

'Exam Roulette' could quell essay-induced anxiety

June 21 2018

For many students, essay tests are a source of dread and anxiety. But for professors, these tests provide an excellent way to assess a student's depth of knowledge and critical-thinking skills. At the American Physiological Society's (APS's) [Institute on Teaching and Learning](#) in Madison, Wis., Andrew Petzold, Ph.D., of the University of Minnesota Rochester Center for Learning Innovation, will discuss how a game of chance can lead to increased student preparation and motivation.

"Students often have negative associations with essay-only exams, either due to writing phobia, discomfort answering open-ended questions or being unsure of expectations or concepts being covered," Petzold said.

Petzold developed an assessment called "Exam Roulette" that allows students to preview potential essay questions a week before sitting for an exam. Students are allowed to ask clarifying questions about the potential essay topics, but they can't receive specific information about the content in essay responses. On the day of the exam, a 12-sided dice is used to assign students the question they will need to answer.

The additional preparation and novel approach may lead to a better experience and outcome for essay test takers. "Students report a greater motivation in studying, better retention of knowledge prior to and following the [exam](#), and reduction in associated stress," Petzold said.

Andrew Petzold, Ph.D., an assistant professor at the University of Minnesota Rochester Center for Learning Innovation, will present the

poster "Roll for [essay](#): A mechanism for increasing self-accountability within summative assessment" on Thursday, June 21, at the Madison Concourse Hotel.

Provided by American Physiological Society

Citation: 'Exam Roulette' could quell essay-induced anxiety (2018, June 21) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2018-06-exam-roulette-quell-essay-induced-anxiety.html>

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