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