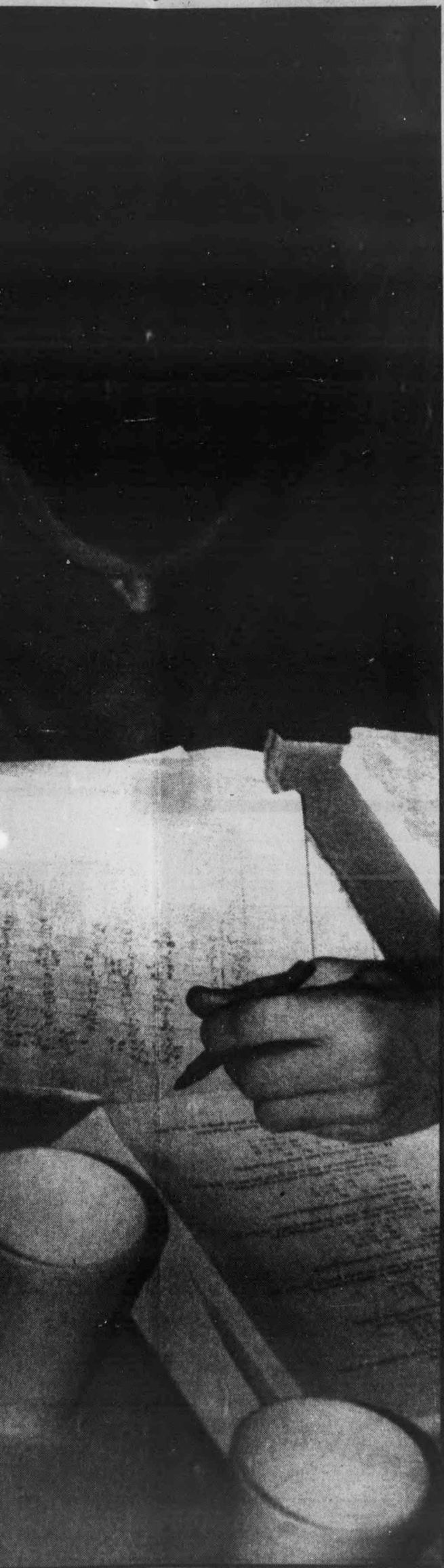


ures Editor: Ryna Brideau



COMMON MISTAKES

You've now entered the examination room, you have all the permissible material you need... pens, pencils, erasers, ruler; other aids such as a calculator, special reference tables, books, etc., may also be permitted, depending on the course - and have just turned over the exam paper.

1. Most students begin writing before they know all of the rules. Read any instructions on the exam paper and write down any oral instructions given by the person supervising the examination. If you do not understand all the instructions, raise your hand and ask for clarification.

2. Students sometimes fail to identify who wrote the exam. Make sure your name and/or student number is clearly written on the examination paper or booklets as often as is necessary. Proper identification will reduce the chance of your paper or a part of it being lost. Sometimes sections of exams are given to different people for marking, and unless each is identified as yours, you will not receive credit for it.

3. Many students do not allocate exam time very well. Make a note of how long the examination is, then read all the questions and decide how much time you have for each. While you answer one question, your subconscious mind will be thinking over the others, often generating points that your conscious thoughts might miss. By timing each question in proportion to the marks allocated to it, you will not spend too long on one at the expense of others.

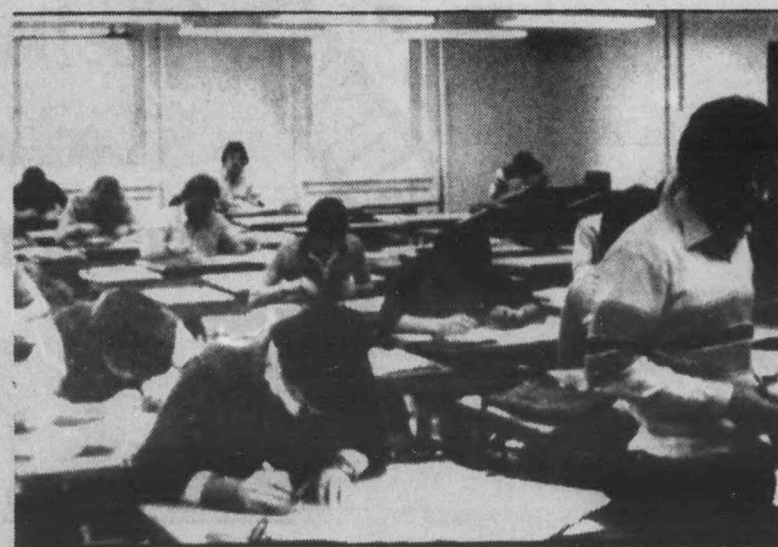
4. Many students simply start at the first question and work towards the last. Start with the questions that are easiest for you and work towards the more difficult ones. This method will build up your confidence and

ensure that you complete the questions you can handle easily. Starting with harder question might get you frustrated enough to cause you to do poorly even on the material you know well.

5. Many students start answering before they understand the question. Before starting to write, read the examination question very carefully. Underline key words to verify that the question is asking what you think it is. Then organize your thoughts; think about the best approach to the question. Start writing, making notes in the margin or on the back of the page of things you will cover later. This will ensure that important points will not be left out.

6. Many students hopscotch through their exam papers. After finishing one question, go on to the next. If you think of additional material for questions you have already answered, make some notes in the margins or on the back of the page for those questions, but don't jump back and forth between the answers you are writing. When you have finished the question you are on, then go back and make additions to previous answers.

7. A lot of students don't recheck their answers. When the questions have all been answered, go back to the beginning and reread your answers, making changes only when you are positive that they must be made. If there is a lot of time remaining, don't leave immediately even though you think you are finished. Turn your exam over and take a break. Then reread your answers. Often this brief respite will bring to mind additional relevant facts. Also, if you have made a mess of your answer by making a lot of corrections or insertions, you could use any of the remaining time to rewrite those sloppy answers. Too many students rush out to the exam room only to realize that they have forgotten to put down some important points. Don't cheat yourself out of potential marks by leaving too early.



About the author:
Anton H. O'Day lectures on the University of
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Toronto, 1990).