

TEST ANXIETY AND TEST TAKING SKILLS

ATTITUDE: can add to anxiety. For example, many people say they hate math, or are no good at it, or have had negative experiences with the subject. You do not have to “love” the subject but “hating” it doesn’t help either. It blocks your mental progress in learning the subject which leads to overall anxiety. Rather, say something like, “What is the one thing I can learn about this topic today?” This kind of thinking keeps you interested in the subject.

IDEAS TO THINK ABOUT:

- Can you pinpoint what exactly makes you feel anxious about tests?
- Are you giving yourself enough time to study?
- Do these seem to stop you in completing your goals:
Working too many hours? No help with child care?
- Are you studying for the right type of test-subjective (essays) or objective (multiple choice, short answer)?
- Do you actually understand the material so that you can ask questions?
- Do you feel you have good note taking and study skills?
- Do you know where resources are to help you with material?
- Have you used instructor’s office hours?
- Have you used tutoring or group study effectively?

Test Taking Skills:

Night before the test:

- Do you go to bed early enough?
- Do you have all of your materials ready for the test?
- Do you have transportation/childcare ready and available?
- Have your clothes out so you don’t have to think about it and rush.

Day of the test:

- Eat breakfast, or if this is not your habit, drink juice or have a small snack.
- *Use positive statements such as:* I know the material.
I attend every class.
I ask questions and take good notes.
- Come a little early so that you can get yourself “centered”.
- Have the correct tools such as calculators (TI-84) pens, pencils, etc.
- Look over all questions first.

- Jot down formulas on the paper so that you don't have to worry. Doing this will cut down on some anxiety.
- Work on questions that are worth the most points first.
- Use your time wisely so that you have enough time to answer **every** question as well as go back to check on others. *Be sure to finish the exam.*

After the test:

- When you get your test back, instead of concentrating on what you did wrong, concentrate on what you got right. This will build more confidence.
- Later, rework the problems that you did not get correct. Notice the type of questions you got wrong. Is there a pattern?
- Use fresh paper; choose a time when you are not tired or feel rushed.
- Utilize the Tutoring Center to assist you.

Final Thoughts:

The true secret to overpowering test anxiety is to keep practicing each day as well as using positive statements so that you are in control rather than the anxiety controlling you. It will take time. There is no "quick fix".