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Does a 12 week intervention of metacognitive strategies improve self-efficacy and lessen test anxiety in high stakes testing for 10-12 year olds?

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Abstract

Test anxiety affects girls more than boys (Hembree 1988) and from as young an age as 7-8. Test anxiety is a transactional construct (Zeidner 1998), which affects performance of the working memory (Eysenck 1992). High Test Anxious students are more self-centred and more self-critical than Low Test Anxious students (Zeidner and Matthews 2005). One aspect of Banduras self-efficacy theory (1997) is that self-belief, belief in capability can raise performance. A 12 week intervention using metacognition of desirable difficulties in the testing effect (Bjork 1974) and interleaved spaced retrieval (Karpicke and Roediger 2011) was delivered to a small group of Year 6 girls prior to a high stakes (entrance to Senior School) examination. This pilot intervention aimed to enable 10-12 year olds to believe that as you face an important exam, new metacognitive knowledge can be used to give self-efficacy in test taking; to believe that testing routes in the brain have been primed and that belief in oneself is possible because of the mastery of the metacognition of self-efficacy.