

# Test Taking Strategies for Global Campus Students

**KAITLIN HENNESSY:** Hello, everyone. And welcome to test taking strategies for Global Campus students. My name is Kaitlin Hennessy. I'm the program coordinator here at Global Connections.

And our goal at Global Connections is to provide co- and extracurricular programming for Global campus students wherever they live. And tonight presenting for us is James Bledsoe. He is a senior career advisor at the Academic Success and Career Center at WSU.

And as most of you are already doing, please do us chat box throughout the night to discuss the content. You can also submit questions to James, and he answer them at the end of the session. But feel free to pop in at any time.

And if you have any technical difficulties, please do let me know. And I'll do my best to help you. I will be in the chat all night.

My name is Kaitlin Hennessy once again. And I'm going to give it over to James now. Thanks so much for coming.

**JAMES BLEDSOE:** Good evening, everyone. And thank you Kaitlin for that wonderful introduction. Much of what I'm going to present tonight is some of the standard information that we give out in the Office of Academic success and the Career Center.

We are two offices that merged. So we do have the academic support and also career planning. So I'm happy to take this opportunity to talk about some of these things that are very important, as it relates to tips on test taking. So I'll just start with some things. I'll try to answer as many questions as I can, but I want to make sure we get those key points on my PowerPoint here tonight.

So tips on testing. Let's go ahead and get started. And there we go. OK, so just to overview some of the learning goals, or take home, or what I hope you get out of this is number one, a study schedule and how to organize for your college test.

Number two, how to prepare for a college test. And then number three, test taking skills and strategies. So study schedule, test prep, and strategies, OK? Now before we get started with that, I've got to pose a question for everyone. And this will kind of help me later on in the presentation in terms of answering a few questions.

But what issues are you having with test preparation and test taking? Now, you can think about that, and you can type in some questions, again. We'll come back to it from time to time and try to answer as many questions as we can on that. But I want you to be thinking about issues you're having with preparation for test taking and taking the test itself.

So let's get started with study schedule. Again, this is one of my personal favorites. It has to do, I think, with time management.

But when you're talking about a study schedule, let's go over the three points here that are mentioned. Create a separate schedule for studying a test. Number two, start with the extended study times. And number three, plan a review schedule time 24 hours before the test.

Now, let's go back. When you talk about a study schedule, here's my advice. If you know ahead of time when you get the syllabus and you're able to see the timeline in terms of when a quiz, or a midterm, or a really important exam is going to be given, right from the outset of the class, that's your time now to set your study schedule in a way that fits your learning style. So for instance, if you happen to be taking a class that requires a lot of reading and you kind of know ahead of time that the test is going to be a little bit of maybe what's coming from the video lecture, or maybe a lot of it is going to be coming from the reading from the textbook, or the online handouts that you get, what you want to do is think about what I call your reading stamina.

Now, what I mean by reading stamina is on any given night how long are you able to get to read before you're actually kind of tired. So for instance, my daughter, who's a sophomore in college, she can read for four, five, six hours a night, and she never gets tired. So she's able to cover a lot of ground in her reading and her studying. And she may not have to set aside as many nights as I do.

Let's just say I have three weeks to get ready for an exam, and I've got six chapters, long chapters, to read. I probably need all of those weeks to get ready for that, because maybe my reading stamina is about I can do about 90 minutes a night. And so I'm going to have the budget to time so that you want to avoid the cramming and trying to read everything all at the last minute.

You want to extend that time and set aside time every day, so that you're reading at your pace. You're giving yourself a chance to highlight different things in the book, and underline different vocabulary words that maybe you don't necessarily understand, and you could take a few minutes just to look them up. You want to give yourself time to do that. And what might take usually 30 seconds or maybe a minute to read one page, when you're studying you may take four or five minutes to read a page, because there happens to be a lot of vocabulary on the page, terminology related to the subject matter that maybe you've never heard of before. And you could give yourself time to look up that word.

If you come across one or two words in just one paragraph that you don't understand, you probably will lose the entire meaning of that paragraph if you don't know those words. And if you go through several pages and on each page there were two or three words where you've heard of the word before, but you weren't really clear on the definition, again, you could lose three or four pages where you did not get the meaning of it. So now I see someone talks about reading versus studying as an important distinction. And Heather, I agree with you.

You've got to give yourself time to understand the material. So that's kind of what I'm getting at in terms of knowing your own reading pace and what you're able to cover. What you do want to do is avoid cramming. And I'll get back to why you want to avoid cramming here in just a few minutes.

OK, so next create a study plans. So this kind of gets at what I was talking beforehand. Plan at least two hours of study time for every hour you will spend in class. That's a general formula to use.

Again, when it comes to reading, or looking at flashcards, or maybe taking some of the quizzes that are in the back of the book, whatever you're doing to prepare, again, you want to set aside an ample amount of time to do that. And make sure that you're setting goals for each study session, which is the second bullet on the PowerPoint there. So maybe I know ahead of time I'm going to be able to study for this particular exam at least 10 hours, let's say five sessions of two hours.

And in those two hours I want to make sure I'm covering the vocabulary. I'm setting aside time to do some flashcards with a partner. Maybe setting aside 30 minutes to join a study group or maybe online exchange notes online through email. But, again, you want to know exactly what you're going to cover during that study time.

The third bullet talks about studying boring or difficult subjects first. Again, if that fits your style, and you want to be able to kind of get the things maybe that, yeah, it's boring, maybe it's difficult to understand, but then you can spend that time looking up the vocabulary, or looking at things you don't understand, or gathering questions that you want to be able to ask your study partner or ask your professor. Let's get that clear right away. Again, if from the outset if you're able to understand some of difficult material, it makes everything else a whole lot easier to digest and not just commit to short-term memory, but to long-term memory. And that's our goal here is to commit everything to long-term memory.

The fourth bullet there talks about avoiding marathon study sessions, because you can get to a point where you're studying way too long. You're getting tired, and a lot of the material that you're studying is just not sticking. And then the last bullet is being aware of your best time of the day.

I'm going to back up here in just a moment, so I can answer some of these questions. Being aware of the best time of the day, again, a lot of you, I think, have already thought that through. But for me, during my undergrad and graduate work, my best study time was early in the morning, 5 AM to about 9 AM was my best study time. That's when my mind was ready to go.

And that's when the material would stick, whether I was reading, whether I was looking at videos. Whatever study tools I was using, that was the best time for me. Late night after work, that didn't work for me. Midday didn't work for me.

Early morning was the best time for me. And that's when I did my best studying. I'm gonna pause for a minute to see if I can answer some of these questions. Kaitlin, are we do OK on getting some of the questions answered?

**KAITLIN HENNESSY:** We're doing fine right now, James. There was one clarification about how this formula alters to apply to online courses when we don't have classroom time. I suggested that her credit hour the general formula would be you should plan to study at least two times that amount weekly. So if you were in a three credit course, you'd ought to expect to study at least six hours each week.

**JAMES BLEDSOE:** Thank you. Thank you, I agree. Thank you for translating that over.

OK, next we want to talk about where to study. And this is an area that, again, I'm going to do some personal experiences here. But again, I'm going to draw on what I give students-- I've been here now at Washington State University 18 years. A lot of that was in retention counseling.

And so where the study is very important. And cutting to the chase here, if you can find something that has the same environment as a library, that is going to be your place where you don't have the interruptions, where you can reflect on things, and you really want to make sure you take this to heart where you study. Because if you have the interruptions, the phone is going off, the people are knocking at the door, maybe there's background noise, those things are going to be a distraction. And over time, you're not going to be able to digest the information the way that you should.

So for instance, during my undergrad, I would use the ninth floor of the library in a back corner. And I would be there four or five hours a day. It was quiet. It was out of the way.

And if I had questions, particularly when I was doing research or I needed some more background information on a particular topic to help me understand the topic, there was always someone I could go to for help. Maybe looking up a book. Again, you can have study groups in the library if you find a nice quiet space.

I understand that studying quiet may be not fit for everybody. Obviously, there are times when I study with the radio on faintly in the background. I get that.

Getting yourself up to a comfortable, reflective state of mind is what you want to be able to do. So once you're there, you want to make sure you return to that environment and do those things that get you ready to absorb this information. Again, we want to stick away from cramming, so we want to make sure that we use our time wisely.

OK, test preparation. Test preparation. Get yourself prepared by studying. Take a practice test. See which questions you missed and study those questions, so that you're ready for the exam.

Now, I always recommend, especially in those classes where you have a test book or some type of material that gives you at the end of the book, the Class Book or the material, vocabulary words that are important for that chapter, or it gives you a quick little quiz just to kind of review the information that you just read, I recommend that people go through that first. It kind of helps you to anticipate what you're about to read for that chapter or that piece of information that you get. Again, it's important to know the vocabulary word or key words that are important to that chapter and make sure that you just don't grace over them without fully understanding their definition and the context in which they're being used in relation to that academic topic.

And so anything you can do to give you as much preparation, but also confidence in you knowing that the material, you have to do that. So if there's a practice that's available, take the practice test. Take it several times. Take it until you know all the answers, and you can anticipate all the questions like the back of your hand. If there is little study guides to be used, use those.

Again, going back to your study group, and maybe, again, you're using the flashcard method. Again, you can pair up with somebody and do flashcards over, and over, and over until this information is, again, going from short-term memory to long-term memory. You're actually becoming an expert in the subject matter. And that's where you want to get yourself when you're preparing for an exam.

OK, back to test preparation and the environment. If you happen been to be in a situation where you're living with other people or you're sharing a space with other people, taking the time to make sure people understand and know that you're studying, and set the parameters for what you're going to be doing for the next 90 minutes or two hours. Again, avoid noise distractions. Learn to say no.

Now, for me what this means when we say, learn to say no is that a lot of times when you sit down to study there might be that friend, that person trying to get ahold of you through Facebook or through social media and your phone is set for bells and whistles to go off every time someone tries to contact or wants to communicate with you about something that has nothing to do with your subject matter. Those are the things you have to avoid. Learning to say no.

So it's not always a verbal no. It's you know what, I'm not going to have social media access. I'm not going to meet my friend who just asked me to meet them downtown for dinner. It'd be nice to meet for dinner, but I've got to get this study time, because it's the best time of day. Once you agree the best time of day, if that's my best time of day, and I've got access to the environment that I need, and I've got access to the people that can answer questions if I have trouble with my study time, or it may be the time that you set aside to communicate with the professor by email or through video conference, you don't want anything to get in the way of what you set aside to help you get prepared for your exam.

Remember, you're trying to space your time out and use it effectively over a two week, three week, maybe a one month period. All of us are busy. You're busy.

Some of you may be working full-time, part-time, have a lot of other responsibilities. And when you set this time aside to prepare for your exam, it's got to be sacred. It's got to be something you stick to. So that the art of saying no as it relates to your study time is very, very, very important.

So now we get to general tips on test preparation. OK, test prep. Study in short distributed sessions rather than mass practice cramming sessions. I've kind of alluded to this several times that I was going to get back to this topic.

Here's why. When you think about how the brain works, I like to use the analogy it's similar to how we digest food. So I like Subway sandwiches. If I'm going to go get a Subway sandwich, a foot-long sandwich, I'm not going to now take that sandwich, and in one bite stuff it down my throat and just eat that.

That's not how the human body digests food. I will take small bites of that sandwich and do what I need to do and there's a chewing, and swallowing, and making sure it goes down before I get to the next bite. It's going to be in small bites. Small bites, I'm not going to cram that sandwich down.

And in my opinion, and the research that I have done, the brain works in a similar fashion. You can try to cram everything into your brain right a test. You can try to do that. And some of that information you might hold on to.

But it'll be short-term. It won't be for very long. And a lot of that information you won't remember for the test.

So the key is you want to study in a way that commits everything to your long-term memory. You want to master the material as you go in for a test. So that's why it's so important to distribute your time and take small bites. Master small parts of the information before you move on to the next, so that the information is digested.

You can talk about the information. You can write the information. You can display your knowledge in several different ways, because you've committed it to your long-term memory.

Next, begin your study session by reviewing your lecture notes. If the test is comprehensive, review it one unit at a time. Review the text book readings. Reread the textbook introductions, the conclusions, anything that's italicized, the bold face headings. These are all tips in terms of familiarizing yourself with material.

Any time you come across something, I'm going to reiterate this again, anytime you come across something that you don't understand a word, a phrase, a whole paragraph where you

just didn't get it, make sure you highlight, indicate it, rewrite it to make sure you have a chance to find out the definition, or find out the context and how it's being used present that information to your professor, present that information maybe within your study group, online study group, or whoever. Maybe you have a partner that's helping you to study, and you can look up information the together. But making sure that you're looking at all these things, so that you're not just digesting the material, but you're identifying things that you need a little more feedback on.

Also, this last bullet. Review the study guide. Never take a study guide lightly. The more information you can use to give you a different perspective of the information is only going to enhance and broaden your understanding and your perception of the material. Again, this is a process of committing everything to long-term memory.

Now, what if they don't give study guides. A lot of times, you've got to rely on your what I call your inner mentor. You've got to create your own study guide.

And that's what you do within the readings where you highlight different things and underline different things that you feel are key things that you need to understand. And you pull them out of the book, out of the readings. And maybe you look up more information using YouTube, using other books, in your study groups talking about it. But sometimes you've got to create your own study guide, so that you can follow when there's not one study guide being given out.

Maybe in that study group or maybe with a partner you work together, even if it's online through email, the two of you are the three of you to put something together and, again, create your own study guide. When you put two or three heads together, and you identify things that you all feel are important, you can make a really clear and concise study guide that helps everyone in the group. Again, when it comes to making your own study guide, creating outlines and concept maps-- now I prefer creating outlines.

I love to read two or three pages, and go back, and kind of write down what was covered in those two or three pages. Sometimes I'll just write at the top of the book or at the top of the paper that I'm reading, or maybe sometimes when you're getting attachments online there's a highlighting feature where you can cut and paste information to Microsoft Word. And, again, you're basically creating your own outline, but you're highlighting things yourself using the computer tools, again, to highlight those things that are important when you compare them with people in your study group or you're going over these things on a daily basis as you work up to your exam. Again, these are all the things that are going to commit everything to your long-term memory and help you to be able to display your knowledge in multiple ways.

Predict possible test questions. I hate to say predicting, but I would more so say that comes through meeting time or communication with your professor and trying to get a handle on what test format is going to be. And just talking to the professor, even if it's email, the way you ask questions and the way the professor answers those questions, or asking the professor to elaborate on a particular topic, or helping you understand a particular vocabulary word within

or term, when you ask Professor to elaborate, sometimes they're kind of giving a clue as to how the possible test questions are going to be framed. So the more you can get the professor to communicate with you and elaborate on different subjects, the more you get an idea possibly on how these test questions are going to be put together.

OK, after individual review and study, meet with a study partner or group. Have each member bring questions over the lecture and assigned readings. The last bullet there is quiz each other and discuss key ideas for the course. Now, again, sometimes you've got to get a lot of this done online through email or I assume there's different chat rooms where you can form your study groups.

I'm actually taking a few classes online myself. So again, part of a study group is the beauty of it is getting a chance to exchange your notes, exchange your questions, and helping each other to answer the questions. If you get in a regular routine of a study group, and all of you are listening to the lectures online, you're doing the readings, and you've got three or four people meeting in the study group, a lot of times you've got you guys together can't help but have a good idea of what's going to be important in terms of what you need to know for this test or exam.

OK, and then lastly, this bullet about this general tips, get a good night's rest. The quality of your education often depends on sufficient sleep. I'll tell you what, some people might think this should go without saying, but if you're not getting proper rest it affects your thinking process.

It affects your memory. It affects your ability to communicate. It affects your ability to recall information, especially in times when you're a little bit nervous, and stressed, and A little bit of anxiety has set in. So it's very important to get your rest.

I made some corrections recently in my ability to sleep after doing a sleep test. And my sleep is so much better. My thinking is so much clearer. I'm able to remember things and recall things so much better. And there's no doubt in my mind that if you're not able to get the proper rest, you're not going to be able to recall or digest the information properly.

So it's not just about getting good rest right before the test. It's about getting good rest while you set aside that study time. All those weeks that you set aside for study time, you've got to make sure your getting the good rest, so that you're able to digest the information and commit to your long-term memory to be able to recall it when you need it

OK, we're going to continue on with general tips on test taking. Let me get all this out here. Don't schedule appointments immediately after the test. Don't study right up until the test.

Number three, assess your time. How much time is given to complete the test? Let's spend some time here on number three for a moment here.

I'm going to switch over from test taking to say a job interview just to compare. When someone's going to interview me for a job, they tell me right up front, we're going to ask you a few questions, and we have 20 minutes to do the interview. We're going to probably ask you eight to 10 questions.

When you give me numbers like that, I automatically start doing the math. And if I'm to get about 10 questions and you want me to do this interview in 20 minutes, I know I've got about a minute and 1/2 to two minutes to answer each question. Well, the same thing is true when taking a test.

You've got to understand how much time you have to complete the test, how much time you need to answer all the questions, which questions are most time consuming, you've got to be ready to watch the time, so sometimes you've got to put yourself in a position where you can see the time on your computer, or you've got a clock in front of you, so that you can keep track of the time, and also of an understanding of which questions are worth the most points. Now, let me let me say this. I've seen exams before where when you look at it the way it's structured, 10% of the test is going to be vocabulary, matching, or multiple choice, or fill in the blank, and then 90% of the test is going to be essay.

A lot of times what I will suggest is if you can skip the part that's only going to be worth 10% of your score and work on the essay first, because that's 90% of what you're going to do. And then come back and do the other part that's only worth 10%. Again, you want to be careful, and watch the time, and understand how much time you have.

If you have a test that's a lot of essay in terms of you're going to type in your answer, personal statement, or whatnot. And maybe you know that it takes you a little bit of time to read the question, and then formulate your answers, and then actually commit to the typing or the writing if it's a proctor test, so you want to make sure that you understand OK, well, it's going to take me a little bit of time. So I need to make sure. I've only got 40 minutes. I'd better set aside 38 minutes to make sure I get that part of the test done.

So all of this is just strategy, but being aware of how many questions, what type of questions, the point breakdown, and where you're going to score the most points, all of those things are important as it relates to assessing your time. The next important point before I leave general tips on test taking is number four. Carefully read the instructions.

I don't care if it's a quiz, midterm, exam, after you finish your degree if you're taking a national exam, GRE, the LSAT, all of these things are you can lose so many points by not reading the instructions. So every time you click to a new page of questions or you turn the page to a new page of questions, make sure you read the instructions. Don't assume that whatever the instructions we're on page number two, well, page number three looks the same, I assume the instructions are the same.

That is a way to really lose a lot of points, because sometimes the instructions will change. And you might be asked to do one thing like pick all those questions that have terminology that need the same thing. And the page then turns and the instructions are on the same place on the page, and it will say something like now pick those things that are opposite. And you didn't take the time to read that, and now you're going through those questions based on the instructions you read on the page before. So it is important to read the instructions on every single page as mundane as it may seem or tedious, make sure you understand the instructions for each page or each section of a test or an exam.

There are a few more general tips on test taking. OK, jot down any immediate answers or pieces of information that come to mind. Answer questions worth the most points. We kind of went over that. Ask the instructor about any questions that you may have about test directions.

And so again, any time you can communicate with the instructor, even if asked beforehand, to kind of get an idea of how that test is formatted, whatever you can draw from that is just going to be helpful. Going back to number five, jot down any immediate answers or pieces of information that comes to your mind. I'm jotting down things all the time, especially when I'm doing the reading.

I write in my books. I underline in my books. I highlight.

I do whenever I can in terms of identifying information that I'm just not familiar with or identifying information that I know is going to be important. Now, these are things that all lead up to the first test you may have with an instructor. But once you take one test and you kind of know how the tests work, hopefully you'll have another opportunity with the final exam, or another quiz, or midterm, or whatnot to redeem yourself if you didn't do well on the first midterm or exam, and you kind of know how the test is set up now. And so you've got to figure that in to your preparation time and your study time in terms of what you study, and how long you study, and what you prepare for, and making sure that you're ready to execute the next time around you take the test.

OK, number eight. Leave time to redo your answers. Check for grammar, spelling, omitted words, and, again, if you kind of know how much time you have to test and how many questions, sometimes you set up how much time you're going to take to answer each question. But then also figure in a little bit of time to go back and check your grammar and spelling.

So for instance, again, let's say I've got 20 minutes for a little quiz, or a midterm. I've got 20 minutes. And maybe I've got 20 questions. And I figure, OK, that means I've got about two minutes per question before I have to go onto the next one.

But if you want to leave some time for checking grammar, and spelling, and omitted words, maybe you take a minute and 1/2 to answer each question. And each question you finish your game in 30 seconds. And so in that 30 seconds at the end of say at the end of the test, you've now set aside maybe four, five, six, minutes to go back and check your grammar quickly, and

your spelling, and your omitted words. So sometimes you can budget that in when you kind of know how much time you have and how many questions you're going to be to be dealing with.

OK, if there's extra time add to or complete answers. Remember to complete skipped questions. You know, a lot of us have learned over the years to get to the questions we know first, and then go back, and answer the questions that we're kind of having to make an educated guess on.

Just make sure you are checking back for any questions that you skipped. You always got to remind yourself of that. And usually, before I take a test or do an interview, I always remind myself that I'm going to go back. First, I decide I'm going to skip those things that take too much of my time. And I remind myself I'm going to go back and answer those things. I'm not going to leave it out or leave it blank.

And then finally, you may feel more relaxed, and as a result remember more at this point. Sure, when you set aside some extra time toward the end of your test or exam, sometimes it gives you a chance to take a deep breath. Sometimes it gives you time a time to gather your confidence and say, you know what, that wasn't so bad.

Sometimes it gives you a chance to just reflect. And in that reflection time when you're relaxed, sometimes more information comes back. And this is what we're talking about, you can go back and add information sometimes or correct some of the answers that you gave if you're taking that type of test that allows you to go back and make corrections on any thing that you answer.

So in any case, again, that comes with some practice. You don't want to stress yourself out and not give yourself enough time to ask questions. But at the same time, you want to set aside some time to relax and check your work.

Let's review some of the test taking errors that people make and I've seen over the years. Number one, the person did not follow the directions for the test. You know, I've seen people who knew the material, studied the right way, prepared the right way, they are expert in that subject matter, and they just got the directions wrong, and they all their questions come out wrong.

Again, as you go to each section of the test you've got to remember to breathe. You've got to remember to relax. And you've got to remember to read the directions in a way that you know exactly what you're about to do as you answer the questions.

Another common error is did not calculate how much time spent on each question in order to have time to complete all of them. Again, we've talked extensively about that. You've got to know from the get go how much time you have, and how many questions, and quickly be able to designate how much time you're going to spend on answering each question.

Again, once you take a test once with a professor, you kind of understand her style, or his style, or the framework, or how their tests are put together. And so sometimes you've got to go through it just to better prepare the second time around. And just hope that you're not taking a class where there's one comprehensive test at the end, because then you don't have a second chance.

So in any case, make sure you calculating your time correctly. Again, did not read the questions carefully. Again, reading questions carefully comes with being relaxed, and focused, and staying in your confidence. That's what we're trying to get you to focus on, being relaxed when you read the directions and when you're reading the questions.

OK, some more common errors. You did not understand the question, and did not seek clarification from an instructor.

If you have that liberty within how you're taking your online exam or test, if you're able to clarify with the professor if you don't understand the question, take advantage of that option. Sometimes you don't have that option, and that's understandable. I get that.

But sometimes there's no way to get around that, except for going through the test the first time and learning from experience the second time around. And having those questions ahead of time that dialogue with the professor, because a lot of times in that dialogue with the professor, he or she is going to reveal what's important on the test. And you're going to hear some terminology sometime that's going to be on the test.

But you'll hear it ahead of time, and you might not understand it. And that's when you're going to ask, well, wait a minute. Can you clarify that? Can you talk about that a little bit more. That's why it's important to engage the professor in dialogue as part of your study routine as often as you can.

Another missed error, the person wrote lots of words, but did not answer the question. I can use an example where I was to an evaluator for people who were writing personal statements for scholarships, for instance. I'll just use this as an example. And students wrote a lot of words, but they did not answer the question.

A lot of times when you want to make sure the reader or the evaluator knows that you know the material, those first two sentences need to be direct with that terminology that's related to the material, so that right off the bat you're answering the question directly. And then the last one there, the third bullet where people lose points or make errors, their answers were disorganized. And so sometimes when you see a question, you have to take a moment, think about how you're going to answer it, and then answer in a way that you know the person is going to understand what you're trying to communicate.

But never just write your answer without being able to look back and say, you know what, this is not an organized display of my knowledge. So you put in hard work studying, you don't want

to mess it up by not delivering your answer in an organized fashion. Before I move forward, are there any questions, we can take right now, Kaitlin that maybe I can answer directly?

**KAITLIN HENNESSY:** No, we're good now. Thank you, James.

**JAMES BLEDSOE:** OK, all right. Well, these are more test taking errors. Some of these you've heard before, but, again, the handwriting was not legible. But again, sometimes you're typing, so that's not always an error. But spell checks are in order.

OK, another error could be you did not know the subject matter very well. And again, I'm getting back to, all of you probably noticed I used the phrase subject matter expert. Anything that I'm studying or when I'm helping a student to master material, I always talk about subject matter expert, that you want to be studying to what you feel is that you're an expert in this subject matter, in terms of what you just read or what you just listen to on the video.

That you can get to a point where you can repeat it back. You have read the chapter so many times that every time you read a page, as you come to the end of that page, you can anticipate what's on the next page. This is when you know you're committing things to your long-term memory.

And sometimes we don't study to the point where we know the subject matter very well. We don't study to the point where we can write it, we can say, we give can even lecture on it ourselves if we needed to as test takers. You need to be able to get to that point or as close as you can to that point.

Because when you can display your knowledge in multiple ways, that's letting you know it's in there, it's made my long term memory. And when I need to recall it, I'm going to be ready, and I'm going to be confident. I'm not going to talk myself out of that a that I know I deserve, because I put in the study time.

OK, so how to avoid these errors. Again, we've talked extensively about preparing adequately and studying enough. I think if you understand your learning style and you set aside enough time from the outset to get ready, I think will study adequately. We talked about reading the instructions to really stay disciplined in that area. We talked about understanding the question.

Again, sometimes that comes with beforehand, any terminology, any vocabulary that you really don't understand, you really don't know the definition of it, make sure you look it up, so that you know the context of the paragraph or the page that you're reading of the information that you're looking at. Because you just don't want to skip things that you don't understand, because you'll miss the whole point. You'll miss the whole lesson. You'll miss the whole learning targets, the whole learning objective for that material.

Take your time within the allowed limits. Again, if you set aside the right amount of time based on a number of questions and the total time that you have, again, you can build in some relax

time. You can stay comfortable and avoid getting too tense or stressed out as you're studying for something and as you're taking the test.

Make sure you review your test before turning in. That's the last bullet there. Again, sometimes you've got to set aside some time in how you do your time management for the exam, so that you have time to review what you're turning it or what you're hitting submit on if you are taking something online.

OK, we've got a little bit of time. And there's a lot of information here. But I think you all are familiar with the types of tests that you may encounter in your online programs of study, the multiple choice, true and false, fill-in the blank, matching, short answer, and the essay. Let me just say this rather than go through all those slides, hear me on this.

The essay. I learned this in my undergrad, and I have to flunk a course just to come back, and retake the course, and get an a. And the reason when I talked to the professor after hand, because I thought I had studied well. I thought I had written down enough information from the test. The professor told me, Bledsoe, you did not display your knowledge.

And you all have heard me use that over, and over, again. It's been 25 years since my undergrad. This point, this lesson has never left me. An essay is your chance to display your knowledge.

You can never write too much when it comes to an essay or a personal statement. Now, you can write too much if you look at the bullet above that when you talk about the short answer. You can buy too much there.

When you're dealing with a short answer on a test, you want to make sure you get to the point right away. Again, don't write a lot of words that really don't pertain to the answer. Don't worry about developing your answer. Just get right to the point, because remember, it's a short answer.

Matching types of tests, again, you want to do a good job of as you answer things make sure you cross them off, so you don't answer them twice. And make sure you take your time and you make the logical selections. There's not a lot to talk about when it comes to matching, but you've got to make sure that as you see maybe you're matching terminology or vocabulary words, make sure you go through those on the test as you're reading them.

And make sure you restate them in mind what each one of those terms means just to reacquaint yourself and make sure you're on the same page with what it's asking. And then begin to match. OK, make sure you state what each term means. And sometimes that'll help you understand what it's asking you to match it to.

Fill in the blank, there's only one answer. When you read a question on a fill-in the blank-- so for instances, here's the question. A method of research for a psychologist who is studying different age group cohorts cognitive development for 25 years is called.

Well, right away the question is asking me what is a method of research. So maybe this is something where you were given five or six different methods for research. So right off the bat, that's what that question is answering.

Which method of research is for psychologists. And then it goes on the rest of the question. But understand with asking you first before you just try to recognize some things that are in the question and then answer too quickly. So no what it's asking you first before you go directly to put your answer in the blank.

True or false. Again, when you read the question sometimes you can pick up on things in the question that let you know OK, this is going to be a false answer or this is going to be a true answer. A lot of times when the question is asking something that's asking if it's absolute or is asking several different things and it's absolute, sometime that's going to be an easy flag and say, that's usually the cause.

But the bottom line is this, I really don't want to recommend any strategies for how to do true or false. Honestly, when you know the material, you've getting yourself as close as you can to being an expert in the subject matter, true false are usually pretty easy. I know some of us think that professors try to word things to kind of trip us up, but they're wording things in a way, I think, that is trying to assess if you really know the information. So if you've done the right type of studying preparation, true or false and multiple choice hopefully over time are not a problem for you. But the strategy really, in my opinion, for multiple choice and true false types of tests are actually knowing the material ahead of time, so that those answers just jump out at you.

Do any of you experienced burnout in terms of your preparation for studying? OK. I've got yes. Yes. OK.

And do any of you experience-- OK, yes, especially when it's a subject that you don't enjoy. Thank you, Heather. Well, that burnout may signal, without even really through all this, sometimes that burnout has to do with studying too long, trying to cram things in, but you have to get yourself to a relaxed state of mind.

You basically have to convince yourself that you're capable and that everything is going to be all right. You put in the time, everything's going to be all right. But I'll tell you what, sometimes anxiety can trigger burnout. And this is my opinion, again, 20 some years in the business. I'm just going to shoot straight on this.

If you're telling yourself the entire time that you're preparing for it, yes, during your study time, the days that you set aside to study-- If you're reminding yourself, I don't take tests very well. I'm not good at taking tests. I've always been bad at taking tests.

I never really want to take tests. It makes me nervous. It makes me this. It makes me that.

What you're doing is something called internal dialogue. And you're talking yourself out of doing well on a test right then and there. And if you're doing that every day, you're reinforcing that.

And if you're reinforcing it, it's almost like your state of mind is in a dilemma. You're studying, and you're trying to take in the information, but then there's this background voice that's saying, you're not good at tests. You've never been good at tests. You're not going to do well on the test. You're not going to score high enough on the test.

And you've got to know to stop, to cut yourself off when you hear that inner voice or that inner dialogue that's negative. You've got to cut yourself off, and now do something that relaxes you, that's positive. Maybe if it's reiterating positive affirmation, telling yourself it's going to be OK.

Stop for a minute. Play some inspirational music. Look at something inspirational.

Maybe it's a picture. Maybe it's gazing out at the window at the scenery. Maybe it's going for a short drive. Maybe it's going for a short walk.

And while you're walking, you're telling yourself, I can do this. It's going to be fine.

I know what's on the test. I know it's going to be on the test. I'm getting my rest. I'm going to study correctly. I've got to study.

If you do positive affirmations and keep those negative thoughts out, when it comes time for you to sit back down and study again, you're going to get yourself in a state of mind where that information is coming into a relaxed mind, a relaxed spirit, and it's moving itself to long-term memory. So sometimes that's kind of the way you avoid the burnout is not to let yourself get so stressed out about how you're going to perform on the test when you should be concentrating on your preparation and study for the test. And not allowing anxiety to build up.

When you hear that internal voice, cut it off. I'm talking about it it's negative. Cut it off and replace it with positive thoughts, positive feelings, positive emotions, doing things that make you happy, or just rather breathing, drinking water, putting a smile on your face.

But you can do this. This whole thing that we talk about test taking tips and getting ready for tests, this study portion, you can do it. But you have to constantly work on keeping yourself in the right state of mind.

And lastly, before I close, those same things that you do while you're preparing and studying for a test, you've got to do that once the test starts. You can't be five minutes out from a test saying, OK, this is it. I'm going to fail this. I'm not ready.

And all of a sudden that internal dialogue starts up again. You're getting yourself into a state of mind that's ready to now fail the test. And you've got to stay positive with your comments to yourself. Because if you're going to think it, and you're going to say it, then you're going to do it.

So if you think negatively and say things that are negative in your mind, you're going to perform negatively. But if you think positively, and keep yourself relaxed, keep yourself happy and calm, and say things that help you to stay in that state of mind, you're going to free yourself up to display your knowledge in multiple ways. And you're going to score that grade that you truly deserve based on the time that you've put in.

**KAITLIN HENNESSY:** I did have a question on a little more about test anxiety. Specifically, where you have a type of test anxiety where you can study beforehand, but then blank when you're taking the test. Do you have any helpful tips or strategies for helping to deal with that?

**JAMES BLEDSOE:** Yeah, here's what I have used, because first remember I think this thing that type of thing happens to all of us, whether it's a test, whether we're about to go on stage and speak, whether we're about to start a test taking tips webinars. Those types of things happen. And a lot of times all the information that you've taken in, and you that you've studied, sometimes you've got to kick-start the recall portion of your brain.

So you might memorize a sentence ahead of time that directs your thought process. So a better example might be maybe you're taking a early American history exam. You might put a sentence together that has a few details that you've come up with that, that sentence helps you to trigger all this other information that you've been studying.

But sometimes you've got to focus your brain on the topic, on the matter. You've got to do something to kick-start it. So sometimes it's putting that sentence together like, OK, this country was formed in 1776. George Washington was the first president. And it went into civil war in 1861.

Now, that's an odd sentence. But I put that sentence together, because it helped me to now focus on the time period between 1776 and 1861, the formation of the United States and the Civil War that happened. Now my mind is focused.

I've got the time period. I put that sentence together. I memorized it.

And now it's getting me in the right state of mind to display my knowledge. It's almost like giving yourself a cue, your own cue that cues you into the subject matter, to what you're about to do. You've got to have that cue ready.

It might be a word. It might be a sentence, but it's got to pertain to something that makes you think about the material that you've got already locked in here ready to display. You just need something to kick-start the right state of mind for you. Any other questions?

**KAITLIN HENNESSY:** Thank you so much, James.