



Course: Study Skills

Level: First year LMD

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Exam Preparation

Objectives of the Lesson: By the end of this lecture, learners will be able to:

- Determine the importance of exam/test preparation on their achievement
- Employ different exam taking strategies

Introduction

Success in examinations depends on the complex interplay of several factors encompassing pedagogical, previous schooling, cognitive, motivational, affective and personal characteristics, as well as contextual elements such as the cultural and family environment. The positive outcome of these interactions is crucial in achieving higher academic outcomes.

1. Definition of Examination

An examination is defined as the evaluation of the person's understanding of the knowledge. The exam is taken to check the knowledge of a student of a particular subject. It includes a variety of questions like objective, subjective, one word ...etc. Each question in the exam is assigned with marks according to the level of knowledge it requires. The students are required to answer the

questions asked in exams. Marks are given based on the quality of answers given by a student in their examination. Evaluation is done on the basis of marks obtained in the exam.

2. Definition of a Test

With a test, you can test the knowledge level of the students. This is done mostly with a series of questions that may differ in form or format.

A good teacher adjusts the course material according to the results of the tests he gives. So he can improve the content of the course especially the parts which are not clear or those that need extra explanation.

3. The Difference between a Test and Examination

The big difference between a test and an exam is that an exam is more formal than a test. They are used as synonyms throughout schools and courses though they serve a different purpose:

- The test is a tool to measure the knowledge level of your students and adjust the learning material accordingly. With the purpose to have your students learn.
- An exam or the examination is more formal and it tells you if a student passed or failed a class or course. In most cases you have to study again and re-take the exam; or start the course or class all over again.

4. The Importance of Exams for University Students

The exam forms an integral part of the student's university experience. Upon entering university studies, students are deprived of effective methods and strategies for success

and very rarely those who validate all the modules of the program without compensation, despite the introduction of the module "Study Skills".

Academic university studies show that the continuous revision of the program modules is often neglected by students. Exam preparations are done only one to two weeks in advance, and are often done too intensively, with rushed readings, superficial understandings, poorly mastered knowledge, and skipped chapters. On the day of exam, the student can only be distraught, stressed, and loses self-confidence. The purpose of this lesson is to identify test preparation strategies and concerns of university students in the open and regulated education system. It attempts at providing students with useful tips for better exam preparation.

5. Effective Exam Preparation

5.1. Physical Preparation

The way you treat your body during exams directly affects your performance on exams. Even if you are not consciously aware of the effects, you will have trouble remembering facts and writing your exam. There will be that one concept you cannot remember, or that sentence which will be badly written and cost you half a mark. Always make sure that you prepare physically for an exam. Your body is a machine which is used to certain patterns and schedules. Do not interrupt these for an exam.

- ✓ Sleep well and get your normal amount of sleep (hopefully around 8 hours).
- ✓ Maintain your sleep schedule. If you normally sleep at midnight and wake up at 8am, keep doing that.
- ✓ Don't pull late night study sessions or all-nighters; they will have a negative effect on your body.

- ✓ Maintain your exercise schedule. If your body is used to jogging every morning, make sure it gets that jog. If you don't normally exercise, don't start now.
- ✓ Maintain your eating habits. Don't skip any meals and eat healthy.

5. 2. Mental Preparation

The learner's mental preparation is just as important as his/her physical preparation. The student cannot cram for an exam and expect to do well. Properly preparing for an exam is vital to your success.

Remember:

- ✓ Study in advance. This will move information to long term memory, and you will have less pre-exam stress and anxiety.
- ✓ Don't rush. Look over your study notes calmly and with focus, rushing will only mean you absorb less information and need to study longer overall.
- ✓ Clarify all the details in advance. Know what sort of questions to expect, where the exam will be held, etc.
- ✓ Have a positive attitude. Being positive about the outcome will always lead you to do better on any examination. It will also make studying a whole lot easier. Remind yourself why you need good grades, or why you are interested in the subject.

6. Dealing with More Than One Exam

Students are not always able to have their exams easily spread out across the exam period. Sometimes you will have two exams in 48 hours or a lot of exams in a

very short period. This situation is unavoidable, and you must adjust your studying accordingly. It is these moments when time management and calm study habits are especially important.

Exam Preparation Tips & Test-taking Strategies

Active Review	Before the Exam
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do practice problems • Recite what you already know/learnt • Anticipate questions and answers • Make “summary sheets” • Review past exams • Study with a group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get plenty of sleep the night before • Diet and exercise properly • Eat a healthy breakfast the morning of the exam • Avoid panicking the last minute • Avoid last minute interference
During the Exam	Essay Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be confident! You can do it! • Look over the entire test first. • Follow directions! • Answer questions that are easy or questions you know first. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline what you plan on writing first • Read over all the questions carefully first • Write the “easy” essays first • Underline your main idea • Answer the question in the first sentence of the paragraph • Be direct and specific • Answer the question!

General Tips

- ✓ Read all instructions carefully and mark important/key phrases.
- ✓ Budget your time and use it wisely.
- ✓ Do what you know first and come back to the questions you are unsure of later.
- ✓ Do questions that are worth more points first.

- ✓ Be clear in your answers and in your handwriting.
- ✓ Support your answers with good arguments, evidence and facts.
- ✓ *Trust yourself!* Do not change the answer to a question unless you find the correct answer in the test or you remembered a key piece of information.

7. Answering Different Types of Test/ Exam Instructions

7.1. Multiple Choice Questions

- ✓ Try to provide your own answer without looking at the choices. If your answer matches one of the choices, it is most probably the right one.
- ✓ When your answer does not match one of the answers, narrow down your choices. Eliminate wrong, silly or synonymous choices. Avoid the ones that contain absolute words (never, always, no, every, worst, best ...)
- ✓ In questions where a choice is '*all of the above*', this tends to be a correct answer, especially if two of the other choices are correct.
- ✓ If two choices are exact opposites, one of them is probably correct.
- ✓ If one choice is much longer than the rest, and it seems likely to be right, go with it; longer answers tend to be right more often than shorter ones.

7.2. Short Answer Questions

- ✓ Use concise answers with appropriate textual evidence. Concise means expressing or covering much in few words; brief in form but comprehensive in scope.

- ✓ Explain and elaborate. Do not just say something is true, prove it. Show how the evidence supports the answer; supply reasons your answer is correct.

7.3. Essay Instructions

- ✓ Analyze the task.
- ✓ Brainstorm ideas.
- ✓ Create an outline of your response before starting to write.
- ✓ Write a draft for your answer. Do not spend much time worrying about errors in the first draft. You can correct them on the draft later.
- ✓ Strive for a focused essay, tightly organized, and supported with facts.
- ✓ Write your answers as quickly and as legibly as you can; do not take the time to recopy.
- ✓ Proofread your answer and correct errors in spelling and mechanics.

7.4. Reading Activities

- ✓ Read and understand the questions first.
- ✓ Skim the passage given to you and look for main ideas, understand the layout of the text, highlight keywords and salient points, and try to make sense of what the passage is about. This will help you to identify sections where to find information to answer the questions.
- ✓ Usually, questions refer to information in the text in chronological order.
- ✓ Leave difficult questions and come back to the end if you have time.
- ✓ Don't worry about difficult vocabulary unless it is a key term. Use the context to help you understand its meaning.

8. Dealing with Test/Exam Anxiety

Anxiety about a test is a normal side effect of tests and exams. Good preparation is the best solution for test anxiety is, but if you are still anxious during the test/ exam, these tips might help:

- ✓ Arrive early to get comfortable in the environment and feel more relaxed.
- ✓ Mind your posture; sitting up straight can trick your mind into being more confident.
- ✓ Take deep breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth.
- ✓ Think positively and practice positive self-talk

Exercise

- ☞ What are the purposes of tests and exams?
- ☞ What useful techniques do you use while taking a test/ exam? Share your experience.
- ☞ There are certain distractions that may disrupt the process of test/exam taking. How can you deal with each of them?

1-Noise in the exam hall.

2-Problems from outside the exam hall that you keep thinking about.

3-Exam is too long, too boring or too difficult

- ☞ Can you think of other distractions? What are they? What do you propose to deal with them?

- ☞ Reflect on the lesson and on class discussion, which technique ...

a- have you already used?

b- do you find surprising?

c- do you find difficult to use?

d- would you like to try?