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Study Skills L1

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Examination Techniques

Introduction

Examinations are not a completely new experience for university students. Throughout their academic journey, students have undergone various forms of assessment that eventually allowed them to reach university. However, despite this experience, many students still struggle with **effective exam preparation and revision strategies**.

A common issue among students is the inability to revise efficiently. Many rely on ineffective methods or repeat the same mistakes, which negatively affects their performance during exams. As a result, students often experience stress, anxiety, and poor academic outcomes.

It is important to understand that **examinations are compulsory** and unavoidable in higher education. They play a crucial role in evaluating students' progress, level of understanding, and academic productivity. Therefore, students must become aware of common pitfalls and learn effective techniques to improve their performance **before, during, and after examinations**.

I. Common Examination Mistakes

1. Procrastination (The “Tomorrow Syndrome”)

Procrastination refers to delaying exam revision until the last minute. This habit leads to:

- A. Anxiety and stress
- B. Mental and physical exhaustion
- C. Panic during the exam period

Effective preparation requires **early planning and consistent revision**, rather than last-minute cramming.

2. Repeatedly Reading Notes Without Understanding

Simply reading notes over and over again does not guarantee comprehension or retention. Passive reading rarely helps information enter long-term memory.

Better alternatives include:

- a) Summarizing information in your own words
- b) Explaining concepts aloud
- c) Using mind maps or diagrams

3. Writing or Typing Notes Repeatedly Without Thinking

Rewriting notes mechanically, without reflection or understanding, is ineffective. If a study method does not produce results, students should **change their approach** instead of repeating the same task.

4. Memorizing Word by Word

Memorizing handouts or lecture notes word for word is a serious mistake. Exams often require students to:

- ✚ Analyse
- ✚ Explain
- ✚ Apply knowledge in new contexts

Pure memorization prevents students from expressing ideas clearly or adapting answers to different questions.

5. Forcing Yourself to Study

Studying under pressure without motivation leads to poor concentration. Instead, students should:

- ✚ Take regular breaks
- ✚ Set realistic goals
- ✚ Use creative and engaging study techniques

6. Boredom During Revision

Feeling bored while studying is completely normal. However, boredom can be reduced by:

- ✚ Varying study methods
- ✚ Studying in groups
- ✚ Using visual aids, quizzes, or flashcards

Making revision dynamic helps maintain focus and motivation.

7. Lack of Time

Many students claim they lack time, but this issue is often linked to **poor time management**. Planning, prioritizing tasks, and creating a realistic study schedule are essential skills (as discussed in previous lectures).

8. Multitasking

Multitasking during revision (using phones, social media, or switching between subjects) reduces concentration and productivity. Students should:

- ✚ Focus on one subject at a time
- ✚ Study in a distraction-free environment

Quality revision is more effective than studying many things at once.

Conclusion

Successful examination performance depends not only on intelligence or effort, but also on using the right study techniques. By avoiding common mistakes and adopting effective revision strategies, students can improve their confidence, reduce stress, and achieve better academic results.

Techniques for a good preparation of exams

There are seven points that needs to be considered in order to prepare well for exams:



Figure 1

1. **Positive Mindset:** Students should develop a positive attitude toward exams and avoid seeing them as a battle or something frightening. Reducing stress and anxiety helps learners think clearly and approach exams with confidence.
2. **Time Management:** Effective time management is essential. Students should divide their study and revision time properly and avoid procrastination. Regular revision throughout the semester, supported by a clear revision schedule, leads to better preparation.
3. **Study Environment:** Choosing an appropriate study environment is crucial. The study place should suit the individual student and be free from distractions in order to ensure concentration and productivity.
4. **Practice Exercises:** Regular practice improves exam performance. Students are encouraged to complete mock tests or “dress rehearsals” by creating their own questions and setting a timer. Practicing in a classroom can also help with place memory. Learners should reflect on key questions such as: What does the teacher expect? What type of questions may appear? What information is most likely to be tested?

5. Supporting People: Seeking support is important. Students should ask teachers for clarification if there are ambiguities before exams. Study groups (two to five students) can also be helpful. Group members can organize sessions in places such as the library, assign a leader to ask oral questions, engage in debates, and encourage one another.

6. Strategic Selection: Students should carefully select appropriate and concise revision materials. Reviewing past exam papers helps them become familiar with the format and types of questions.

7. Diverse Methods: Using diverse study methods enhances learning and reduces boredom. Since modules and exams differ, students should be creative in their revision strategies. Techniques may include flashcards, colours, audio aids, summarizing, recalling, paraphrasing, and highlighting key information.

On the day of exams

- First things first, you need to have slept quite enough eaten healthy to be in a good state of mind.
- You need also to wake up early to arrive early and avoid any jams or unplanned situations that can make you come late to your examinations.
- Check beforehand, your exam time table and room you are going to have your exams on, so that you don't waste time looking for the room.
 - Once having your papers, check you have been given the correct exam papers and check both sides because mistakes do happen.
 - Fill in your personal information, and write your name in each paper.
 - Read carefully the instructions and start with the task or questions you think you know the answer.
 - Reread the instructions in order not to have missed a point or misunderstood the questions.
 - Always use the draft before writing on the exam sheet.
 - Pay attention to 'false friends. When a question seems exactly like one you have studied before, reread it, there might be a trap.
 - Jot down in your draft any ideas that come to your mind to facilitate answering the questions afterwards.
 - Manage your time properly and pay attention to your grammar and spelling mistakes.
 - Do not write everything you know about a topic but rather answer what is required from you.
 - Do not pay attention to students who finish early, they might have not written anything, or they are just rapid writers. Use your time in full.
 - Make sure your paper is well-structured, well written and organized to make the job of the examiner easier to correct and appreciate your paper.
 - Do not hand-out your paper before revising it for another time.

After completing your examinations, it is important to take some time to relax and recover. However, students should also review their performance carefully, identify their mistakes, and work on improving them for future assessments. Acknowledging and rewarding yourself for your hard work is equally essential, as it helps maintain motivation. These strategies can be beneficial for many students seeking continuous improvement.