














Exam Planning: What is it and how can it help me?

Exam planning is the use of active study strategies and planning to make your test preparation more effective and efficient.

There are four steps to plan a successful and organized test prep routine:

- 1. Find out what you already know.** Do some self-assessment. Look back through your notes, ppts, objectives, and any other learning resources you have. Use these to make a list of the topics likely to be tested. After you have this list, hide all notes and readings so you can test your understanding of each key concept. For example:
 -  Make a list of key concepts and define as many as you can from memory.
 -  Make an outline starting with higher order concepts and filling in details of sub-concepts and examples in as much detail as much as you can. This method will help you use recall (a powerful tool for studying) to determine the big ideas you need to know and help you create an organized way of remembering the details that fall under these big ideas. This method helps you situate the things you don't know within what you do already know.
 -  If needed, employ a 3-2-1 approach to the concepts. 1=I don't know it; 2=I sort of know it; 3=I know it.
- 2. Make a study guide (what will you study?) and a study plan (how will you study?).**
 -  Look at the items you marked with a 1 or a 2. This material is what should be reviewed first.
 -  Ask yourself if there is a particular study strategy that would help you learn the content best. For example, would flash cards/Quizlet work best or is this information that would benefit from making a bullet point list of steps/procedures/processes? Would a concept map help you determine different approaches to a patient scenario? Strategies may vary depending on your learning style preferences and the type of material you need to master.
- 3. Schedule your studying. When will you study?**
 -  Add your plan, developed in step 2, to your calendar/time management system. Also, consider where you will do this studying. If studying at home is not as beneficial for you, find another place that works better. Spread your exam plan study blocks across a week (at least).
 -  Be specific about your study goals for each study block.
 -  Break things down into manageable pieces. *Allow time for studying/reviewing and then self-testing in each block.*
 -  Remember to take some breaks.
- 4. Test yourself again (similar to step 1).**
 -  As you near the end of your week, go back to your original list of terms and concepts and rate yourself again. Hopefully, you will see noticeable improvement.
 -  If you still have some areas of concern, draw up a more focused plan as you head into the end of your week of preparation.
 -  On the day before your exam, review all materials and do a final self-test of the content.
 -  *Research studies have proven that students who report higher instances of self-testing had higher GPA's.*

Remember, while you are applying this focused exam plan to the course content for which you will be tested, don't forget to do routine studying for your other classes.

When final exams approach, you may want to draw up an expanded (multi-class) set of study blocks over a longer time period. Apply this same process to each of your courses.

Day #1	Day #2	Day #3	Day #4	Day #5	Day #6	Day #7
Do steps 1, 2, 3. 1. Find out what you already know or don't know. 2. Make a study guide & a study plan. 3. Schedule your studying across the week.	(Study)	(Study)	(Study)	Self-test again. Create a revised, more focused plan on any topics where you are still unsure.	Implement (study) your revised plan.	Review all materials and do a final self-test over everything.

Looking for some different study strategies? Try these...

Create flashcards - hard copy or online Take notes from texts Write or rewrite notes by hand Create a study sheet Draw concept maps or diagrams Review study guides/materials provided by your instructors Study with a classmate or small group	Create a bullet point list regarding steps, processes, procedures Reorganize/reformat information from memory Teach/Explain a topic to someone else Recite a process/procedure from memory Write a summary of major units, concepts, your class notes/ppts	Read chapter summaries and then create a list of the major points/ideas Create a giant concept map connecting class objectives to all the terms and concepts you need to know Do all of the above without looking at your materials.
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