Test-taking Skills: Recall Test Questions

Recall Questions require you to retrieve information from your memory to answer correctly. Recall test questions are typically more difficult than Objective Questions (see handout) since they do not provide you with any clues you can recognize as accurate. Also, recall questions require higher level of thinking and processing information. Types of recall questions include listing items or steps, definitions, and short answer questions.

General tips for recall test questions are:

- Study course terminology
- Determine the number of words required in the sentence
- Use essential test-taking skills (12 Essential Test-Taking Skills handout)

Below is a more detailed look at the strategies for specific types of recall questions.

**Strategies for Listing Questions**

1. Predict Listing questions when you study.
2. Identify Questions as closed or open-ended
   - Closed Questions – require specific answers, sometimes in a specific order.
   - Open-ended Questions – variety of possible answers.

**Strategies for Definition Questions**

1. Predict and study for definition questions. What key terms should you know the definitions to?
2. Practice writing definitions with three levels of information
   - Name the category associated with the term – in what chapter can this definition be found? What is the big picture?
   - Give the formal definition – course-specific definition
   - Expand the definition with one more detail.
3. Study examples of weak and strong answers

**Strategies for Short Answer Questions**

1. Pay attention to and circle direction words (what is required of an answer?)
2. Pay attention to and underline key words.
3. Make a mental plan or a short list of key ideas.
4. Write a strong, focused opening sentence.
5. Expand your answer with details.