



# LEARNING DEVELOPMENT

## Multiple choice exams

### Overview

- Purpose of multiple choice examinations
- Strategies for success in multiple choice examinations

### What do multiple choice exams test?

- Recognition of information
- Application of knowledge to specific contexts
- Breadth of knowledge and understanding of the subject

### How do multiple choice exams test this?

- Questions are quick to answer
- Many questions can be asked
- It will test your ability to identify correct answers under time pressure

### Common misconceptions about multiple choice exams

- The correct answer is usually 'c'
- You can alternate 'true' and 'false' to pass
- You can't study for multiple choice exams

### Reality

- It takes skill to perform well
- You need to study strategically
- You need to be very sure of what you know before you sit the exam
- Different types of questions can be used to elicit the correct answer

### What question types are used?

- Odd one out  
You need to choose the only correct answer from a series of options
- Most accurate  
You need to choose the answer which most closely aligns to your understanding of the course content and theory.
- Cloze format  
A sentence is given with a missing word or words and you need to choose the most appropriate answer

### Studying for the exam

- Must achieve maximum breadth, but not too much depth
- Read & summarise:
  - all lecture notes
  - relevant chapters from textbook and/or prescribed readings.
- Work through past papers if available
- Don't do extra reading into one topic area that interests you

### 24 hours before exam

- Quick revision
  - Summary cards, diagrams, mnemonics
- Prepare exam pack
  - What will you need?
- Have some time out
- Eat and sleep well – the most important!

## In the exam room

- During reading time:
  - Quickly skim through entire test
  - How much time can you spend answering each question?
    - E.g. 2 hour exam with 80 questions = about 1.5 minutes per question.
- Check marks allotted against time available
- Read instructions carefully
- Fill in the bubbles correctly – if you make a mistake rub it out completely otherwise the computer could mark the answer wrong (or the entire exam might need to be hand-marked holding up your results)

## Completing multiple choice exams

- First, cover options, think of answer
  - Select option that most closely matches your answer
- Underline key words and phrases
- Read stem with each option
  - Treat each option as a true-false question, and choose the “most true”
- Read questions accurately:
  - E.g. “which of the following is **not** an example of...”
- Use hints from questions you know to answer questions you do not
- Only change first answers when sure, or other cues in the test cue you to change
- Watch for modifiers and qualifiers
  - *always, never, none, must, without exception* = no exception (*tend* to be incorrect more often)
  - Rarely, usually, seldom, some, sometimes, frequently, often = some exceptions

## Strategic thinking in multiple choice exams

- Be quick: don't over-think answers
- Eliminate obviously wrong answers
- More qualified answers are *more likely* to be correct than less detailed, absolute answers
- Don't assume there are trick questions
- Do not assume a proposition is false just because it is unfamiliar (and vice versa)
- All questions should be related to your course
- Try to avoid 'distracters' (false answers)
- Don't know the answers? Guess only if no penalty for wrong answers

- Process of elimination
- Grammatical inconsistencies (sentences make sense?)
- Repeated words

The apparent *distance* hypothesis explains...

*B) The distance between the two parallel lines appears...*

## Stressed?

- Know that you have prepared as well as you can
- Maintain healthy lifestyle
- Think positively
- Allow plenty of time to get there
- Sit quietly and breathe
- Don't talk to friends about the exam before you go in

## Good luck!