

Test Preparation

Reflective Practice

- Take a moment to reflect on your past testing experiences:
 - What was your preparation?
 - Where and when did you study?
 - What were your surroundings on test day?
 - What is different now? (other than the obvious content differences)
 - What can you do to recreate successful test preparation and study environment?
 - How can you restructure to create successful test preparation?

Stress: Effects on Testing

- Nervousness
 - Difficulty reading or understanding questions
 - Difficulty organizing thoughts
 - Difficulty retrieving keywords or concepts
 - Poor outcome despite knowledge
- Mental block
 - Drawing a blank
 - Remembering after the exam

Time Management Strategies

- Identify your windows
 - Plan study time
 - Create environment
- Recognize time wasters
 - Unrealistic time estimates
 - Lack of organization
 - Unable to say “no”
 - No priorities
- Develop task-based master study schedule
 - Examine test objectives
 - Systematically study material

Time Management Procrastination

- Procrastination
 - Avoidance of doing a task
 - Leads to negative thoughts
- Why?
 - Fear of failure
 - Lack of time
 - Shortage of energy
 - Poor organization
 - Overwhelmed by the task at hand

Memory and Forgetting: Memory Strategies

- Recitation
 - Summarizing aloud or in writing
- Rehearsal
 - Mentally review/reflect on facts; link together
- Selection
 - Keep big fish; let small ones go
- Organization of information
 - Chunk and categorize
- Whole VS part learning
- Memory cues
 - Elaborate on information as you learn
- Overlearning
 - Going beyond mastery

Memory and Forgetting: Mnemonic Strategies

- Mnemonics: any kind of memory system or aid
 - Proven to improve memory many times over
 - Use mental pictures
 - Make things meaningful
 - Make information familiar
 - Form bizarre, unusual or exaggerated mental associations

Concentration and Focus Strategies

- Record disruptive thoughts and deal with them later
- Recognize distractions and remove them as much as possible
- Set clear goals for study sessions
- Focus on task at hand not everything that needs to be accomplished for the exam
- Create regular study space free of clutter
- Keep all study materials (books, notes) close at hand
- Don't try to build a piano!

Multiple Choice Strategies

- Read carefully
- Formulate an answer in your head
- Match your answer to choices
- Throw out those you know are wrong
- Select best answer
- Apply "true/false" technique
- Pay attention to grammar clues

Essay Test Strategies

- Take time to plan
 - Brainstorm and group thoughts

- Road map for essay
- Use essay format
 - Intro, body, conclusion

Text Anxiety Strategies

- Deep breathing
 - Anxiety: short, shallow breaths
 - Relaxed: long, deep breaths
- Progressive muscle relaxation
 - Systematically tensing and releasing muscle groups
- Visualization
- Positive self talk

Test Anxiety Strategies

- Coping statements/positive self-talk
 - Preparing for stressful situations
 - I'll just take things one step at a time
 - If I get nervous, I'll just pause for a moment
 - Tomorrow I'll be through it
 - I've managed to do this before
 - What exactly do I have to do?
 - Confronting the stressful situations
 - Relax now; they can't really hurt me
 - Stay organized; focus on the task
 - There's no hurry; take it step by step
 - Nobody's perfect; I'll just do my best
 - It will be over soon; just be calm

Final Thoughts:

- Preparation:
 - Hard work
- Relaxation:
 - Do nothing with your mind or muscles
- Rehearsal:
 - Practice skills: affect-behavior-cognition
- Restructuring Thoughts:
 - Positive self-talk
 - Think about what you know already
- Maintain healthy routine
 - Sleep
 - Exercise
 - Diet