

STUDY HARD....STUDY EFFECTIVELY...

GENERAL STUDY TECHNIQUES

- Establish a routine
- Set short -and long-term goals
- Control internal and external distractions
- Prepare for each class by reading the textbook chapters before class-This will make you familiar with relevant terms and concepts
- Take good notes and review them regularly
- Know your learning style and capitalize on your strengths
- Make an effort to use any small blocks of time for reviewing notes. Make use of flashcards, vocabulary lists or categories of information. Cassette recorders with or without head phones also work well
- Use all the resources at your disposal...tutors, study groups, your professor, adaptive technology
- Maintain a balance between the rigors of studying and some pleasurable activity

SPECIFIC STUDY TECHNIQUES

Become familiar with the four basic types of questions in nursing:
KNOWLEDGE, COMPREHENSION, APPLICATION AND ANALYSIS

Knowledge questions require you to recall or remember information.

Sample question:

When you are administering medications, *qid* means:

1. Once a day
2. Twice a day
3. Three times a day
4. Four times a day

To correctly answer this question, you have to know the meaning of *qid*.

Reciting the information out loud, reviewing it in your mind and writing it down will increase your chances of remembering it because you are using more than one sense.

Associating information with letters of the alphabet is a useful technique. Example: the ABCs of cardiopulmonary resuscitation are: AIRWAY-clear the airway; BREATHING-initiate artificial breathing; CIRCULATION-initiate cardiac compression.

Use acronyms to help you remember. An acronym is a word formed from the first letters of a series of statements or facts. Example: The American Cancer Society acronym for early warning signs of cancer is CAUTION.

Change in bowel and bladder habits

A sore that does not heal

Unusual bleeding or discharge

Thickening of a lump

Indigestion or difficulty swallowing

Obvious change in a wart or mole

Nagging cough or hoarseness

Memorizing information can be difficult and boring. Acrostics can help make it effective and fun. To recall fat-soluble vitamins remember All Dieters Eat Kilocalories.

Comprehension questions require you to understand information. This means you must go beyond memorizing facts and be able to interpret facts and determine the implications of the information. Sample question:

To evaluate the therapeutic effect of a cathartic, the nurse should assess the patient for:

1. Increased urinary output
2. A decrease in anxiety
3. A bowel movement
4. Pain relief

To answer this question, you have to know not only that a cathartic is a potent laxative that stimulates the bowel but also that the increase in peristalsis will result in a bowel movement.

To answer knowledge questions, you must know facts; to answer comprehension questions you must understand the significance of the facts. Ask yourself **WHY OR HOW** the information is important.

To maximize the effectiveness of your study time, plan to do some studying in a small group. The sharing process promotes your comprehension because you listen to the opinions of others, learn new information from peer tutors, and reinforce your own learning by teaching others.

Application questions require you to **SHOW, SOLVE, MODIFY, CHANGE, USE OR MANIPULATE** information.

Sample question:

An older adult's skin looks dry, thin, and fragile. When providing back care the nurse should:

1. Apply a moisturizing lotion
2. Wash the back with soap and water
3. Massage using short kneading strokes
4. Leave excess lubricant on the patient's skin

To answer this question, you must know that dry, thin, fragile skin is common in older adults and that moisturizing lotion helps the skin to retain water and become suppler. When presented with this patient scenario, you have to apply your knowledge concerning developmental changes in older adults and the consequences of the use of moisturizing lotion.

To facilitate learning to apply information, get in the habit of relating new information to what you already know and identify commonalities when studying principles and theories that can be used in a variety of situations. A commonality exists when two different situations require the application of the same or similar principle.

Analysis questions require you to interpret a variety of data and recognize the commonalities, differences, and interrelationships among the presented ideas. Sample question:

A patient has dependent edema of the ankles and feet and is obese. Which diet should the nurse expect the physician to order?

1. Low in salt and high in fat
2. Low in salt and low in calories
3. High in salt and high in protein
4. High in salt and low in carbohydrates

To answer this question, you have to understand the relationships between salt in the diet and fluid retention, and between obesity and caloric intake. You must also understand the impact of carbohydrates, proteins and fats in a diet for a patient with edema and obesity. When you answer this question, you must understand and examine the information presented, identify the interrelationships among the elements, and arrive at a conclusion.

In handling complex questions recognize differences. Blood pressure can rise for a variety of reasons: infection causes an increased metabolic rate; fluid retention causes hypervolemia; anxiety causes an autonomic nervous system response that constricts blood vessels.

PRACTICE TEST TAKING- REVIEW RATIONALES FOR THE RIGHT AND WRONG ANSWERS

This material was taken from

Nugent,P.& Vitale,B. (2004). Test success; Test-taking techniques for beginning nursing students. Philadelphia: F.A. Davis. and contains direct quotations.

Other useful resources are:

Nugent,P.,& Vitale,B. (2004). Fundamentals Success: A course review applying critical thinking to test taking. Philadelphia: F.A. Davis.Lippincott

Williams & Wilkins (2005). Nursing student success made incredibly easy. Philadelphia: Lippincott

Do you want more information about.....

How you learn best <http://www.metamath.com/lswb/dvclearn.htm> Take a learning styles inventory online

Specific activities to improve your comprehension, test taking, note taking and time management skills <http://www.muskingum.edu/~cal/database/general/>

College Survival Tips <http://www.gwc.maricopa.edu/home-pages/crimando/jcsurviv5.htm>

Important Steps to Success in Science Class <http://www.gwc.maricopa.edu/home-pages/crimando/jctools.htm>

Crucial Information about Answering Essay Questions in Science
<http://www.gwc.maricopa.edu/home-pages/crimando/jcessay5.htm>

Activities Designed to Boost Your Grades <http://www.howtostudy.org/> Go to *Model* and *Resources*-click on *biology* or *chemistry* for specific help in these courses

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