

Test taking strategies



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Test-Taking Strategies For 10 years, I was the one testing the students, teaching strategies and finding new ones to help students study. Suddenly, I found myself returning to school and the anxiety, stress, lack of time, and just all the unknowns seemed to overwhelm my life. The last couple of years I have learned to incorporate strategies that work best for me, but there is always room for improvement and strengthening.

Learning, study and test taking skills are some of the most important things to have when furthering your education. Upon reading *Strategies for Test Success* by Linda Anne Silvestri, I was able to scrutinize some of my weaknesses, reevaluate my learning style, and look at some new test taking strategies while assessing my current strategies. *Helpful Test Taking Strategies* Tests usually have significant validity on your grade. The better you are prepared for different types of tests, the better grade you will receive. (Meyers, 2000) Some helpful test strategies that I gathered from this assignment include: techniques for reducing test anxiety, avoid reading into the question, avoid changing answers, learning how to study in a manner that works best, and improving retention of information. Test anxiety is an unpleasant experience and can interfere with test performance. This is one area that I struggle with myself. Linda Anne Silvestri suggests incorporating some of the following techniques in order to reduce anxiety while preparing for and taking an exam.

First, evaluate yourself to determine what may be causing the anxiety. Is it stress, pressure to succeed, or negative thoughts? Second, figure out techniques that will help to reduce the anxiety such as: avoid procrastination, relaxation techniques before and during an exam, maintain a healthy

lifestyle and diet, and maintain a positive attitude which will lead to success. (Silvestri, 2010) In that moment of despair, when my memory just seems to go blank, I often find myself digging from my own life experiences to find a rationale to the question being asked.

Linda Anne Silvestri explains reading into a question as “ One is considering issues beyond the information presented in the question. ”(Silvestri, 2010) I am guilty of this on many occasions, and learning to identify the information the question contains and what it is asking will help improve my test scores. Changing answers is another area which I struggle. “ You know the information; go with your first instinct, don’t second guess yourself! ” I have said this to many students over the years, why does it seem so hard to incorporate into my own strategies now that I am a student? By reevaluating this area, hopefully I can become more confident in the answering of questions and learn to trust my instincts and knowledge. “ One must also remember not change an answer unless you are absolutely sure you have made a mistake,” as stated in the book *The Secret of Taking Any Test* by Learning Express. (Meyers, 2000) In Kaplan’s *How to Study* video about learning to study in a manner that work best for you, suggests that you find a quiet room or area that you can use just for studying.

I often find myself trying to study in thefamilyroom where it seems like the TV is shouting at me and my books are scattered all over the couch and floor. I am currently working on this by converting a spare room into my study space. It was recommended that in this area you are to consider good body position, such as using a chair and desk not sitting or lying on your bed. This area must also have good lighting and be free of distractions. In doing

this I hope that I will be able to separate my school time and family time from each other. Visualize, organize, recite, repeat is suggested by Kaplan in order to retain information.

The goal of most students is to retain what they are learning. Spending too much time studying is and major complaint of students. By making vivid associations of the content with a picture, group and organize topics together because items are best learned in groups, recite your knowledge out loud to figure out what you do not understand, and finally repeat it often. By using this strategy instead of trying to memorize text out of a book, one should have to spend less time studying and more information should be retained. (KaplanNursing: Lipponcott) Test Strategies Not so Helpful

There are so many strategy recommendations for students. While each have good points, some are more helpful than others. Strategies that don't seem as helpful to me are simulating actual test like circumstances when studying for the exam, study groups, note taking by using the fancy systems. These three strategies just seem to increase my stress level to the point I feel like I am not learning. Simulating actual test like circumstances has just never worked for me as I usually don't pick the correct information to test myself on and the important information gets left behind.

Study groups cause me too much pressure because I find that one or two people seem to be putting the study guides together. This is a pet peeve for me; I don't mind sharing my ideas but don't expect me to do all the work and then hand it to you. The final one that has never worked for me is taking notes by using one of the many note taking systems. I find myself spending

too much time trying to remember what needs to be written where, organizing, how to fold the paper. I have developed my own crazy way of taking notes over the years.

Note taking is an area that I feel is individualize for each person. Learning Style The VAK Learning Style Assessment indicates that I learn visually followed closely by being a kinesthetic learner. I feel this is a very accurate assessment of my learning style. I am the person who likes to observe how things are done either by reading the instructions or watching someone perform the task. I also learn by holding, touching, and feeling. The whole hands-on experience works well for me. Auditory learning is sometime difficult for me.

I find using the auditory portion of an E-book is not beneficial to me because my mind seems to wander and I have a hard time concentrating on the information. I am someone who likes to have the textbook in hand to touch and feel. Diagnosis of Test Taking Weakness My personal diagnoses of test taking weakness would be: Anxiety related to taking examinations as evidenced by sympathetic stimulation including increased respiratory rate, heart rate, apprehension and facial flushing. I will display decreased test anxiety before and after each exam for the next twelve months.

I will learn how to control sympathetic stimulations during exams for the next year. Interventions will include getting enough sleep before exams, practicing relaxation techniques such as deep breathing by inhaling deeply through nose and exhaling slowly, thinking positive thoughts, avoiding reading extra information into the question, and changing answers on the

exam. Interventions will be confirmed effective if vital signs reflect baseline, there is decreased sympathetic stimulation, and able to control test anxiety by using stated techniques. Risk for impaired memory related to inability to retain sufficient knowledge and information. I will retain sufficient knowledge and information from the ADRN program to pass all exams for the next year. I will demonstrate use of techniques to help reduce memory loss for twelve months. I will utilize anxiety reducing techniques, non-distracting study areas, visualize, organize, recite, and repeat techniques into current study and test taking practices . Intervention will be confirmed effective if I pass all exams and the NCLEX. References Ackley, B. & Ladwig, G. (2008).

Nursing diagnosis handbook: An evidence-based guide to planning care, (8th ed.). St. Louis, MO: Mosby, Inc. , an affiliate of Elsevier Inc. Kaplan Nursing: Lipponcott, W. a. (n. d.) Kaplan Nursing. Retrieved September 1, 2011, from Kaplan nursing: How to study, Nursing school success http://www.nursing.kaplan.com/student/User_Home.aspx# Meyers, J. N. (2000). The secret of taking any test. Learning Express Silvestri, L. A. (2010). Saunders strategies for success for test success: Passing nursing school and the NCLEX exam. Philadelphia, PA: Elsevier Saunders an imprint of Elsevier.