



## Professional Development Institute

### Flex Course Syllabus

## Improving Your Students' Test Taking Skills (2-12)

**PDI Course Number: 30T03**

**UCSD Course Number: EDUC41458**

If you would like information about receiving post-baccalaureate (graduate) credit for completing this course, [please click here](#).

### Course Timeline

Participants have one year to complete the course. Participants must spend a minimum of three weeks in this course.

### Course Description

Are you looking for strategies to help your students prepare for the rigors of high-stakes testing? This online course is designed for teachers in grades 2-12 who are interested in learning how to improve their students' test-taking skills. Teachers will learn how embracing a growth mindset contributes to students' metacognitive and problem-solving skills. Teachers will also explore several time management techniques that are designed to help students make the most of the testing time frame as well as their study time. Specific problem-solving strategies such as test cues, word parts, and strategic guessing are discussed, specifically as they relate to building students' problem-solving skills and boosting their comprehension. Techniques for using mnemonics and other memorization techniques are also shared. Teachers will also explore a variety of test formats to better help students become more test-wise. Specific test-taking strategies are explored in an effort to help students improve their standardized test scores, causing them to feel more confident answering all types of questions including essay, multiple-choice, short answer, and even performance-based tasks. By the end of this course, teachers will feel more confident in their quest to better prepare their class with the necessary tools so that their students can become effective and engaged test-takers and lifelong learners.

## Educational Outcomes

1. Teachers will learn nationwide and statewide curriculum standards.
2. Teachers will learn the history of standardized testing.
3. Teachers will understand how the Common Core Assessments impact state standardized testing.
4. Teachers will learn standardized testing concepts.
5. Teachers will learn how to interpret standardized test scores.
6. Teachers will learn about growth mindset including how it benefits the test-taking process.
7. Teachers will learn specific strategies for using metacognition in an effort to prepare their students to perform well on tests.
8. Teachers will learn a variety of instructional strategies aimed at increasing students' problem-solving skills in an effort to help them do well on tests.
9. Teachers will learn how to nurture students' self-efficacy so that they can become effective and engaged test-takers and lifelong learners.
10. Teachers will learn a variety of instructional strategies to help students study smarter, not harder so that they can become lifelong learners.
11. Teachers will be introduced to the components of time management, and they will learn why time is such an important factor when taking tests.
12. Teachers will be given several student time management tips and will learn a variety of instructional strategies to help students manage their time well.
13. Teachers will learn strategies aimed at helping their students efficiently manage their time during tests.
14. Teachers will learn what it means for a student to be "test-wise" and they will be introduced to several tips to help their students become test-wise and test-savvy.
15. Teachers will understand the different types of test formats.
16. Teachers will learn test study techniques in order to prepare their students for written responses and objective tests.
17. Teachers will learn a variety of memorization techniques, including how to incorporate them into the study process.
18. Teachers will learn instructional strategies for helping their students become better test-takers, especially when faced with having to "guess."
19. Teachers will learn about the various "cues" often embedded within test questions, and they will understand how to help their students recognize them.
20. Teachers will become familiar with the importance of word parts and how to help students learn them.
21. Teachers will learn ways to prepare students for standardized testing.
22. Teachers will learn ways to prepare students for taking an essay test.
23. Teachers will learn ways to prepare students for taking an objective test.
24. Teachers will learn ways to prepare students for taking a performance-based test.
25. Teachers will be introduced to several sample standardized test battery categories and questions.
26. Teachers will be introduced to several instructional strategies in order to guide their students to do well on exams.
27. Teachers will learn how to review material as a class before an exam.

28. Teachers will better understand their role in the success of students' performance on standardized tests.
29. Teachers will learn the important information they must know ahead of end-of-year testing so that they are prepared and can best prepare students for success.
30. Teachers will learn specific methods for teaching students how to take an essay test.
31. Teachers will learn to guide parents to help their children prepare to take standardized tests.

## **Instructional Media**

- Online Discussions
- Online Engagement
- Online Collaboration
- Instructor Feedback
- Instructor Interaction
- Online Resources and Websites
- Supplemental Instructional Materials
- Printable Classroom Resources

## **Evaluation**

- Test #1 (5% of final grade)
- Test #2 (5% of final grade)
- Test #3 (5% of final grade)
- Test #4 (5% of final grade)
- Test #5 (5% of final grade)
- Autobiography and Goals for the Course (10% of final grade)
- Article/Video Reflection (15% of final grade)
- Course Collaboration/Share Ideas with the Class (10% of final grade)
- Cumulative Assignment/Project: Create Tests with Cues (20% of final grade)
- Culminating Practicum (20% of final grade)

## **Topical Outline**

### **Unit One**

- Introduction to Curriculum Standards
- The History of Standardized Testing
- An Introduction to Standardized Testing
- **Assignment #1**

- *Write an autobiography including information about yourself, your grade level and what you specifically hope to learn about improving your students' ability to take tests. Your autobiography should be a minimum of three paragraphs.*
- **Test #1**

## Unit Two

- Growth Mindset
- Metacognition and Problem Solving
- Creating Effective and Engaged Lifelong Learners
- **Assignment #2**
- *As an educator, it is important to be aware of the research, studies, and professional work done in the field. In the course, you will find an article and video that are relevant to the specific course content. Read the article and then write an essay with your thoughts.*
- **Test #2**

## Unit Three

- Time Management for Better Test Taking
- Understanding Test Formats
- Teaching Test Study Techniques
- **Assignment #3**
- *Online Discussion Board Participation/Engagement: Please post a tip, strategy, or idea that specifically relates to improving students' test taking skills and will make a difference to other teachers in their own classrooms. Your assignment should be a minimum of three paragraphs and detailed enough for another teacher to easily follow. This is a great opportunity to share and collaborate with other teachers at your grade level around the country. Take time to review and respond to other postings that are relevant to your classroom population in order to gain effective ideas to use immediately in your classroom.*
- **Test #3**

## Unit Four

- Teaching Memorization Techniques
- Teaching Guessing Techniques
- Test Cues and Word Parts
- **Test #4**

## Unit Five

- Success Strategies for Standardized Achievement Tests
- Success Strategies for Essay Tests

- Success Strategies for Objective Tests
- Success Strategies for Performance-Based Tasks
- **Test #5**

## Unit Six

- Sample Standardized Test Battery Categories and Questions
- Preparation Activities
- Preparing Students for “High-Stakes” Exams
- **Assignment #4**
- *Review the test cues presented throughout this course and consider additional examples that you may have seen on standardized tests. Then, create two tests on subjects you have recently taught. The tests should be formatted as true/false, multiple choice, or a combination of both. Ask at least fifteen questions for each test. Within those 15+ questions, at least ten of them must contain a test cue and you MUST provide an answer key that includes both the answer and the test cue that was used, if applicable. Additionally, out of the list of 15+ questions (for each test), you MUST include at least one example of each of the nine varieties of test cues, as presented in Unit Four of this course. (Please note that not every question must contain a test cue, but at least ten of the questions — for each test — should. Additionally, nine of those test cues — for each test — must be different from one another.) Challenge students to spot all the test cues. Keep in mind that this assignment is a cumulative project and therefore, you are expected to demonstrate the knowledge you gained from the course and your ability to apply what you have learned in a practical setting.*
- **Assignment #5**
- *The culminating practicum is a three-step process. (1) In the first assignment, you were asked what goals you had and what you hoped to learn from the course. Think back to your original goals for this course. Write a minimum two-paragraph reflection specifically describing how what you learned can be used to help you reach those goal(s). (2) Next, write a minimum three-paragraph plan that specifically describes the ways in which you intend to implement a particular strategy you learned in this course into your own teaching situation. (3) Last, write a minimum two-paragraph reflection describing a student you have or have had in the past. Then, discuss how the strategies you learned in this course will specifically benefit that student as you put your plan into action.*

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