

Learning Skills, Room 120

Multiple Choice Exams

Preparing for the Exam

1. Review Bloom's Taxonomy so that you will recognize key thinking and directive words.
2. Practice by preparing multiple choice questions.
 - Form questions that reflect the different levels of learning.
 - Form/join a study group to share the work and get different perspectives.
3. Look at previous exams
 - Note the types of thinking required.
 - Note the degrees of difference between correct and incorrect choices.
4. Practice by photocopying, whiting out answers, and writing the previous exams

Writing the Exam

5. Do this section of the exam *first*. Pace yourself.
6. Follow this *procedure* for reading and answering questions:
 - First: answer questions that you *know*
 - Next: put ? beside questions of which you are *unsure* and ?? beside those that you *don't know*
 - Next: Go back to questions marked ? and spend more time on them, following the suggestions below.
 - When answered, erase the ? Then proceed to the ones marked ?? and do the same.
7. What to do for when *unsure* or *stuck*
 - Eliminate any *obviously* incorrect choices
 - Read all the stem and every alternative, checking for *flow* and *logic*. Eliminate any choices that do not 'sound right.'
 - Note *qualifying* words such as *always*, *never*, *all*, *none*, and *only*. In the social sciences, such absolutes are rare.

- Note *negative* words such as *no*, *not*, *none*, and *never* when they occur in the stem. Be aware that the correct answer will be an absolute or fact, and the other choices may be true statements but *not* the correct answer.
- Note *degrees of difference*: If the answer is a number, at least one number will be too small and one too large.
- Note *degrees of correctness*: Sometimes, more than one answer is correct, but one is better than the others. Be sure to read all alternatives.
- If you must *guess*, narrow your choice to two alternatives, if possible, and make an *educated* guess rather than a *random* guess.

Learning from the Exam

8. Look at each question that you got *right*
 - Did you *study* this? *How* did you study it? How did you *know* that it was important?
 - Did you know the answer *right away* or was it questionable or not known?
9. Look at each question that you got *wrong*
 - Discover the *distinction* between the correct and incorrect choices.
 - Ask *why* the correct answer is correct and the others are not.
10. Examine the questions in terms of *level of thinking* that is expected.
 - Is there a pattern?
 - Commit to studying accordingly