

## APPENDIX B – EXAM-TAKING STRATEGIES

This section will offer you some basic strategies and tips that are tailored to the math competency exam. The tips in Appendix A are generally applied toward preparation for all mathematics courses.

### GET SOME SLEEP THE NIGHT BEFORE THE EXAM

This tip you've probably heard before from another class, professor, friend. Do something relaxing the night before the exam. Watch a movie or your favorite TV show. You can do a few practice problems if you want, but don't make it into a full-blown study session. Cramming the night before isn't going to help! And you probably won't remember any *new* concepts you've seen the night before. If you have taken the time to prepare, you wouldn't need to cram. Get enough sleep!

### EAT A GOOD BREAKFAST

Even if you normally skip breakfast, you should make time to eat something. Your brain needs energy you get from foods for it to work efficiently. Some good brain-boosting foods include eggs, nuts, yogurt, cottage cheese, fish, blueberries, and sunflower seeds. Some foods to avoid before the exam are chocolates, cookies, cakes and muffins. They tend to send you into a sugar high and end up in a sugar low. And you wouldn't want that to happen in the middle of the exam.

### BLOCK OUT OTHERS BEFORE THE EXAM

Whenever you look around at other students just before a test, you see panic. A lot of students are scrambling to cram in those last few concepts. Students get nervous and start discussing the exam with other students. When you start hearing them talk about the test, it is easy for you to get pulled into panic mode also. Now is not the time to be cramming or even panic. Now is the time to relax. Bring an iPod and listen to music. If you have put in the time to study over the past six weeks, there is no need to second-guess yourself.

### DON'T SPEND TOO MUCH TIME ON ANY ONE PROBLEM

When you are handed the test, don't always start with Question 1. Skim over the exam, and do the problems you are sure you know what you are doing. You can then go back to the problems you skipped and spend a little more time working them out. I have seen students spend so much time on Question 1, that they end up running out of time and don't finish the exam. If you start to struggle with a problem, move on. But be sure to mark it and return to the problem.

### A MARATHON, NOT A SPRINT

The math competency exam is a timed test. As other students are standing up and turning in their exams, don't worry about it. It is not a race to see who turns in their exam first. It is about how well you do on the problems. Take your time. Be confident with your answers. As Aesop said, "Slow and steady wins the race."