HOW TO STRATEGICALLY ANSWER MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

Demystifying the “K-Type”
Goal of Presentation

To provide students with strategies on how to prepare for exams and how to strategically answer multiple choice questions.
About Multiple Choice Questions

- Most commonly used objective test question.
- Consists of two (2) parts:
  - Stem (statement or question)
  - Answer Choices (known as distractors or foils)
- Multiple choice questions assess
  - Memory of facts, details and/or relationships
  - Ability to reason (K-Type)
    - Synthesis → Analysis → Application
- Two rules to remember when taking multiple choice questions.
  - Budget Time Wisely
  - Relax and Don’t Panic!
**Study Tips: Active Study Flow Diagram**

**Active Study Techniques:**
- Daily review notes
- Use of note cards/flashcards
- Develop a study schedule
- Develop study sheets for exams
  - Read and condense notes to one-page guides with key points
  - Re-organization will help with recall of content.

**Flow Diagram:**
- **PRE-READ TEXT**
- **GO TO CLASS**
- **TAKE NOTES**
- **ASK QUESTIONS OF INSTRUCTOR**
- **REVIEW & EDIT NOTES SAME DAY AS LECTURE**
- **ASK YOURSELF QUESTIONS**
- **OUTLINE MAJOR TOPICS**
- **READ TEXT SELECTIVELY**
- **DO HOMEWORK**
- **ASK QUESTIONS OF T.A. OR INSTRUCTOR**
- **REVIEW & INTEGRATE**

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MONDAY</th>
<th>TUESDAY</th>
<th>WEDNESDAY</th>
<th>THURSDAY</th>
<th>FRIDAYS</th>
<th>SATURDAY</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8am – 9am</td>
<td></td>
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<td>A&amp;P Lab</td>
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<tr>
<td>9am-10am</td>
<td>Anatomy &amp; Physiology</td>
<td>Biostatistics Drill (9:30)</td>
<td>Anatomy &amp; Physiology</td>
<td>A&amp;P Lab (9:50am)</td>
<td>Anatomy &amp; Physiology</td>
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<td>9:30am</td>
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<tr>
<td>10am-11am</td>
<td>Biostatistics</td>
<td>Biostatistics (10:20)</td>
<td>Biostatistics</td>
<td>Break/Lunch</td>
<td>Biostatistics</td>
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<tr>
<td>11am-12pm</td>
<td><strong>Study</strong>: Biostatistics– Review Notes–Questions</td>
<td><strong>Study</strong>: Biostatistics – Review Notes–Questions</td>
<td><strong>Study</strong>: Biostatistics – Review Notes–Questions</td>
<td>Review A&amp;P Lab Notes (11:15am-12:30pm)</td>
<td><strong>Study</strong>: Biostatistics – Review Notes–Questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>12pm-1pm</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Review A&amp;P Lab Notes</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:30pm</td>
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<td>1:30pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>2pm-3pm</td>
<td>IPPE</td>
<td><strong>Study</strong>: Pharmacy Calculations – Review Notes</td>
<td>Intro to Pharmacy</td>
<td>Immunology</td>
<td>Intro to Pharmacy</td>
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<tr>
<td>3pm-3:40pm</td>
<td>Break!/Travel Home</td>
<td>Study Skill - Library</td>
<td>Break!/Travel Home</td>
<td>Immunology (3:40pm)</td>
<td>Break!/Travel Home</td>
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<td>4pm-5pm</td>
<td>Break!/Travel Home</td>
<td>Biochemistry</td>
<td>Dinner</td>
<td>Biochemistry</td>
<td>WORK</td>
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<td>5:30pm-6:15</td>
<td>Dinner</td>
<td>Break!/Travel Home</td>
<td><strong>Detailed Study</strong>: Biostatistics – Questions</td>
<td>Break!/Travel Home (5pm–6:15pm)</td>
<td>WORK</td>
<td>Detailed Study: A&amp;P – Questions</td>
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<td>6:15-7pm</td>
<td><strong>Detailed Study</strong>: Biostatistics – Questions</td>
<td>Dinner</td>
<td><strong>Detailed Study</strong>: Biostatistics – Questions</td>
<td>Dinner</td>
<td>WORK</td>
<td>Detailed Study: A&amp;P – Questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>7pm-8pm</td>
<td><strong>Detailed Study</strong>: Biostatistics – Questions</td>
<td><strong>Detailed Study</strong>: Pharmacy Calculations– Questions</td>
<td><strong>Detailed Study</strong>: A&amp;P – Questions</td>
<td>Review &amp;Detailed Study: Pharmacy Calculations</td>
<td>WORK</td>
<td>Dinner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8pm-9pm</td>
<td><strong>Detailed Study</strong>: A&amp;P – Questions</td>
<td><strong>Detailed Study</strong>: Pharmacy Calculations– Questions</td>
<td><strong>Detailed Study</strong>: A&amp;P – Questions</td>
<td>WORK</td>
<td>Detailed Study: Biostatistics – Questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>9pm-10pm</td>
<td><strong>Detailed Study</strong>: A&amp;P – Questions</td>
<td><strong>Detailed Study</strong>: Pharmacy Calculations– Questions</td>
<td><strong>Detailed Study</strong>: A&amp;P – Questions</td>
<td>WORK</td>
<td>Detailed Study: Biostatistics – Questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>10pm-11pm</td>
<td><strong>Detailed Study</strong>: Biochemistry – Questions</td>
<td><strong>Detailed Study</strong>: Biochemistry – Questions</td>
<td><strong>Detailed Study</strong>: Biochemistry – Questions</td>
<td>WORK</td>
<td>WORK</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Gr.Tot/Wk</strong></td>
<td>39 Study Hours Per Week (Excluding Sunday)</td>
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**LEGEND:** Review Notes – Form Questions – Contact Professor | Detailed Study – Form Questions – Contact Professor
Multiple-Choice Test-Taking Strategies

- Read question carefully
- **Underline** – **Highlight** – **Circle** important terms.
- **Eliminate!** – **Eliminate!** – **Eliminate!**
  - Get rid of choices you know are incorrect at 1st glance
  - doing so improves chances of selecting a correct answer
- Only change answers if you are absolutely sure the current answer is incorrect – **Don’t second guess yourself!**
- Use time wisely – Pace yourself
- Browse test and determine time to spend on each question.
- Don’t ignore an obvious answer
- Avoid patterns (i.e. selecting “C” just because…)
Type A questions deal with Basic knowledge, factual information and requires knowledge of information (simplest type)

Example:

1. What most frequently causes a tennis player to miss the ball completely?
   a. Swinging too early
   b. Swinging too late
   c. Not watching the ball
   d. Gripping the racket incorrectly

ANSWER: C
Example: Multiple Choice Question
Type B

Type B question focus on application – These questions test knowledge in a specific context and requires more than memorization.

Example:

1. Billy, at age of two months, is very active and wiggles frequently. The findings of a study on the origins of temperamental or constitutional personality differences would predict that
   a. Billy will be very quiet and docile by age 5
   b. Billy will succeed in school
   c. Billy will very likely be active and unable to sit still for long as a small child
   d. Billy will be neurotic

2. How should you analyze this question?
Billy, at age of two months, is very active and wiggles frequently. The findings of a study on the **origins of temperamental or constitutional personality differences** would predict that

a. Billy will be very quiet and docile by age 5
b. Billy will succeed in school
c. Billy will very likely be active and unable to sit still for long as a small child
d. Billy will be neurotic

**ANSWER: C**
Type C (K-Type) require analysis, synthesis and evaluation in order to select an answer. K-Type questions require integration of knowledge and decision making.

Example:

1. A student suffers an injured ankle while running to first base in a softball game. The teacher examines the indicated area. The symptoms are typical of a sprained ankle, although the injury may in fact be more severe. Which of the following steps should be included in the first aid administered to the student?
   I. Elevate the injured leg  
   II. Apply ice to the injured area  
   III. Apply direct pressure to the site of the injury

   a. I only  
   b. II only  
   c. I and II only  
   d. I and III only
A student suffers an injured ankle while running to first base in a softball game. The teacher examines the indicated area. The symptoms are typical of a sprained ankle, although the injury may in fact be more severe. Which of the following steps should be included in the first aid administered to the student?

I. Elevate the injured leg
II. Apply ice to the injured area
III. Apply direct pressure to the site of the injury

a. I only
b. II only
c. I and II only
d. I and III only

ANSWER: C
## Multiple Choice Question Types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type Question</th>
<th>Strategies to Approach Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Complete the Statement</strong></td>
<td>• Carefully read the question stem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Given an incomplete statement that must be</td>
<td>•Eliminate wrong answers immediately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>completed with answer.</td>
<td>•Read the question stem with each answer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>•Make sure your answer choice BEST completes the sentence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Which of the Following</strong></td>
<td>• Carefully read the question stem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Choice of answers limited to answer stem only; although others answers could apply which aren’t listed.</td>
<td>• Insert the answer choices in place of the phrase “which of the following”</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Negative Choices</strong></td>
<td>• “Not”, “Except”, “Least” – These words are often overlooked.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Negative choices are used for questions with several GOOD solutions. BUT there is clearly a wrong answer in the choices</td>
<td>• Carefully read the question stem</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Underline, circle, or highlight the negative word presented in the stem, so that you will select a correct answer.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Think about what choice does not fit</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Keep in mind that you are looking for a negative choice – one that doesn’t belong.</td>
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</table>
The Power of Panic

- A person who panics...
  - Relies on instincts instead of knowledge
  - Lacks an understanding of exam content

- What happens when you panic?
  - Memory is inhibited
  - Ability to focus decreases
  - Tend to overlook stated facts
  - Easily become confused
  - Emotions take precedence over reason
  - Guessing is not strategic
Eliminate to Ameliorate!
(Process of Elimination)

- Process of elimination is the most effective way to improve your chances of selecting a correct answer.

- Eliminating Incorrect Answers
  - Details are important — watch the subtle differences in answers choices. (use question stem to find key text).
  - Answer choices must be logical
    - If reasoning for answer choice is not correct, then answer is not correct.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incorrect Answers…</th>
<th>Correct Answers…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Misrepresent a fact(s)</td>
<td>• State a fact(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ignore the central issue in the question</td>
<td>• Address the central issue in the question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Have faulty reasoning</td>
<td>• Have sound reasoning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Process of elimination is the most effective way to improve your chances of selecting a correct answer.

Faulty reasoning includes:
- Blatant contradictions
- Goes beyond the facts
- Assumes facts in dispute are true

When can a right answer be wrong?
- When the answer choices include an option that is MORE CORRECT <OR> a BETTER OPTION.
The Guessing Game
(intelligent deduction)

- Do not guess until you have eliminated all known wrong answers
- Look at the facts in the question stem
  - What issue(s) stand out?
    - <then> look for answer choice(s) that address the issue(s) presented in the question stem.
- Beware of the following:
  - Distractors or Foils (incorrect answers that appear to be correct)
  - Absolute certainties (always, never, cannot must)
  - If two answers are opposites, one is probably correct.
Good Luck with Your Exams!

Please feel free to contact me if you have a question, comment or concern at lblakley@xula.edu or 504-520-7412.

Dr. Blakley
Director, Student Academic Performance & Support