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**University Learning Center:**

**Crash Course Study Skills #8**

**Test Anxiety**

Created by Megan Miller

**Overview of the Online Academic Makeover Workshops**

Thank you for taking an interest in the Online Academic Makeover Workshops! The University Learning Center at California State University, Fullerton is passionate about helping students learn how to learn. The goal of the online workshops created by the University Learning Center is to help students understand the value of fundamental concepts that are vital to student success throughout the college experience. In addition to the high impact practice of peer-to-peer tutoring, the online workshops enable students to learn student success secrets virtually anywhere at any point throughout the academic year.

To better support student learning, a workshop packet accompanies each online workshop. Each packet has a pre-reflection, guided notes, and a post-reflection. We encourage students to answer the prompts of the pre-reflection before viewing the workshop video. There are no correct or incorrect responses since the pre-reflection serves as a tool to help the workshop participant to consider themselves and focus on the workshop content that is most relevant to them. The guided notes are intended to help the workshop participant focus on the big ideas presented in the videos. Additional notes are recommended! The workshops are most effective when participants create meaning for themselves. The post-reflection is meant to be completed after the workshop video has been viewed. This section allows the workshop participant to check and see if they understood the main ideas from the workshop and make more personal connections while considering ways to apply what was learned.

The University Learning Center appreciates your interest in our online workshop series, and we hope you learn something new!

Happy Learning!

**The University Learning Center Team**

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**Test Anxiety Online Workshop Pre-Reflection**

1. What does test anxiety feel like? Please explain.
2. What causes students to feel anxious about tests and exams?
3. How can you reframe the way you think about tests and exams?
4. What do you want to learn from the Test Anxiety Online Workshop? What questions do you have about test anxiety?

**Test Anxiety Workshop Guided Notes**

* Tests and exams are battles all their own, and they often come with feelings of anxiety
	+ Thesefeelings are normal
* If you’re doing work that is important to you, you will always feel some amount of anxiety
* Anxiety is an indicator that what you are doing is important
* Too much test anxiety can hurt you
* High-pressure situations can deplete your working memory
1. **The Three Big Fears**
* The next time you go into a test where you are anxious, take out a piece of paper and spend a couple of minutes writing out exactly what is causing you to feel that way
	+ This has been proven to reduce test anxiety
	+ This allows you to take all these worries out of your head and store them somewhere safe
	+ By writing them down, you unload those worries into an external system you trust
* You free up mental resources that you can then devote to doing well on the test
1. The Fear of Repeating Past Failures
* Failure is inevitable occasionally

**Negativity bias**: a tendency to remember and give more emotional weight to negative experiences rather than positive ones

* Any negative event can create feelings of apprehension and fear when it comes up again
* You are not defined by your past successes or failures
* At any time, you can choose to do things differently than you did in the past
	+ Analyze your past mistakes
	+ You can only improve if you know what you were doing wrong before
* Review your past exams to see how you can improve
	+ Look over your past exams
	+ Ask for feedback from your instructors
	+ Review the mistakes you made
	+ Make sure you know what the right answer was, and why it was right
	+ Cross-reference the question with your notes
		- Overall, shoot for mastery
* You also need to figure out why you made the mistakes in the first place
	+ “Was I prepared?”
		- “Why was I unprepared?”
* If you feel you were prepared, maybe something went wrong during the exam
	+ You may have rushed through
	+ Made careless errors
	+ Maybe you let time get away from you
* Remember that failure is a great teacher- and it’s a better one than success
1. **The Fear of the Unknown**
* People naturally fear what they don’t understand
* Try to gain as much experience with the upcoming exam as you can
	+ Replicate the test conditions
	+ Access practice tests and study guides
	+ Create quizzes
	+ Spend time studying in a classroom that looks and feels like the one you’ll be tested in
	+ Study with the same time constraints
1. The Fear of the Stakes
* One of the biggest sources of test anxiety is the feeling that this test means everything
* You are rarely going to come across a test or situation that you can’t recover from in the case that things go wrong
* Try reframing the test in your mind
	+ Think of it as another learning opportunity rather than a judgement
* Active recall strengthens your mastery over the material
* Anxiety isn’t something you always need to try and deal with on your own
	+ If you have anxiety that is affecting your life, don’t hesitate to ask a professional for help

**Test Anxiety Online Workshop Post-Reflection**

1. What did you learn from the Test Anxiety Online Workshop?
2. What was something from the Test Anxiety Online Workshop that surprised you or you found to be the most interesting?
3. Which of the concept, method, or technique discussed in the Test Anxiety Online Workshop do you think you would benefit the most from? Why?
4. Describe how you will apply what you learned from the Test Anxiety Online Workshop.