

Preparing for Final Exams

Study Skills Workshop
Academic Support Center
NMSU-A

Agenda

- Preparing for final exams
- Before, During and After the Test
- Dealing Effectively with Test Anxiety
- Discovery
- Survey Completion

Get Ready

- Prioritize, set goals, know where you stand in your classes
- Know the rules/expectations of you on the final
- Get all your materials together – compile lecture notes, fill in any blanks
- Accept your limits

Plan Ahead - Time Management

- Identify how many weeks you have to plan
- Make a schedule and/or to-do list
- Break up large tasks into small tasks
- Use small study sessions to build up to the final
- Take advantage of review sessions

Before the Test

- Do daily, weekly and major reviews
- Schedule your reviews on your planning calendar
- Create study checklists
- Create mind map summary sheets
- Create flash cards
- Monitor your reviews
- Take a practice test
- Get copies of old exams



Study Smart

- Library time – reduce distractions
- Study actively – set goals and reward yourself
- Diversity – Use different study methods for different subjects
- Practice, practice, practice
- Create review sheets
- Study with groups
- Predict exam questions – test yourself
- Think positive! Stay motivated

Ways to Predict Test Questions

1. Ask your instructor to describe how he or she tests early on in the semester.
2. Put yourself in your instructor's shoes – if you were teaching the class, what kinds of questions would you include on an exam?
3. Look for possible test questions in your notes and readings.
4. Look for clues to possible questions during class.
5. Save all quizzes, papers, lab sheets, and graded materials of any kind
6. Apply your predictions
7. Remember the obvious

During the Test

- Arrive early so that you have time to go through a relaxation exercise. Avoid talking about how much time you prepared with classmates or trying to cram last minute studying.
- As you begin:
 - If allowed, jot down material on scratch paper that will help you remember key ideas, formulas, etc.
 - Read and re-read the directions
 - Read through the test and answer the easiest, shortest questions first.
 - Watch your time and if you can't answer a question, move on – if you are careful with your time, you can come back to missed questions later.

During the Test (cont.)

- Multiple Choice Questions
 - Answer the question in your head first (in other words, ignore the options until you do a mental check for what you know the answer to be and then check for that answer in the list of possible choices).
 - Read all possible answers before selecting one
 - Test each possible answer
 - Eliminate incorrect answers

During the Test (cont.)

- True/False Questions
 - Read the entire question
 - Look for qualifiers (all, most, sometimes, rarely)
 - Check the details carefully
 - Watch for negatives
- Short-answer/fill-in-the-blanks tests
 - Concentrate on key words and facts – be brief
- Open-book Tests
 - Carefully organize your notes, readings and other materials.
 - Write down formulas on a separate sheet of paper.
 - Bookmark the table of contents and index in your textbooks. Use Post-it-Notes or paperclips to flag important pages
 - Create an informal table of contents or index for the notes you took in class.
 - Predict which material will be covered on the test and highly relevant sections in your readings and notes.

After the Test

- Spend a few minutes after the test reflecting on your performance. How did you feel about taking the test? How effective were your review strategies? Do you feel you accurately predicted the tests that would be on the exam? Follow up by writing down your intentions for how you plan to study for the next test.
- When the test is returned, view the test as a way to gather feedback on your learning. Use it to analyze the following:
 - What material did the instructor use to base the test questions?
 - What types of questions were asked on the test?
 - What types of questions did you miss?
 - What can you learn from the instructor's comments to help you better prepare for the next test?

The Power of Perception

- “A man’s errors are his portals of discovery” – James Joyce



What is Anxiety?

- What symptoms of anxiety have you experienced before a test?
 - Stomach upset
 - Headaches
 - Sweaty palms
 - Memory lapses/mental blocks
 - Low self-esteem
 - Apprehension
 - Frequent yawning
 - Other?

Causes of Test Anxiety

- What factors lead to test anxiety?
 - Bad test experiences
 - Worry
 - Comparing self to others
 - Low expectation of self
 - Poor study habits
 - Lack of studying/preparation
 - Fear of failure

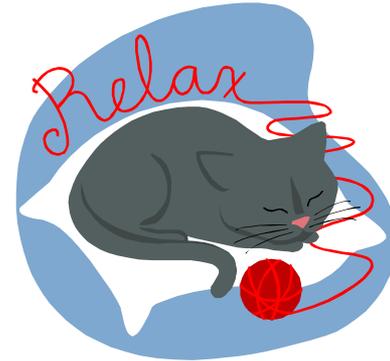
Letting Go of Text Anxiety

- Dealing with Negative Thoughts
 - Yell “Stop!” (mentally, of course)
 - Daydream
 - Visualize success
 - Focus
 - Praise yourself
 - Consider the worst



Letting Go of Test Anxiety (cont.)

- Dealing with Physical Sensations of Anxiety
 - Breathe
 - Scan your body
 - Tense and relax
 - Use guided imagery
 - Be with it
 - Exercise aerobically
 - Get help



Discovery

- Mentally re-create a time when you struggled taking a test. Complete the following discovery activity – Letting Go of Test Anxiety.



Preparing for Final Exams Workshop

Thank you for attending our student success workshop. Please take a few moments to fill out the survey and return it to your facilitator before you leave.

For more information on study skill topics, please visit the
Academic Support Center

(Building a



for Student Success)