Learning from a Returned Test

Help your students make the most of a returned test by pointing out common errors and asking the students to reflect on how they can improve next time. Limit this time to a few examples that are the most important. Perhaps students in the class who got the items correct can explain why they knew the answer(s).

For problem solving exams, such as math, chemistry, physics, and others, offering partial credit for correcting and explaining their errors can be an incentive for students to go back and clear up misconceptions about important concepts.

A more extensive exercise would be asking students to track their errors on tests over time to find patterns of errors, such as
- Forgetting to read the directions,
- Neglecting to read all of the choices on multiple choice exams,
- Reading incorrectly (omitting a word such as "not," inserting a word),
- Neglecting to answer a questions completely (or skipping part 2 of a question).

The above types of errors have nothing to do with knowing the material or test preparation. They are **test taking errors**. When students correct these types of errors, they are well on their way to improving their overall course grades and their confidence in taking tests.