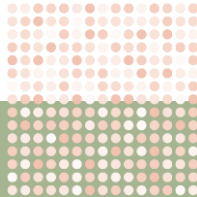


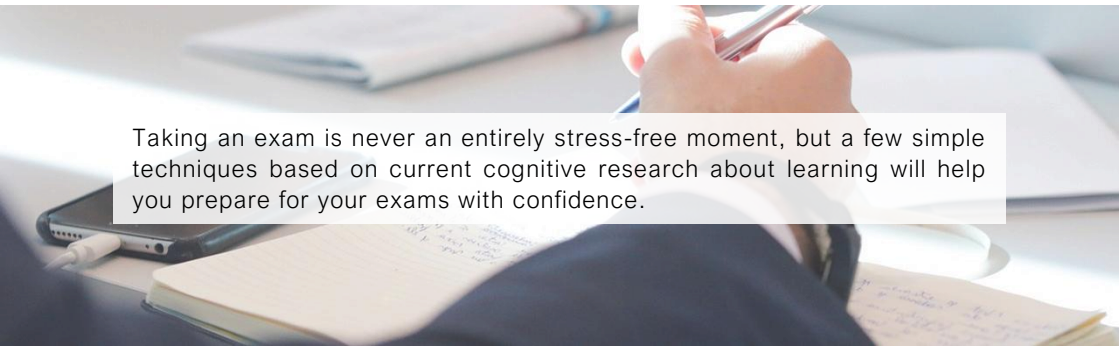


GLION SELF-HELP SERIES

Learning Support



Preparing for exams



Taking an exam is never an entirely stress-free moment, but a few simple techniques based on current cognitive research about learning will help you prepare for your exams with confidence.



WHAT'S THE SECRET?



The secret is to reduce demands on your short-term working memory during your exam.

This will reduce your mental load and feelings of stress.

You will feel calmer and more confident during your exam, and you will perform better.



HOW DO I REDUCE STRESS ON MY WORKING MEMORY



You need to “overlearn” the course material on which you will be tested.

This means you revise and practice the material so much, that your recall of the material from your long-term memory to your short-term working becomes “automatic”.

This “automaticity” reduces the mental effort you need to recall the knowledge and apply it during an exam.



WHAT STRATEGIES WILL HELP ME TO OVERLEARN?

Space out your revision sessions over several weeks.

Revising the same material several times at weekly intervals increases the strength of your recall.

Mix up the topics that you revise.

Your power of recall will be strengthened if you revise different courses in the same sessions, rather than concentrating on one course or class and then another one.

By revising different topics together, you will start to make links between seeming disparate knowledge, your learning will be better integrated and more robust.

Replicate: revise by doing the same type of task or activity that you will be asked to do in the exam.

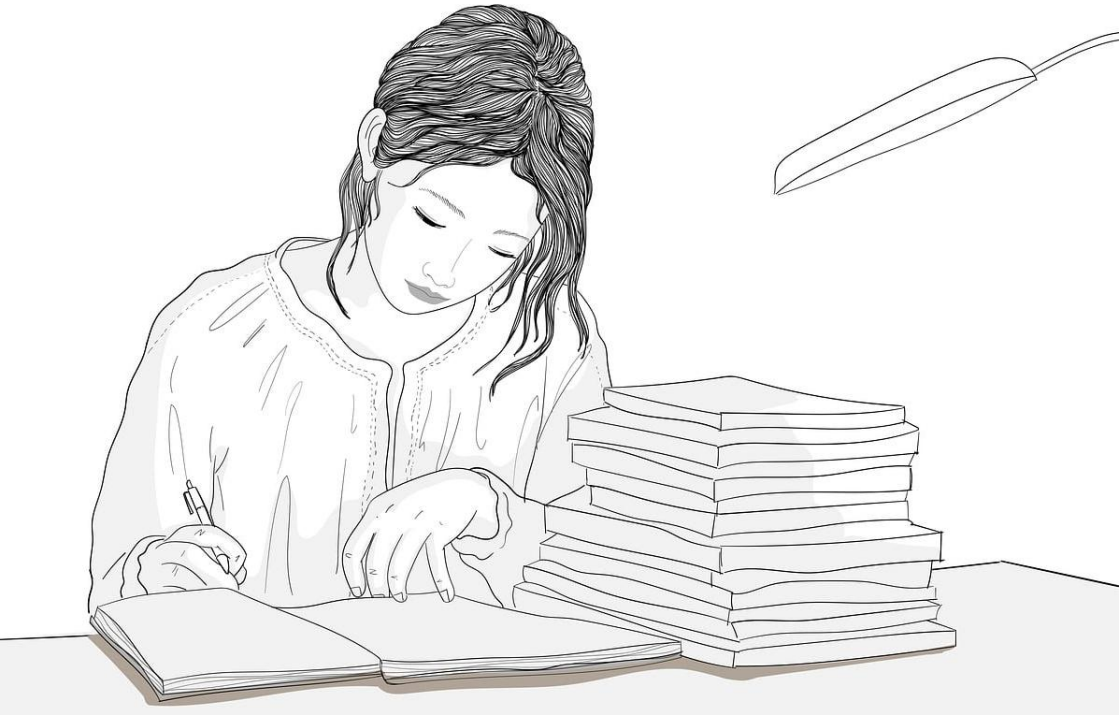
This replication of exam conditions will prepare your mind and memory to function effectively during your assessment.

Learning a teacher's PowerPoint presentations or highlighting text is not an efficient way to prepare for an exam.



CONCLUSION

Regular revision sessions, revision by applying the knowledge you need to learn (use the knowledge to do something, do not simply try to memorize it) and mixing up the topics as you revise are all proven techniques to prepare for exams. Learning is hard work, but it is worth the investment of time and effort!





REDUCING TEST ANXIETY



It is normal to feel some tension before any challenge or test.

A healthy level of stress helps us to focus fully in the moment, to concentrate our mental and physical resources and so to perform to the best of our ability.

Unfortunately, too much stress or anxiety prevents us from performing optimally, it blocks us, we freeze, we forget.

However, there are ways to reduce to stress before or during a test or examination and thus improve performance.



ACCEPT



Accept that a certain level of stress is helpful.

Use your stress to motivate you to work, to prepare.



PREPARE



We feel the most stress during a test when we know we have not adequately prepared for the test.

Put the dates of assessments in your calendar / diary.

Make sure you know exactly the content you will be tested on.

Make sure you know how you will be tested (what type of question or task you will have to complete).



SPACE OUT STUDY SESSIONS IN TIME

You learn more when you study for several sessions spaced out at regular intervals rather than one long session.

This strengthens the powers of recall you will need during the test.

You should schedule one revision session per week in the weeks leading up to the test.

REPLICATE THE TEST FORMAT TO REVISE

Reading a teacher's PowerPoint or highlighting text in a course book is not an effective way to revise or learn.

Usually, it is a waste of your precious time.

You will prepare much more effectively for the test if you use exactly the same tasks that you will be asked to do in the test.

If the test has multiple choice questions, then create your own questions, if you have to write short answers in the test, then revise the material by writing short answers, if you have to analyze a financial report, then practice this skill.





OVERLEARN



The more you revise and practice something, the less mental effort you need to recall it from your long-term memory to your short-term working memory and apply it.

During a test, this reduction in mental effort will decrease your stress level and induce a feeling of calm and confidence.

So however well you think you know something, practice recalling it and applying it again and again.

This investment of your revision time will pay off in the test.



LEARN FROM A DISAPPOINTING PERFORMANCE



Successful business leaders, sports people, students reflect on why they have underperformed and then implement actions to improve.

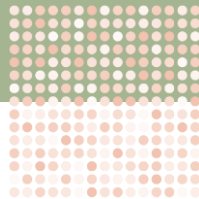
This reflection can be a painful process, but by deciding to take action you will regain a feeling of control, confidence and this will reduce your anxiety during your next test or challenge.



SEEK SUPPORT



If test anxiety continues to weaken your performance, ask for help from learning support or the campus health advisor.



Contact us

THE LEARNING SUPPORT TEAM

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THE LIBRARY & INFORMATION SERVICES TEAM

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