MAKING USE OF THE RETURNED EXAM

I. Use the score as a standard of comparison.
   A. Check the letter grade.
   B. Consider the average score of the class. [even if your score is low, it may still be good compared to others in the class]
   C. Consider the range of scores.

II. Use the test items to evaluate your strengths and weaknesses in the subject.
   A. Study the items missed.
      1. Check for different items repeated in other words.
      2. Ascertain the need for further study on points.
      3. Analyze what is wrong with your answers.
      4. Ask the instructor for clarification and suggestion for improvement.
   B. Study the answers guessed.
   C. Survey the correct answers.

III. Analyze your errors.
   A. Most common errors in Essay Exams.
      1. Students don't follow directions or answer the question.
      2. Essays are not well-organized.
      3. Essays are too general; students give few examples of specific persons, groups or places.
      4. Facts are incorrect or mixed up.
      5. Students don’t give a viewpoint or thesis. They mention facts, but don’t tell why those facts are important, or what the facts prove.
      6. Students fail to give a time frame.
      7. Students write illegibly and don’t proofread.
   B. Most common errors in objective (multiple choice) exams.
      1. Students misinterpret question.
      2. Students answer first correct choice instead of reading all.
      3. Students don’t study differences or exact definitions of terms.
      4. Students misread directions.
      5. Students don’t use clues to help them choose.

IV. How did you produce that error?
   A. Studying: Not enough
      Not the important/relevant material
      Not correctly; no outlines, etc.
   B. Read questions wrong or partially.
   C. Didn’t think before writing.
   D. Wrote incoherently or poorly.
   E. Not enough time.
V. How do you plan to improve?

A. Instructor expectations.
   1. Kinds of questions asked? [Did you study the wrong kind of information/problems?]
   2. Source of content? [Did content come more from book or lecture? Will this change your emphasis?]

B. Studying
   1. Amount: Spaced vs. crammed?
   2. Selection: Stressed in book? [approach readings more strategically?]
      Stressed in lecture [consider more effective notetaking strategies?]
      Syllabus [are there clues you missed in the syllabus?]
      Old tests, repetition [did old tests contain clues or actual test items? Can you find a copy for the next exam?]
   3. Techniques: Organize?
      Think?
      Memorize? [consider new strategies?]
   4. Tutors [Look at this as seeking assistance from a professional “consultant”]

C. Writing
   1. Aid [do you need greater assistance for the next exam – e.g., from the writing center; take the exam with you to discuss ways you can improve]
   2. Sample answers [can you obtain examples of answers that were expected for the exam?]

D. Time
   1. Improve organization strategies before exam
   2. Write-out or do formulas (… more)
   3. Budget time differently and/or more effectively (new tools, strategies?)

VI. Use the test as a pattern for the next test - note the instructor's style of writing a test.

A. Note the kind and/or type of questions asked.

B. Analyze the content of questions:
   1. From text or lecture [to what extent did the questions reflect notes or text material?]
   2. Expected or unexpected material [how well did the exam match expectations stated by your instructor (or not)?]