Study Skills in Action

Managing Test Anxiety

Test anxiety is different from the typical nervousness that usually occurs during tests. It interferes with the thinking process. After leaving the classroom, have you suddenly been able to recall what you could not remember during the test? It is likely that this was a result of test anxiety. Test anxiety is a learned reaction or response—no one is born with it. The good news is that most students can learn to manage test anxiety.

It is important to get as much information as you can into your long-term memory and to practice retrieving the information before you take a test. The more you practice retrieving information, the easier it will be during the test.

Smart Study Strategy

Make Mental Cheat Sheets

No, we are not asking you to cheat! Just prepare as if you were going to and then memorize the information you've gathered.

1. Write down important information on note cards. This can include:
   - formulas
   - examples of problems you find difficult
   - concepts that always trip you up
2. Memorize the information on the note cards. Flash through the cards, placing the ones containing information you know in one stack and the ones containing information you do not know in another stack. Keep working on the information you do not know.
3. As soon as you receive your test, turn it over and write down all the information you remember, starting with things you have the greatest difficulty remembering. Having this information available should boost your confidence and free up mental energy for focusing on the test.

Do not wait until the night before the test to make note cards. Make them after you study each section. Then review them two or three times a week.

The FOIL Method

To multiply two binomials, you can combine the products of the **F**irst, **O**uter, **I**nner, and **L**ast terms.

$(2x + 1)(x - 5)$

$$= \underset{F}{2x(x)} + \underset{O}{2x(-5)} + \underset{I}{1(x)} + \underset{L}{1(-5)}$$
$$= 2x^2 - 10x + x - 5$$
$$= 2x^2 - 9x - 5$$

Special Products:

$(a + b)(a - b) = a^2 - b^2$

$(a + b)^2 = a^2 + 2ab + b^2$

$(a - b)^2 = a^2 - 2ab + b^2$