

by Dony Sukardi

Effective Studying Techniques for Exams

Edited by **Al Marzuki Anuar**
Layout by **Janice Huang**

Photo: libraries.idaho.gov

Exams are probably one of the scariest things for most students.

You are expected to recall all the knowledge learned over the semester, carefully structuring answers in a limited amount of time. Here are a few effective techniques to help you prepare for your exams.

What to Study?

- 1.** Exam tips provided by lecturers. Sometimes provided explicitly at your last lecture, but most of the time implied implicitly throughout the entire semester. Do get hold of them!
- 2.** Past exam papers. They are very helpful as they give you a picture of the exam structure and difficulty level of the questions asked. Moreover, they usually also reveal trends.
- 3.** Revision papers and/or classes. Not to be missed.
- 4.** Tutorial papers, lecture notes, essential text books. These materials form the bulk of knowledge required to excel in the course. Do read through them and make notes. Be sure to attempt some exercises early-on to cement the reading.
- 5.** Tips from seniors. Get seniors' thoughts on past papers and tips on what to focus on.

How to Study?

- 1.** Rewrite notes using your own words and style (e.g. mind maps). This will help absorption as you think about what you are writing. Moreover, referring to your own written expression quickens memory recall.
- 2.** Use tools such as highlighters, Post-its, and flash cards. In some cases, such as describing processes, drawing diagrams are helpful for visualization.
- 3.** Use different colors while writing your notes to help you identify and associate various parts of the contents.
- 4.** Concepts first. Try to understand the key concepts of the subject that you are currently studying before jumping into the details. It can be easier for you to understand and appreciate the details.
- 5.** Study the right way. The key to effective studying is clear understanding and good grasp of concepts plus the ability to apply them. For numerical subjects, spend more time working on questions than reading through. It also helps you to pick up speed in answering. For theoretical subjects, refer to essential reading and try to relate to practical, 'real-world' applications. Do not attempt to memorize without understanding.

Surviving Your Exams
is an initiative brought to you by
the SIM GE Scholars

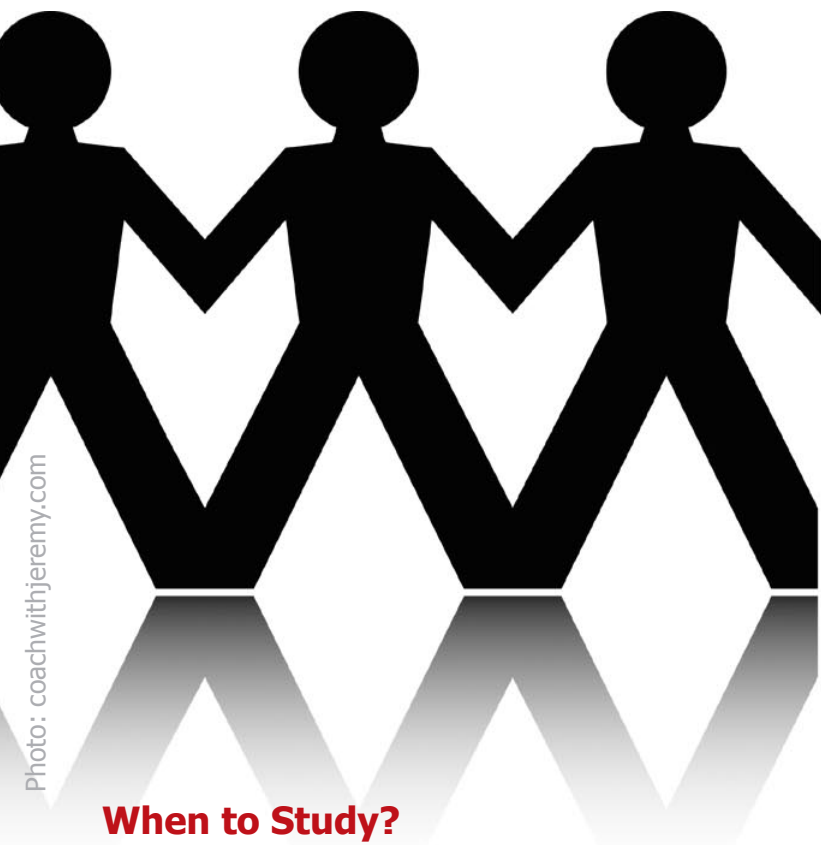
6. Repetition can help. Repeat your revision in all areas until you feel confident about it. This applies particularly to harder topics, hence the need to begin earlier.

7. Spend some study sessions in groups. It provides the opportunity to raise questions and share knowledge. Trading questions benefit both the enquirer and the answering party. There are chances that some questions asked are those you have never thought of.

3. Find the right hours for your mind and body. Do not force-study when fatigued, as low absorption wastes time and worsens your condition.

Where to Study?

1. Choose the appropriate environment. How and where do you study best? Do you prefer studying with music or without? Avoid locations with excessive distractions that can promote procrastination.



When to Study?

1. Start early. Last minute 'cramming' rarely helps with exam effectiveness. When you start early, you have plenty of time to go through all the reading and practicing materials. It also gives you time to ask questions about anything that you do not fully understand.

2. Adopt consistent study. Seize as much opportunity as possible to study, be it short or long sessions. By gradually and consistently building on revisions, you can end up with better perception of the materials.



The Ultimate Study Tip

The ultimate study tip lies within the classroom. By being an active learner during lectures and tutorials, you will find studying more fun and manageable. Be attentive. Be participative. Raise your hand, ask key questions, and participate in discussions.

Most importantly, be responsible for your educational exploits, make the effort to learn, and the exams could be much less of a burden than you think.

