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.

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STUDENT AFFAIRS
ADVISING | ASSESSMENTS | COUNSELLING | DISABILITY | FINANCIAL AID | FIRST NATIONS | LEARNING CENTRE | TUTORS
2011 University Way, Duncan | British Columbia, Canada | V9L 0C7
ph (250) 746-3509 | fax (250) 746-3559

- 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.