TEST TAKING STRATEGIES

All things change-so can we.”
Julia Cameron

BEFORE THE TEST

1. Prepare for your exams the very first day of class.
   - Read your syllabus carefully.
   - Determine the number of exams you will have and how much each exam will count.

2. Read your text!! Your book is expensive. Read it!
   Would you spend $85.00 on a pair of shoes that you leave in the closet?
   - Read your text before class.
   - Write questions in the margin of your text.
   - Turn the headings and subheadings into questions.

3. After hearing the lecture, determine what information the instructor stressed in the lecture. Then write possible test questions on note cards. On the back of the note card, write the answers or the mnemonic devices that help you remember the answer.

4. Read these cards daily. Whenever you have a few minutes like between classes, read your note cards!! Reading and rereading the material is the way to place information into your long term memory. Professional basketball players must practice to be good players, and you, too, must practice to be a good student.

5. Ask your instructor about the test. Ask what information will be stressed and the kinds of questions that will be given.

6. Develop a study strategy. Determine the days and hours you will study before the test. Determine the material you need to study. Study on a regular basis. Read your note cards constantly. Cramming the night before is not studying.

7. Get a good night’s sleep the night before the test. Before you go to sleep, reread your note cards. Get up thirty minutes earlier on the day of the test, and again read your note cards.
DURING THE TEST

1. Get to the testing site early and be prepared with pencils, paper, etc.

2. Do not talk with students prior to the test. Discussing possible test questions right before a test sometimes leads to confusion.

3. Survey the test. Read it over quickly to determine the types of questions and their value. Then determine the amount of time you will have for each section.

4. READ THE DIRECTIONS CAREFULLY.

5. Do a MIND DUMP. On scrap paper, write any mnemonic devices or other material that you know you will need to answer questions.

6. Now, take a deep breath and relax. During the test when you are feeling stressed, take some deep breaths.

7. Answer the easiest questions first. If a question is difficult, skip it and return to it later. Many times you will find the answer in another part of the exam. Your subconscious mind will also be contemplating the question, so that when you return to it, the answer might be obvious.

8. ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS.

9. Strategies for answering Multiple Choice Questions:
   - After reading the question, look for the main point.
   - Try answering the question before you look at the answers.
   - Read ALL answers first. Some answers will be similar and you will need to select the BEST answer.
   - If you have to guess an answer:
     1) select the longest answer.
     2) if two choices are similar, choose neither.
     3) if two choices are opposite, choose one of them.
   - Never change your answer unless you are positive of the correct answer.
10. Strategies for answering Essay questions:
   - Remember, you need not only to demonstrate what you know, but also to explain and support your ideas.
   - Read essay questions carefully! Underline the key verbs that tell you what you need to do such as explain, compare, discuss, etc. As you are writing, refer back to the question to make sure that you are on the topic.
   - Map or outline main points. Decide their order and how they relate to the question. Decide on support for each point.
   - To answer a question well, you need to:
     1) provide information that specifically answers that question.
     2) provide support for your answer using detailed explanations.
     3) use technical terms and vocabulary.

Strategies for answering math exams.
You will use the same strategies listed for answering the multiple choice questions. A few additional strategies that can be used for answering math are:

1) Decide what is known? What does the problem tell you specifically? What don’t you know?
2) Decide which information does not pertain to what you are being asked to find. Forget that information and concentrate on the key facts you need to answer the question.
3) Feel free to work backward. Start at the end of the problem and work toward the beginning. This is an excellent way to check your answers.
4) Check your answer to see if it makes sense. If the problem is asking the speed of a car and your answer is 450 miles per hour, you know that you probably have the wrong answer as that is not logical.
AFTER THE TEST

1. Learn from your exams. Too many students just concentrate on the grade and do not use the returned exam as a learning tool.

2. Stay calm.

3. Decide why you made that grade. Did you study too little? Did you study properly? If you made a good grade, then study as much for the next test. If your grade was low, then study differently. **Cramming the night before is NOT studying !!!**

4. Do not give yourself an excuse not to change. If you blame your instructor by saying that the questions were tricky, you are providing yourself with an excuse not to change your study habits

“The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.”
Franklin D. Roosevelt

*To conquer your fear of test taking, take charge of your study habits. If you have studied on consistent basis using text notes and note cards, you should be prepared. Now, you must begin to think of a positive outcome. Tell yourself that you are prepared and that you know the material and that you will do well on the test. You can learn to do well on exams*
Assignments for
Test-Taking Strategies
Module

1. Copy four pages from one of your textbooks that you have highlighted and written questions and information in the margin.

2. Write a description of the study strategy you used to study for one of your exams.
   
   Explain the study times. How much time did you study? What were the study hours? What days? You may want to turn in a study chart of this information.

   Explain what material you studied. Did you study just the review questions? What other material did you use? Where did you find the material that you studied?

   How did you study? Did you use note-cards? How often did you read the note-cards? Did you use an outline? How did you use your notes? How did you study your text? Did you use a previous exam? Did you cram?

3. Write an evaluation of an exam that you have taken. With this evaluation, you will include a copy of the returned test or scantron with the grade.

   What was the grade?

   Why did you make this grade? Did you study properly? How should you change the way you studied? If you feel that you studied properly, why do you think so? What did you do that was right? What was wrong?

   What problems did you have while taking the test? Did you change answers that were right? Did you spend too much time on trying to determine as answer to one question? Where you too nervous? Did you recognize the information, but still answered the problems incorrectly? Why? Did you use any of the strategies for answering multiple choice, essay or math questions?

   How can you use this information to make a better grade next time?