

How to Get A's on All Your Tests

(Or at least become a better test-taker)

October 5, 2010

Rick Muthiah

Session Overview

- Test-Taking Skills Diagnostic Inventory
- Three stages of test-taking
- Addressing anxiety
- Evaluation

Session Objectives

- Participants will leave with
 - 3-4 practical actions to take prior to taking a test
 - 3-4 steps to take during a test
 - Ideas for approaching different types of tests
 - Methods for addressing anxiety

Test-Taking Skills

Diagnosis

Three Stages of Taking a Test

- Before the test
- During the test
- After the test

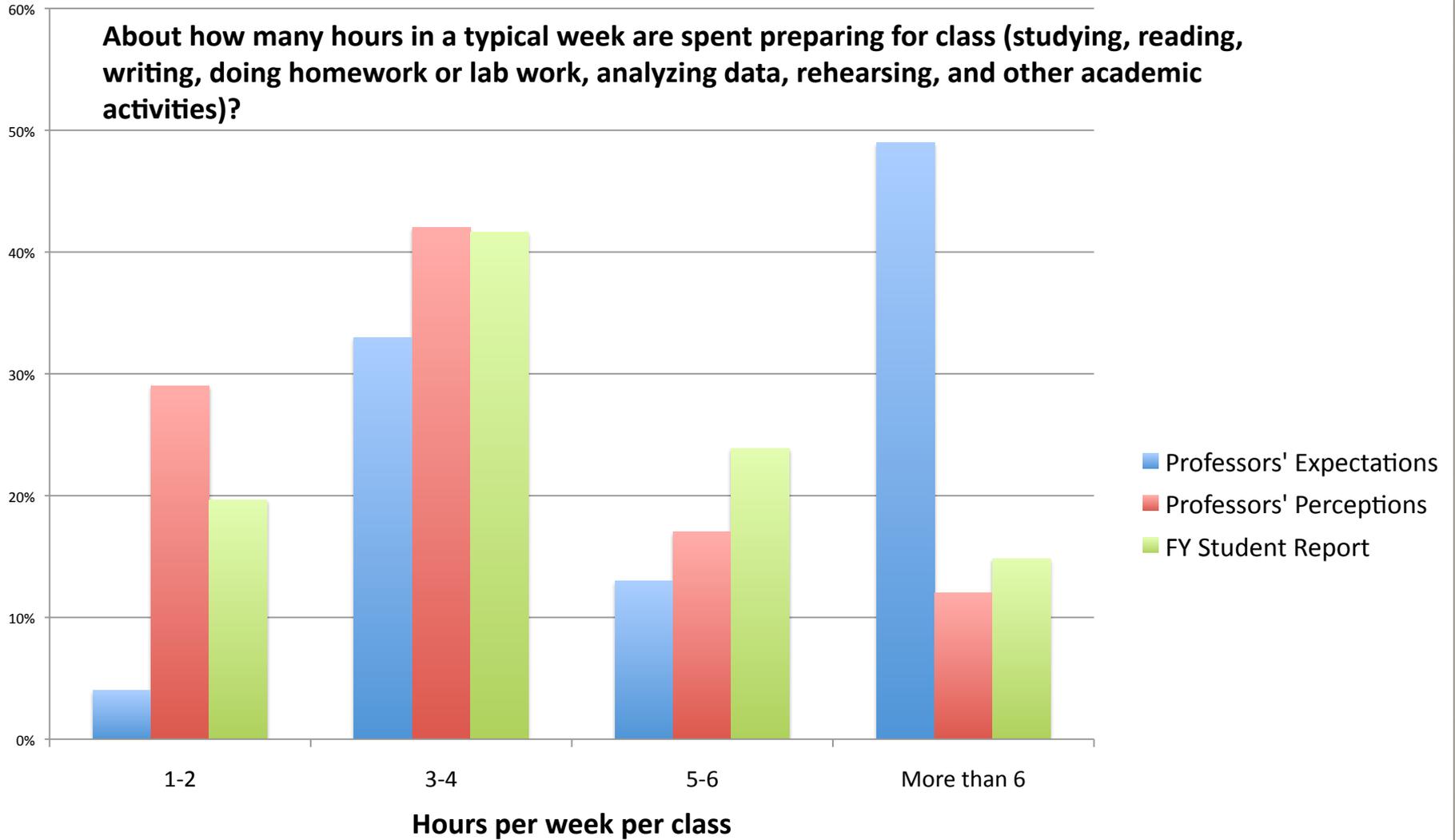
Before the Test: Learning Content

- Attend every class
- Keep up on assignments
- LEARN material
- Break down readings
- Pick out key content

Before the Test: Test Preparation

- Review past tests and quizzes
- Get the big picture
- Study / review early and often
- Practice problems / essays

About how many hours in a typical week are spent preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, doing homework or lab work, analyzing data, rehearsing, and other academic activities)?



An Illustration



Intro

Intro

Engage

Moses insight--
Faculty have
given their
lives for
education

SeaWorld vs.
wild whales

Map layers

4 parts of GFU
education

- Provost - responsible for academic program
- Poem from T.S. Elliot - Lovesong of J. Alfred Prufrock (?)
- Star Trek - Engage, Make it So
 - College Success about engagmt with lrng.
- Story - Bib. study on Moses
 - Reluctant leader at start
 - Later, wanted to lead, but couldn't
 - Conversation with OT scholar
 - Point
 - Faculty have given their adult life for you
 - Faculty look frwd to your ?s
 - They have Qs that go beyond your As
- SeaWorld
 - Shamu vs. wild whales - where the whales ought to be
 - We aren't prepping for SeaWorld

Draw map of Newberg

- What was on your map?
- What about other layers?
 - Sycs. SES, churches, political map
- We're about adding layers

4 Ways GFU adds layers - Education

1) Learning skills

- First colleges had three areas of study
- grammar, rhetoric, logic



- Introduction - Engage with learning
- SeaWorld example - rather be Shamu or live free in the wild? Live in comfort or live fully?
- 4 aspects of Liberal arts - what makes liberal arts important
 - 1. Advance learning skills - develop thinking, writing, speaking skills

General Tips

- Take work with you everywhere
- Review / study immediately after class
- Study during your Prime Time
- Turn off your cell, TV, FB, email, etc.
- Say NO to good so you can do best
- Talk with your roommates / family about your studying needs
- Find several places to study—library, lounges, other buildings
- Prioritize—how much time is it worth?

Taking the Test: Part 1

- Arrive early
- Preview the entire test
- Breathe deeply and relax
- Do a “mind dump”

Taking the Test: Part 2

- Read carefully
- Answer easier items first
- Keep an eye on the clock

During the Test: Multiple Choice

- Look for central idea of question
- Answers with absolutes are **USUALLY** not correct
- Give your own answer first
- Mark every item
- Make an educated guess if needed

During the Test: Essay Questions

- Think before you write
- Start with a direct response to the question
- Mention the topic
- Provide specific as well as general information
- Use the technical vocabulary of the course

During the Test: Problem Solving

- What am I being asked to do or find?
- What do I need to know in order to find the answer?
- What information has been provided that will help me to find the answer?
- How can I break the problem down into parts?
What steps should I follow to solve the problem?
- Does my answer make sense? Does it cover the whole problem?

After the Test

- Review your test
- Analyze items you got wrong
- Look for patterns
- Talk to your professor

Combating Mental Anxiety

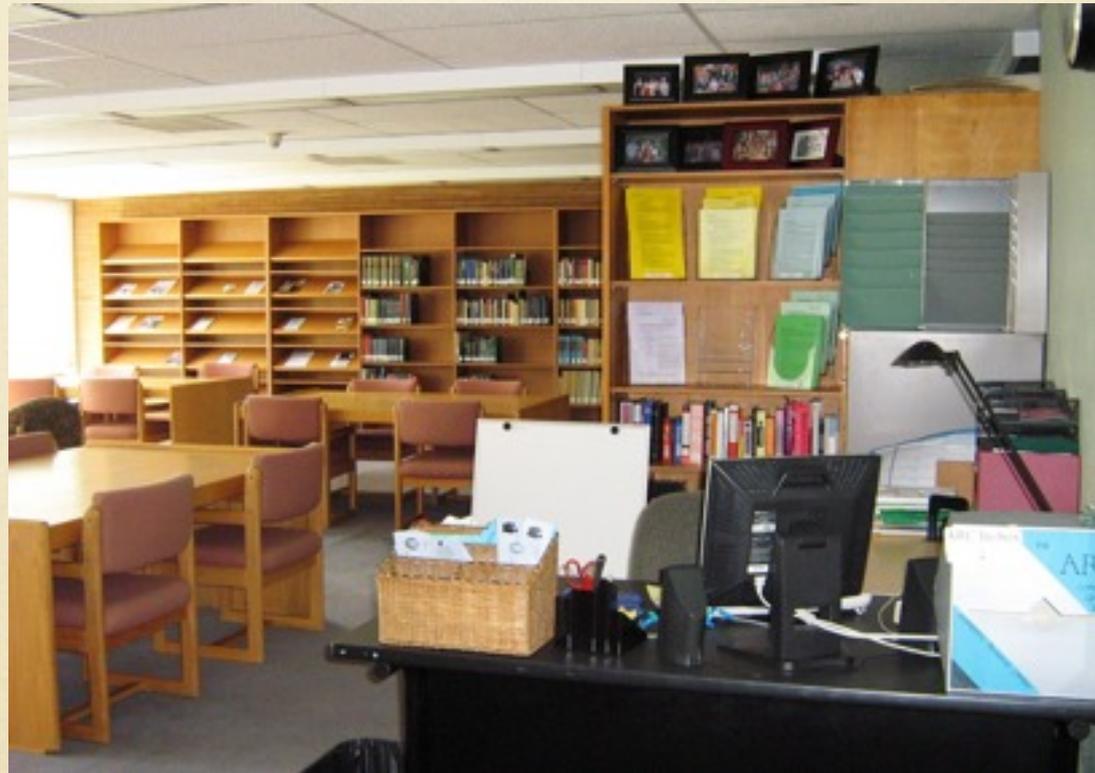
- STOP!
- Visualize success
- Focus on *something*
- Praise yourself
- Put the test into context

Combating Physical Stress

- Breathe
- Tense and relax
- Exercise
- Get enough sleep
- Get help for global anxiety:
Health & Counseling Center

Academic Resource Center

Read. Write. Learn...*Better*



- Open Monday-Thursday, 1-10 p.m., Fridays noon-4 p.m.
- On the 2nd floor of the library
- Go to arc.georgefox.edu for more information

ACADEMIC RESOURCE CENTER



WORKSHOPS

Two Keys to Effective Writing: Thesis Statements and Organization

Wednesday, Sept. 15 at 6:30 p.m. | Stevens 208
Gary Tandy, Professor of English

College teachers will expect your papers to contain creative ideas and deep insights, but they also expect them to be presented in an easy-to-follow format. This session will cover two keys to successful college writing: a clear thesis that unifies the paper and a structure that supports and clarifies that thesis. A checklist will be presented that allows you to evaluate your own paper before turning it in to your teacher.

The Most Common Editing Errors – And What To Do About Them

Tuesday, Sept. 21 at 6:30 p.m. | Stevens 208
Bill Jolliff, Professor of English

Most of us don't worry too much about a writing mistake or two. It's what we have to say that really matters, right?

Well, yes – and no.

The bad news is that too many editing errors can keep our readers from taking us – and our ideas – seriously. The good news is that most of our errors are relatively easy to fix, once we figure out which ones we're prone to make.

In this workshop, Bill will identify the 10 errors that professors are most likely to mark on student work, and he'll demonstrate how to fix them.

Effective Procrastination: How to Use Your Time Well

Wednesday, Sept. 29 at 6:30 p.m. | Stevens 208
Rick Muthiah, Dean of Learning Support Services

College is a place of shifting priorities and competing demands. Sometimes waiting until the last minute enables you to maximize your time; other times, procrastination results in shoddy work and poor grades. This session will address healthy vs. problematic procrastination along with methods for using time effectively to achieve your learning goals.

Using APA Format Effectively

Friday, Oct. 1 at 10:40 a.m. | Hoover 105
Sue O'Donnell, Associate Professor of Psychology

Freaking out because you don't know APA style for citations? This workshop is for you. We'll cover American Psychological Association citation and reference formatting, along with several guidelines for writing in APA style.

How to Get A's on All Your Tests (or at Least Become a Better Test-Taker)

Tuesday, Oct. 5 at 6:30 p.m. | Stevens 208
Rick Muthiah, Dean of Learning Support Services

Do tests drive you crazy? You read the book, did the assignments, studied the night before, and still didn't do as well as you wanted on your test; what else can you do? This session will cover several strategies for improving performance on tests.

MLA Basics

Wednesday, Oct. 20 at 6:30 p.m. | Stevens 208
Gary Tandy, Professor of English

What are the most important elements of MLA style that you need to know to prepare effective papers? This session will cover those elements as well as guide you to other resources that can assist you in mastering this academic style of writing.

Steps to Writing a Successful Research Paper

Friday, Nov. 5 at 10:40 a.m. | Hoover 105
Gary Tandy, Professor of English

Research papers can seem overwhelming, but following a step-by-step, organized approach can make your life much less stressful. This session will walk through those steps and guide you to campus and Internet resources to help make you a research pro.

Using APA Format Effectively

Tuesday, Nov. 9 at 6:30 p.m. | Stevens 208
Kris Kays, Assistant Professor of Psychology

Psychology, nursing, education, and other disciplines often require use of APA style for academic papers. This workshop will cover American Psychological Association citation and reference formatting, along with several guidelines for writing in APA style.

For more information, contact Rick Muthiah,
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Discussion & Assessment

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