Test Taking & Test Anxiety Workshop

Presented by:
The Counseling Center
Gulf Coast State College
General Information

• Give yourself time to travel to the test site.
• Dress comfortably
• Eat something prior to testing
• Arrive Early
• Avoid Discussing the test
• Real all directions
• Budget your time
• Read each question carefully
General Information Continued

• Ask for help from instructor if needed
• Do not be concerned if students finish before you
• Do the easiest questions first.
• Think positive thoughts.
• Do not panic.
• Check your work
• Beware of changing your answers!
General Information

• Ask for help
• Think positive thoughts
• Don’t worry about other students
• Don’t panic
• Check your work
Week Before the Test

- Plan a strategy
- Schedule study time using a calendar
- Stay with the schedule

If good study habits are being used, this should be a time of review and learning the latest information from class lectures.
Day Before Test

- Review in small increments of time
- You are ready and confident
- Do something you enjoy within reason
- Relax before sleeping
- Go to sleep at a reasonable hour
Objective Tests

Multiple Choice

• Answer questions in order
• Read questions carefully
• Check questions you are unsure of
• Be aware of limiting phrases - underline the words to show emphasis
• If not sure of answer - eliminate the wrong answers, then choose from remaining answers
• Beware of changing answers

Matching

• Match one column at a time going from left to right
• Beware of changing answers
Objective Test

True/False

• If part of the statement is false, the answer if false

• Be aware of absolute words - imply no exceptions
  ➢ Never, none, always, all, every, only

• Be aware of qualifiers - limit meaning & allow exceptions & possibilities
  ➢ Some, few, often, many

• Double negatives tend to show a positive statement

• The word “not” does not always make a statement false

• Beware of changing answers
Problem Tests

- Do a “Brain Dump”
- Read all questions
- Answer easiest questions first
- Show all your work
- Be as neat as possible
- Do not erase – draw a line thru incorrect work
- Use a separate sheet of paper if needed
- Leave spaces between answers
- Never leave a blank answer
- Check your work
Essay Tests

• Read all questions first
• Answer easiest questions first
• Watch for action verbs
• Make an outline and mark off the information as you write
• Include introduction, body, & conclusion
• Get down to business
• Write legible, complete sentences & paragraphs
• Leave space for additional information
• Re-read your answers
• If time runs out – outline remaining information
Stay Focused

One technique that helps students stay focused during a test is to take a blank sheet of paper and cover up the test except for the question you are working on. This helps you concentrate on one question at a time.

Another is to read the questions, answer the question in your head and then find the answer in the list of answers.
Test Anxiety
The Causes

- Cramming the night before
- Poor time management
- Poor study habits
- Stressed over past test grades
- Stressed over failing
- Stressed over competing with other students
The Physical Signs

- Perspiration
- Sweaty Palms
- Headache
- Tense Muscles
- Rapid Heart Beat
- Upset Stomach
- Fast, Shallow Breathing
- Dry Mouth
The Effects

• Going Blank
• Remembering answers after the test
• Doing poorly even when prepared
• Difficulty organizing thoughts
• Having difficulty reading and understanding test questions.
Ways to Reduce the Anxiety

• Keep everything in perspective. This is a test, just a test. It does not reflect who you are nor does it make you a good or bad person.

• Embrace the anxiety. Do not fight it and become frustrated, but use it to give you energy.

• Have good study habits.

• Relax before bed time and get plenty of sleep the night before the exam.

• Exercise is a great way to reduce stress but do not overdo it.

• Eat nutritious choices the day before and the day of the exam.

• Avoid a lot of caffeine.
Ways to Reduce the Anxiety

• Avoid arriving too early or too late
• Avoid last minute studying
• Avoid discussing test prior to the test
• Avoid negative thoughts! While you are breathing, think positive, encouraging thoughts
• Prepare for your morning routine the night before or leave work a little earlier than normal to avoid last minute interferences.
• Do not panic over questions your can’t answer
• Breathe and relax
Nutrition and Test Anxiety

Nutrition plays a huge part in how you handle stress and particularly test anxiety. Below are listed choices to focus and not focus on to help with stress.

Focus on:
• Whole grains and nuts
• Fish – particularly wild salmon
• Berries – especially blueberries
• Seeds – Pumpkin and sunflower are great choices - the brain processes seeds into a serotonin, a neurotransmitter that helps reduce anxiety
• Mint or Cinnamon – candy or gum – helps with concentration and ability to recall

Do not Focus on:
• Processed foods high in fat and simple carbohydrates
• Sugar – can give an energy rush, then crash. Can make you jittery and nervous then cause depression and anxiety after the rush
• Alcohol – reduces the ability to retain information
• Appetite disturbance – need to maintain healthy eating habits.
• Quick energy drinks – may leave you jittery and your rain scattered
Before Each Test

• Practice some type of relaxation technique

• Before starting the test, take a couple of deep breaths and tell yourself “I am ready, I am confident, I can do this”. 
During the Test

• If you start to feel anxious, stop, turn your paper over and take a couple of deep breathes. Give yourself a “pep” talk and then continue with the test.

• Make a fist and squeeze tight. Relax and imagine your whole body relaxing.
References

http://www.mtsu.edu/~studkl

What to Eat Before a Test in College. Lucier, Kelci Lynn. About.com College Life. 
http://collegelife.about.com/od/healthwellness/a/What-To-Eat-BeforeA-Test-In-College.html

Academic Resource Center, Utah State University, 
www.usu.edu/arc

Test Anxiety-Study Techniques and Skills for Coping. Grand Canyon University. 
http://www.testprepreview.com/test_anxiety.htm
The End

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