

## **TEST DISRUPTION – Planned evacuations**

Remember that Pre-Planning disruptions is your best strategy. Build interruption strategies into your meetings, conferences, lectures and tests and you will be able to handle whatever happens whenever it happens.

Evacuations that happen during test-taking can cause a lot of anxiety. Here are some strategies to avoid stress or chaos:

- Structure grading with extra points so that brief disruptions (15-20 minute) do not have a great impact on the grades of an individual or a class.
- Realize that students will not learn that much during an evacuation drill. Most of that 15 minutes is used to walk out of the building and walk back in. Even if they found out some information about the test (learned it) and then was able to put that information on a test, that still seems like learning too place.
- Remember that these students are adults. Remind them that they should not talk about the exam while out of the classroom. Treat them as adults then stop worrying about the minor impact this drill will have on their score.
- Make sure everyone puts their name on their tests immediately upon receipt and designate a collection point near an exit, so if you need to collect them all, you have an easy plan in place.
- Not everyone will think your solution is “fair,” but this is life. Some things happen, sometimes they are fair and sometimes they are not.

## **DISRUPTIONS – Unplanned and lengthy**

Some things happen, such a fire or bomb threat, which could impact campus activities for an hour to several hours. Again, pre-planning is key. Some suggestions are:

- Make another test. Often you can “re-write” a test by simply changing the way you ask the question. As an instructor, I always wrote many more questions than I finally put on the exam, so look at your reserve questions for alternative test questions.
- Use on-line methods. Create on-line discussions or provide topics for students to write about in class.
- Add another test during the semester then allow students to toss out their lowest scoring test.
- Ask students to make in-class presentations on key topics in lieu of a test.

### **BOTTOM LINE:**

Don't let single events be a game changer. Good students will continue to succeed and students with poor study habits will probably struggle. If some students know an answer AFTER the disruption and are able to provide that on your test, isn't that learning – however unconventional? Provide leadership and the rest will follow.