

Alright, so welcome. I'm going to walk through the PowerPoint with you. Some of this stuff that I'm going to cover is, is very basic. So bear with me. What I really try to do with this workshop is to hit some different areas of test-taking so that each of you can take at least something away from this workshop that's gonna help you perform better. We used to call this test anxiety, and that's, that's done by somebody else. I really wanted to move away from test anxiety and really look more at what are some things that students do and sometimes do not do, that I see as an instructor that make a difference on how people perform on tests. So I'm not currently teaching undergraduate courses, but I have taught a number of undergrad courses at UCA for about 20 to 25 years. So I've got a lot of experience with working with students, with looking at certain things again, that students do and don't do that really sometimes make a difference. Now, you don't have to laugh. It's not necessarily funny, I think it's funny. There's two reasons for this kind of slide. One is a lame attempt at humor. Two, is to make a point that you're going to hear me make a couple of more times during this presentation. And the point is, always put some kind of answer. Never leave anything blank. Even if you don't know the answer, you're lost. You don't remember covering this. I've had students write well, you tell me not to leave this blank, so I'm just going to be honest with you. I don't remember this material. Alright. Do do they get something at probably would give somebody at least 1. Now, is that a lot? No, of course not, out of five points no, but again, it's one more point. And any of you that struggle with taking tests, I mean, to be honest, even for most people that do better on tests, tests suck. I mean tests are a pain. College would be so much more fun if we didn't have Exams. They make a lot of people anxious. Sometimes there's a lot of, you know, there's, there's some exams are easier, some are harder, some material is more difficult. So again, I want to emphasize that. And Marvin has heard, heard me say this semester after semester. And the phrase is, if you don't write anything, you'll get nothing. If you leave a question blank, then that's guaranteed no credit. If you write something, then you might get something. Now, I'm not gonna lie to you and say if you write something, they'll give you credit because that's not necessarily true. You know, Bob has 36 candy bars, Bob has diabetes. I think that's a pretty funny creative answer. Okay. Would I have given this kid at least a point, sure, maybe a couple of points because he answered the question. So again, I'm real strong about if you don't write anything, you know you won't get anything. But if you write something, you might get some credit. And the more you write, the better it looks. And again, the more effort that you can look like you were putting into the answer. Hey, now again, you want to try to grab scratch, claw for every point a you can get on an exam. Alright, so what we're looking at here is a graph based on research that was done. And the research is actually really simple. And understanding the graph is really simple once I explain it. So you've got all these little, little circles, all bubbles all floating around. And then you've got this line here that goes diagonally. So what exactly does this mean? Imagine, if you took an exam this week. And the last question on the exam, I asked you to write down the score that you think you got on that exam. So the question is, and again, with someone who did this research, they really wanted to know, hey, what if we asked students, college students, to predict their own test scores? And there's different ways you can do this. You could have them predict before they take the exam. In this study, I like what they did is when a student was finished with the exam, there was a bonus question that asked them from 0 to a 100 right down the score that you think you got. So, what did the bubbles with the little circles mean? The ones that are above the line represent groups of students that the number they wrote was actually lower than how they did on the exam. So they underestimated their score. They may have written down, I think I got a 75, and they got an 85. So. Again, good. Okay. They, they did just as well, even better than they predicted. All of the ones below the line are all the groups of students that when they were asked the same question, might, for example,

said, I think I got a 75 and oh crap, I got 55 or 60. In other words, they did not, not only did they, not, well, again, most people don't get the exact number, they not only did not get the number correct, that's not really that important. But especially students who score 10, 20, sometimes 30 points below the exam. Obviously that's a problem. And one of the things that we learned from this research is that not all but the majority of college students, so that's all of us, myself included when I was in school Marvin too, the majority of college students, overestimate their performance. They do this before a test. They do it right after a test. So again, one of the reasons why we push programs like this is because we want you to develop a better sense for how well prepared are you for this test. And when you're actually going through the test, how well are you doing? All right? Now, some common sense tips that you may or may not have used before the exam. The first thing we want to focus on is your body. Because even though an exam is a mental struggle, we take our body with us. And this is really when you want to make sure, particularly for morning exams, to try to be well rested. Now, reality, if you're way behind and you gotta cram, you gotta stay up late studying, you do what you have to do. It doesn't make any sense to say well get a good night's sleep even though you haven't looked at the work, that's dumb. But if you've kind of kept up, you get to a, hopefully what we like people to do is to study the night before and then at some point, stop and go do something fun. You know, go to bed, get a good night sleep. In other words, don't stay up late unless you really, really have to. Because the more tired your body is, the more tired your brain is. The brain of the body. They work together. So we want to make sure you're well rest day. We want to make sure your well fed. Eat breakfast that morning, even if you don't normally. Make sure you're not over caffeinated caffeine in small amounts is benign. Benign means not harmful. It means in small amounts, caffeine helps us stay awake, helps us be a little bit more alert. But you have to be careful about over caffeinating, because once your body reaches a certain level and you go kind of in a hyper drive where it makes students harder for them to concentrate, hard to study. And I would say on the day of the test to get to campus even earlier than usual. Now of course, this advice is based on a traditional semester where you are physically going to an exam. And I realize a lot of you, including my younger daughter, goes here. All of her exams are online who since most of our classes are online, that's how we take our exams. So I'm I'm I'm trying to be mindful during this presentation that that's obviously a change. Some same advice for a lot of these well-rested, well-fed, not over caffeinated. And if you have an exam, get to your laptop, computer, whatever and set up earlier than usual in case anything goes wrong because what you don't want to do is get worked up. We don't want you to be more anxious than you already are. Alright? So now it's time for the exam. Alright, when you take your seat or when you first log on and the test appears, want you to take a nice deep breath. Now, that may be one of the dumbest pieces of advice you've been given in a while because chances are, nobody has ever had to remind you to breathe. What we mean by breathe really is not breathe how we normally do, but just take a nice deep cleansing breath if it helps, good. If it doesn't help, okay. And you know, some of this stuff may not help, but we know it doesn't hurt. Take a nice deep breath before you start. Now. Another one I want you to do is I want you to think only positive thoughts. During the exam, I want you to convince and tell yourself you can do this. That if you look at a question and you're like, I have no idea what this is asking. That's fine. Go on to a different question. If you realize that you're struggling on a test that's understandable, if you're really struggling and having a hard time. Truthfully, it's really hard to be a cheerleader and to think only positive thoughts. Now. But what, reason why we want to encourage this is because until the very end of the test, until you hand it in, you're still in control of the exam. You're still in control, meaning you get to look over the questions, you get to put the answers and nothing is guaranteed. Yes, sometimes it looks bad. I mean, we've all I

know I've had sometimes taken a test and halfway through I'm like, geez, man, this is not good. Alright? But even in that situation I'm halfway through. I'm going to tell myself, alright, well let's see how well we can do. And again, try to encourage yourself, try to think positive. So you don't give up. So you don't give in, so you don't do what some of my students do, look at the essays. I give exams that are half multiple-choice and half essay. Now, multiple choice, not too hard, sometimes difficult, but everybody usually is able to complete those. Because again, all you gotta do, at the worst is guess. So when it comes to an essay question, truthfully, sometimes you look at the question, you're like, I have no idea what I'm being asked, so I have no idea what to write. Alright, we'll skip it, go to another question. But don't, like I said, don't let it psych you out and convince yourself, man, I can't do this. Oh man, I'm screwed. And don't be like some of my, not many but once in a while I get a student who will turn in their exam. And I look through it and they skipped half of the essay questions. And like, you know, if they just would have written something, they might have been able to scratch maybe four or five more points on an exam that's like half a letter grade. So okay. So again, stop any negative thoughts. Stop the what ifs stuff, what if I fail? We're not going to think about that right now. That's later again. Until you turn this test in, there's no score, there's no gray. You're still in control of the test. You have it, you get to work on it, you get to complete it. And only after you turn it in, then we kind of hope that we did our best. I encourage students if possible, and I want to be careful. I don't want to sound like I'm being critical of other teachers because they have the right to teach and test how they want. But I particularly think it's important when students take a test, whether in class or online, that you have the ability to look over the entire tests first. Now, if that doesn't help you, if you, again, if that's not a strategy you want to use, that's fine. Jump right in with the first question, Second question and just hit it, just go. But sometimes it helps to look over the entire test to get an idea of how many questions, yeah, what are some of the format? And maybe I might want to start with a multiple choice, maybe the essay. Again, whatever works best. I've even had every semester in this workshop. I've had at least a few students that when I ask the question, how many of you have ever taken the test and flipped it over or went online and you went all the way to the last question and you answer the questions backwards. Some of you may have done this. And every semester I'll ask students in the workshop, has anybody done this? And there are always at least a few people that will raise their hand and I go, did it help? They're like, yeah, I think so. Alright, now, I have no idea if it helps or not. We haven't done any good research study, we've done any research study on doesn't make a difference. But if you think it makes a difference, then fine. Because again, there's no rule that says you have to take the test. Again unless for some reason it's structure where you can only do a question at a time and that's a different subject, okay? But if you look at the whole test, start wherever you want. So sometimes the first question on exams, sometimes it's one of the hardest ones. So alright, there are, I want, I want to cover what I call seven common tests myths. I wanted to cover what I call test myths. Ahh, I can, I can pronounce test myths, that are things that you may believe are true, may have been told are true. But as an instructor and as somebody who gives exams, I can pretty much guarantee you that, that is not true or it's not nearly as true as you might think. So the first example is, the first questions are always the easiest. I don't know who came up with this. There is no truth to this. Yes, on some standardized test, sometimes the questions go from easier to harder, but we're not taking standardized tests. We're not doing the ACT or LSAT or anything like that in a regular college exam. The first question on the exam, maybe one of the more difficult ones. So when you're, when overly anxious, Start with the items that come most easily to you. Again, assuming you can go back and forth. If you look at the first question ago, I have no idea what they're asking and go to the next one. Do not sit and stare at that first question. Let it go. You can go back to it, leave it alone. Go to

the next one. You go to question two. You're like, I have no idea what this one is either. Fine. K, now we're getting a little anxious. All right, well then let's go to a question, even if you have to go to question 10, find something that you know and start working on this stuff, you know. Because again, it's important that you're able to answer the questions in a good frame of mind. It's also important because we said we don't want you to think negative. We want you to think positive. We want you to develop your confidence while you're going through the exam. So you're likely to feel better if he get off to a good start. So again, look for questions that for you, you find to be easier and do those first. All right? The second myth is the first students that finished do the best. Again, I don't know who came up with this. If not only is, is this not true. In my experience as a teacher, usually the first students that turn in an exam, have some of the lowest scores because they have not completed the exam. So you don't need to pay attention to anybody else on when they finish the exam, when they get up from their desk, when they turn in, K? Do not let that affect how you are doing. You have no idea how well or how poorly. And like I said honestly, most of the time, the first couple of exams that are turned in, they're usually some of the lowest scores. Because again, to students haven't put that much effort and they're like, all right, well I'm done. I guess I'll just turn it. So, Students should carefully read the directions and circle significant words to avoid any misunderstanding. So one of the neat things most of the time about an exam is hopefully you get to take notes or you get to write on it in some way. One of the task you want to make sure when you're reading your questions is to carefully read the directions and make sure that you know what you're being asked. And again, if you're not sure, you should be able in some way to ask the proctor or the instructor. And it may not help you, but again, it doesn't hurt to ask. When I get traditional exams, I tell my students, if you have a question about a question, raise your hand, come up to the front and let me look at it. If I can see that you know the material, but you're not reading the question correctly. I'll try to give you a little bit of help. Again. If you're making an effort, then I'm going to try to help you a little bit to all teachers do that. No, but I honestly think most teachers do because most, hopefully all but most of us, we do not like to see students do poorly. We can not like to see students fail. We want you guys to succeed. Alright. So I want to pick on essay questions for just a minute. And I know that's only one type of question in an exam. But essay questions are a particular specialty of mine, partly because I've been including them in exams every year that I've taught. So I always mix up, I got multiple choice and then I got essays. Some people do better on the multiple choice. Some people do better on the essays. I will tell you a couple of things that you may or may not be aware of that sometimes make a difference in how well you do on an essay question. So what I've done here is I've given you an example of a question that I commonly use in my lifespan development class during the first third of the semester, one of the chapters we cover is death and dying. And one of the topics that we cover is a very famous, very old theory about the stages of grieving. That supposedly when people go through grief, they experience at first denial and then maybe anger. And so there are different, suppose in stages. Now, when I in the test put list the five stages of grieving, technically, that is all. That is all the student has to do for full credit. Again, I want to be careful. I don't sound like I'm being critical of other instructors. But in my view, if I put list, all you have to do is list because that's all it says. List the 5 stages. 1-2-3-4-5 being full credit. Now, I don't write that kind of question. I right. The one on the bottom, I write list and describe. So I ask you to list the five stages that's part of the credit. And then briefly write an explanation for each stage. Briefly, define, describe, say something about each stage. So you're not just listing the stage, the word. So here's the problem. If I tell you to list the five stages of grieving and you list all five. I think you should get full credit. I think if the teacher wants you to write more than that. I think they should put that on the exam. If you look at this and say, do you just

want a list or do you want more than that? I think it's legitimate to ask to make sure. Again, I'm pretty specific. I put list and describe. So I've told you to do two things, give me the stages and then briefly explain them. I can't tell you how often students will not get full credit on this question. And they're like why I listed all the stages, and I'm like yeah but you didn't do the second part, you didn't write an explanation. So you didn't get full credit. And again, we're scratching we're clawing, were fighting for every point that we can get. So I hate when that happens. I hate when a student gets three points out of five because they didn't answer part of the essay question. I try to number my essay questions so that, you know, I'm asking you to do two things, three things, but sometimes they're not numbered. This is again, a reason why you need to carefully read the question and make sure what are you being asked to do. I'm being asked again, and the second one, you do two things, I'm being asked to list and I'm being asked to explain. The title of this slide is called important words and essay questions. So at the risk of pounding this into the ground, what I've really been focusing on a lot is, what are you being asked to do? Again, list and describe are different words, they mean something different. So if I put list and describe, then I clearly want you to do two different things. If I just put list, I only want you to do one thing. So sometimes another way that students trip themselves up on an essay is they'll read the question, but they don't pay enough attention to what exactly did we ask you to do here? Define, okay, I'll give it a definition, define and give two examples. All right, well, I'll do that. Number three. If I stare at the question long enough, the answer will come to me. Wrong. I already mentioned this before. If you look at a question, I don't care what kind of question it is. And again, this is assuming that you can move throughout the test and you don't have to complete one question at a time and then you can't go back. In case you couldn't tell, I don't care for that. If I stare at the question long enough, the answer will come to me. No. Most likely what's going to happen is you're going to get more anxious, more irritated, and you're probably not going to help yourself. And you may wind up taking time away from the other questions on the exam. So here's my advice. If it doesn't come to you right away, go to another question. If it's a math problem and you look and go, I had no idea. Alright, don't sit there and go, Man, I had no idea, I'm screwed, no. Okay, remember we're thinking positive is just, alright you know what, I don't know what they're asking. So I'll come back to this later. Get off the question, go to a different one. Alright, again, if it doesn't come to you right away, skip it. Sometimes as you go through the exam and you start to answer questions and your brain starts to work a little bit better. You'd be amazed, and some of you have experienced this, hopefully everybody. And 20 minutes later you go back and you look at that same question. You're like, oh wait, I think I get it now. Alright. Good. Like I said, that may have been because you left it alone, you worked on other stuff and when you went back and looked at it, you feel a little bit better, more confident. You looked at it a different way. So we really don't encourage people to just keep looking. Again, if this is the only question left on the test, well, obviously that's different, but alright, so hopefully this one helps because, again, a lot of times students will spend too much time working on a question that they don't really understand. And again, we don't want you to take time away from other questions. We don't want you to get any more anxious than you already are. So again, you tell yourself, I'll look at this in a few minutes. I don't get it right now. Okay. That's that's a much more positive way again than saying I have no freaking clue. Alright, okay, another attempt at humor. I loved this first one. Name a solid name a liquid name a gas. I don't know if the kid get any credit, but technically, those are correct answers. Alice plays the prepared slide on her microscope, when she looks at it, she can't see anything suggest one reason why not. She's blind. Alright. I don't think that's the answer they were looking for, but again, you never know. Again, if all else fails, if you can't think of the material, if you're not sure the answer, write something that sounds intelligent. Even if

you just write, I'm really trying on this question, but I really have no idea, but I didn't want to leave it blank. Now. It won't hurt. It won't take points away. Alright? Myth number four. There is no point writing anything on this essay if I don't know the answer, we've already covered this one. If you write nothing, you score nothing. If you write something, you score maybe something. This is true for an essay. This is true for a math problem, physics problem. This is anytime that you have to write out the answer. Like I said, if it's math, write as much as you can, show as much work as you can, even if you don't know what you're doing. Now, I don't encourage people to write bull crap, but I'll be honest with you. Some of you may have had this experience where you've written a whole bunch of stuff for an answer, that didn't make a whole lot of sense, but the teacher looked at it, and went wow, you really wrote a lot here and maybe gave me more credit than you should have gotten. Well, that's not there, now, that's not your problem. Okay, good for you. Because again, we want to show effort. Yes, it's important to get the right answers, but a lot of teachers will take some consideration and well, did you make an effort? Alright, so again, write nothing, get nothing, write something, maybe get something. Alright? Number five, myth, the instructor can't help me now. Again, I can't speak for other teachers. But when I give traditional exams, I am always present for my own exam. Because I believe that as a teacher my job is to teach you all the time, including during exams. So if somebody runs into a question they don't understand. I like them to have the opportunity to come up to the front and ask for help. Sometimes, honestly, I've had people walk up to me and they've already answered the question correctly and they start to ask me for help and I go leave it. They're like what? I'm like, leave it! Okay, that's my, Leave it alone. You got it right. Okay. Get, do something else. So don't hesitate to ask for help during the exam and hopefully help, like I said, is available to you. I think that that's important. Because I think that again, if you don't know the material and you ask for help, You might not get any help. Some teachers may be like, oh, it doesn't sound like you know what you're talking about. Okay. That's fine, alright. But I don't think a student should be penalized when they know the material, but they're misunderstanding the question. Alright. Number six, when in doubt, go with the letter C. Ahh, years ago before taking the ACT, somebody gave me this advice. Like, well, when you don't know the answer bubble in C because that's usually the correct answer. I don't know where they got that from. There's no truth to that, but it sounded good. Now, this advice is obviously for multiple choice questions. And multiple choice questions where, you know, you may run into three or four questions on the exam and you're like, man, I have no idea. Well, right? Again, you don't get penalized for a wrong answer. Guess, circle something. Now, instead of go with the letter C. That actually is not bad advice. If on every one you guess, you pick the letter c. So if you have to guess on a number of multiple choice items, we encourage you to keep picking the same letter. Because if you have five questions that you had to guess at and you put C for every one, or B for every one, at least one or two of those questions, the answer probably is B or C. But if you start going all over from A to C or D, that you may wind up missing all of them. So again, hopefully that helps. Alright, seven, write quickly and get to the point. No, I mean, unless your teacher tells you that you have a certain limit to how much you can write. When in doubt, keep writing. That's an essay, that's a math problem, that's a physics problem, that's, you know, whatever. And if you're somebody that you've gotta write on the test, you gotta write on the back of test and write little arrows to direct the teacher to where you left off, go for it, okay? There's nothing that says you, unless it tells you an exam, you have to stick to a certain amount of space. Write as much as you can and when in doubt, keep writing. Here's the problem, sometimes with a math problem with a history essay question is, you can get the answer write. You can put down some good stuff. But truthfully, there's no way, most of the time, there's no way to know if you've written enough. And

honestly, if you walked up and you said, hey, do you think I've written enough in this essay? I'm not going to answer that question for you. But again, I will tell you that I've learned as a teacher when in doubt, write more. Keep writing. Again, if you've got some time left in the exam. Again, can't hurt anything. The more you write, the more you show, the more likely you are to scratch again, a few points here or there. And if you can get, like I said, even five points, half a grade higher, good. After finishing the exam. Ok, this is obvious, this is what most of you already do. Check your answers proofread for omissions, okay. Proofread for omissions means make sure you didn't skip anything, and check for mistakes. We don't want you to overanalyze. We don't want you to start second guessing. If you feel good, then just mainly look over and make sure you've answered all the questions. Marvin's heard the same stories every semester. The young man that finished the test early, he turned it in and he would have done better except somehow he skipped an entire page of questions. There were about eight or nine, so we're talking about ten to 12 points on the test that he lost right off the bat because somehow somehow he skipped an entire page. And somehow when he went back and looked over his test, he didn't notice. Now, a lot of the teachers might not do this. I had my cell phone, I have my students information. I looked up his number, I texted him and said, get back here right now. While the test was still clinging on, I handed to him and said, I think you missed a page. Was that nice of me? Yes, it was, right? Do all teachers do that, no. Alright. Lucky for him, I caught it. I could have just taken his test and not looked at it. When you finish, reward yourself, go have fun until your next test. Don't go and open your book and start looking through to figure out how well you did, get away from, okay The test is over, alright? It's done. You finished, good, bad, whatever. Go reward yourself. Go eat, go do something fun. You know, we got plenty of time later on to figure out how we did and find out how he did. Last thing I want to mention real quickly is that we're here to help at the UCA counseling center. In case you didn't know it, we have a counseling center on this campus. We're on the third floor of the Student Health Center. We do not charge for our services. So your tuition, thank you by the way, for paying it. Your tuition, There's a fee in your tuition that pays for the counseling center services and pays also for student health or at least their services maybe not a specific test. As far as the counseling center, you don't have to pay for a single session. Like I said, you've already paid for it. So if you're having difficulty doing well in class, if you're having difficulty doing well on your exam, because you got some major test anxiety. If you're having difficulty in school because your personal life right now just sucks and things keep getting in the way, whatever it is. One of the reasons why that we exist on a college campus is our goal is to help you deal with your personal stuff better so that you'll perform better in school. Nothing that always that sometimes people will come and go, no I'm doing well, my grades are fine, but I'm just I'm just miserable. Okay. We don't want you to be unhappy we don't want you to be miserable and we definitely don't want your personal unhappiness to interfere with your ability to do your best while you're a student here. So when in doubt, check us out. Okay. Again, no charge. It's confidential. Come over, have a session, sit down with somebody if it helps, great. If it helps a lot, maybe you come back a few times. If it doesn't help, you wasted an hour, that's the worst, okay? But usually usually and I'd like to say all the time and I know usually people that come and sit down with me, even if that's just one time, will walk away with something from that session with some advice, with some insight, something that's going to make them feel a little bit better. And more importantly, that's going to help you do better. Again, that's why we're here. We care about you guys. We know this pandemic sucks. Everybody's affected by, this is one time, I will say is as bad as things are. This is one time that is, it's nice that you don't have to get a doctor's note because everybody is dealing with this. Everybody's affected by eigen. So hopefully everybody's being a little bit more understanding and they're being a little bit

more accommodating to whatever you or someone else needs. So with my kid, when she has trouble in a class, she's heard me say this before. Well go talk to your teacher. And she'll go, what is that going to do? I go, I don't know. It may not do anything, but it goes back to if you write nothing, you get nothing. If you say nothing then nothing happens. You know, email, call, Zoom whatever, open your mouth and tell somebody, you need help. Like I said, that's your teacher's job. And it's our job as well.