Test Taking Tips Help Students Earn the Scores They Deserve

by Joseph Zodl, TFS Author

I teach adult learners in evening classes who are mostly reentry students. When testing, using traditional methods such as multiple-choice or true-false questions, I ensure they are aware of good test-taking strategies. I emphasize the following suggestions when answering typical objective-style test questions. Here are some of the tips I share with my classes:

True/False Question Strategies

▶ If a statement is always and inevitably true, then it is true. If you can think of even one reasonable instance when it is false, then the answer is false. Example: The sun always shines in Phoenix. (T) (F)

▶ If the main clause of the statement is determined to be false, dispense with the rest of the statement as it's now irrelevant. Example: The sun always shines in Phoenix because of its geographic relationship to the equator. (T) (F)

Multiple-choice Questions Rules of Thumb

▶ If unsure, determine if there are one or more possibilities that are definitely incorrect. Eliminate them.

▶ From the remaining possibilities, determining the correct answer will be easier.

- ▸ It's odd, but many times the old saying that recommends answering choice C is still a truism.
- ▸ Often your first answer choice is correct; look over your selections for obvious errors, but don't second guess yourself and start changing answers.

General Points to Consider

- ▸ If you're stumped on a question (for the time being), go to the next one.
- ▸ Guess if necessary. Don't leave an answer blank unless the scoring system being used penalizes the test taker for guessing.
- ▸ Think in terms of concepts: Always, sometimes, never. Is it always true? Is it sometimes this way? Does it never apply?
- ▸ For proper credit, circle the correct answer. (When I haven't said this, I have had people cross out the incorrect one or "X" the correct answer, giving me 25 test papers each one with a different key to decipher.