

The Student Success Curriculum

Topic 10: Test Taking and Exams

Many students experience some anxiety before quizzes and exams, but with sufficient preparation and some test taking strategies, test taking will get easier and performance will improve. This topic aims to teach students the skills they need to be strong test-takers.

Teaching Strategies:

Lecture

Large Group Discussion

Self-Assessment

Pre-planning

Time Frames

The implementation time for this material is approximately ninety minutes. Giving the optional activity as a homework assignment can shorten this time frame to one hour.

Instructor Preparation

- ✓ Read Topic 10: Test Taking and Exams in the *Student Success Guide*. Carefully review the study sheet and test preparation form so that you know how to best explain these forms to students.
- ✓ Review the PowerPoint slides side-by-side with the lecture outline.
- ✓ Review the written activity.
- ✓ Create a list of quiz, exam, and competency due dates. Hand the list out to students and post one in the classroom.
- ✓ Prepare a pre-testing ritual (optional).
- ✓ Prepare resource options for students who have test anxiety.

Resources

Locate and read any of the following resources to support an understanding of the topic.

- ✓ *No More Test Anxiety: Effective Steps for Taking Tests & Achieving Better Grades* by Ed Newman. Learning Skills Publications.
- ✓ *The Secrets of Taking Any Test*, 2nd Edition by Judith N. Meyers. Learning Express.
- ✓ *Tame Text Anxiety Audio CD* by Richard Driscoll. Westside Psychology.

- ✓ *Test Taking Strategies & Study Skills for the Utterly Confused* by Laurie Rozakis. McGraw-Hill.
- ✓ *Test-Taking Strategies* by Judi Kesselman-Turkel and Franklynn Peterson. University of Wisconsin Press.

Supplies & Equipment

- ✓ *Student Success Guides* (one per student)
- ✓ Quiz, exam, and competency check date list
- ✓ Whiteboard and markers, or chalkboard and chalk
- ✓ LCD/DLP projector, laptop, and PowerPoint presentation, or printed overheads and an overhead projector
- ✓ Activity handout (optional)
- ✓ Blank study sheets and test preparation forms

Learning Objectives

After reading Topic 10 and completing the worksheets associated with this topic, each student will:

- ✓ Understand the school's philosophy on testing and the types of tests that are used in the curriculum (i.e., quizzes, exams, competency checks, etc.).
- ✓ Ask three good questions about tests to support adequate preparation.
- ✓ Define study sheets and explain the components of a good study sheet.
- ✓ Compare and contrast active study methods to passive study methods.
- ✓ List the benefits of making and using flash cards for study.

- ✓ Discuss the types of muscle knowledge that are required to pass muscle exams and competency checks.
- ✓ Describe the design of multiple-choice, true/false, and matching questions.
- ✓ Discuss strategies for answering difficult multiple-choice, true/false, and matching questions.
- ✓ Identify two things that might be learned from a graded exam that can support better test-taking skills.
- ✓ Define test anxiety and list three possible causes.
- ✓ Demonstrate one strategy for reducing test anxiety.

Lecture Outline

This lecture outline is meant to be used in combination with the *Student Success Guide*, and the PowerPoint slides included with this teaching kit. The information in this lecture/activity follows the information presented in the *Student Success Guide*, with page numbers of the associated materials provided to the right of the heading in parentheses. Instructors are encouraged to add or delete slides and information as they deem appropriate to meet the particular needs of their student groups. The PowerPoint slides can be shown with an LCD projector, or printed onto transparencies for overheads.

Slide 1: Title Slide (p. 108)

Introduce the topic (Test Taking and Exams) and ask students to turn to page 108 in their *Student Success Guide*. Ask students to share their feelings and thoughts about taking tests.

Slide 2: Goals of this Lecture

The goal of this lecture is to teach students how to better prepare for exams and how to answer questions strategically to achieve the highest possible score.

Tip!

Hand out blank Exam Preparation Forms (available at www.abmp.com) and have students fill them out on the spot, 5–8 days before an exam to support student preparation.

Slide 3: Test Preparation—Find out About the Test (p. 108)

This is a good time to describe to students your personal philosophy and the school's philosophy of testing. Explain to students the sources you use to create questions (lectures, textbook, etc.). Before tests, students should ask some basic questions (shown on the slide). Discuss these questions and the fact that most instructors provide some type of review during the class immediately before the class in which the test occurs. Emphasize the importance of these pre-test classes.

Slide 4: Break Material Into Chunks (p. 108)

People learn best when they study information in chunks and have adequate time for repetition. Share with students the approximate amount of time that they will need to study to prepare for the quizzes and exams listed on the syllabus. This is a good time to hand out and review exam dates. Students will want to break out these total hours over a number of study sessions. Discuss basic tips for test preparation as shown on the slide.

Slide 5: Study Actively (p. 109)

Review the active study strategies on this slide and compare and contrast active study to passive study.

Slide 6: Use a Variety of Methods to Learn Information (p. 109)

Discuss the ways that students can keep study sessions interesting and varied. The use of a variety of study methods also helps the student better adapt to different testing methods.

Slide 7: Plan Ahead (p. 110)

Review the Exam Preparation Form on page 110 and explain how the form is used and why it is helpful to plan in advance for tests.

Slide 8: Study Sheets (p. 111)

Define study sheets and explain that graphic organizers could also be used as study sheets. A student might develop a study sheet for each topic on a given exam. If the test covers eight topics the student might use eight study sheets of various types. Ask students to turn to page 112 in their

Student Success Guide and review the sample Single Topic Study Sheet. The imaginary student has compiled this single page from his notes. The idea is that a student must read over all of his notes and condense the notes into one neat study sheet. This reorganization and rewriting of the material helps the student better recall it on a test. If one sheet is too small, it may be that the student is trying to cover more than one topic on the study sheet. The student should keep the information on each sheet as specific as possible to better organize it for long-term memory recall. It's much better to have a lot of very clean, neat, and simple study sheets than a crowded page with too many topics.

Slide 9: Flash Cards (p. 113)

Discuss different types of flash cards, have students view examples on page 113, and describe methods for making and using flash cards.

Slide 10: Preparation for Exams and Skill-Checks on Muscles (p. 115)

Discuss the ways your school tests students on muscles and their origins, insertions and actions. Discuss the specific types of information that the student will need to know to test well in this area. Ask students to turn to pages 115-116 in the *Student Success Guide* and review the types of information they will need to know about muscles. The Muscle Graphic Organizer provided in Topic 7 on page 89-90 makes a comprehensive study guide for learning muscles. Blank sheets can be downloaded at www.abmp.com.

Slide 11: Strategies for Test Taking (p. 118)

Review the general principles of good test taking.

Slide 12: Strategic Guessing (p. 118-119)

Discuss the basics of strategic guessing and review the recommendations for building good test taking skills.

Slide 13: Understanding Multiple Choice Questions (p. 119)

Describe the components of a multiple choice question and discuss strategies for answering difficult multiple choice questions. Use the examples on slides 14, 15, and 16 to help students better understand multiple-choice questions.

Slide 14: Sample Multiple-Choice Question

Slide 15: Sample Multiple-Choice Question

Slide 16: Sample Multiple-Choice Question

Slide 17: Understanding True/False Questions (p. 120)

Discuss the design of a true/false question and describe strategies for answering difficult true/false questions.

Slide 18: Understanding Matching Questions (p. 120)

Discuss strategies for answering difficult matching questions.

Slide 19: Graded Exams (p. 121)

Explain the benefits of carefully reviewing a graded exam and what the exam can teach about upcoming test preparation.

Slide 20: Dealing with Test Anxiety (p. 122)

Define test anxiety and discuss its causes.

Slide 21: Support for Test Anxiety

Discuss high-level test anxiety. Explain the school's resources for helping students who experience test anxiety.

Slide 22: Strategies to Reduce Test Anxiety (p. 122)

Review strategies that help students reduce their test anxiety and better prepare for test taking.

Slide 23: Review Concepts of Test Preparation

Provide a general review of test preparation activities and ask students to identify strategies they intend to try for test taking as a way to finish the lecture.

Activity: Test Preparation Plan

Directions: To adequately prepare for quizzes and written exams, it's important to develop a test preparation plan. The plan should include the methods you will use to study information, affirmations for test taking (Topic 3), and the actions you will take on the day of the test to eliminate or control test anxiety. Complete this test preparation plan outline.

Methods I will use to study:

Test-taking affirmations (at least three):

Methods I will use to control test anxiety:

Activity: Pre-Testing Ritual

Introduction: A repetitive pre-testing ritual can help students feel alert and yet relaxed before a big test. Try this ritual or make up one that fits your group of students. This particular ritual is nice because it loosens up and activates the physical body, stimulates memory and then calms and centers the student for the test.

Directions:

1. Ask students to stand in a circle.
2. Ask each student to think about a simple body movement, such as a clap, a kick, a bend, a twist, a facial expression, etc.
3. Ask the first student to introduce his or her movement and ask all the students to repeat the movement.
4. Go to the next student who adds a movement. Now all the students perform the first movement and the second movement.
5. Continue to add movements until all the students have added a movement and the students have completed all of the movements in a row as a group. Applaud.
6. Now ask the students to take a long, slow inward breath and close their eyes. Ask them to focus on their breathing and let all of the tension drain out of their shoulders, necks, and faces.
7. Say out loud, "I am mentally, emotionally, and physically ready to take this exam." Ask students to repeat the phrase with their eyes closed and body relaxed.
8. Say out loud, "My brain is alert and ready. All the information I need is moving to the front of my brain now." Ask students to repeat the phrase with their eyes closed and body relaxed.
9. Say out loud, "I effortlessly recall the information for the test and I am ready to test now!" Ask students to repeat the phrase and repeat the final phrase three more times.
10. End with applause.

Test-Taking and Exams Milestones Checklist

Name: _____

Date: _____

0 = The student does not have this skill.

1 = The student sometimes demonstrates this skill.

2 = The student almost always demonstrates this skill.

0	1	2	
			Quiz, exam, and competency check dates are highlighted in the student's planner.
			Shows the ability to assess a graded exam to improve future test-taking skills.
			Exhibits little test anxiety and feels excitement about demonstrating skills and knowledge.
			Attends review classes before a quiz, exam, or competency check.
			Asks good questions about exam topics and exam format.
			Uses study sheets, flash cards, and graphic organizers for exam study.
			Plans study sessions so that exam topics can be studied in chunks.
			Demonstrates the ability to effectively study for exams and competency checks on muscles.