Strategies for Taking Objective Tests

1. Don’t think too hard nor too long about the choices. These are recognition-type questions, and answers should be apparent.

2. If it’s fairly obvious answer which the instructor is looking for, give it to him/her even though you could argue for other responses. On an essay exam you can argue and defend, but not in an objective test.

3. If not certain, guess (unless there is a penalty) since guesses are seldom blind but rather are based on partial knowledge.

4. There may be superficial clues to help you when knowledge and logic give out. HOWEVER, most instructors are aware of these giveaways and make an effort to exclude them from their tests.

5. Mark your best guess if you don’t know for certain. Return to it later if there is time.

6. Reread all questions containing negative words such as “not” or “least.” Be especially alert to the use of double or even triple negatives within a sentence, as these must be read very carefully to assure full understanding.

7. Check for qualifying words such as “all,” “most,” “some,” “none,” “always-usually-seldom-never,” “best-worst,” “highest-lowest,” or “smallest-largest.” When you see one of these qualifiers, test for truth by substituting the other members of the series. If you substitution makes a better statement, the question is false; if your substitution does not make a better statement, the question is true.

8. Watch for modifying or limiting phrases inserted into true/false questions. Instructors often insert false names, dates, places, or other details to make the statement inaccurate.

9. Be cautious about changing your answer to a true/false or multiple-choice question without a good reason.

10. Apply the same approach to answering both true/false and multiple-choice questions. The same is techniques work equally well for both.