



Success Strategies Part II

Test Taking Strategies

CSUCI Nursing Program

Information for Incoming & Current Nursing Students

Student Affairs Committee

2016

The Purpose

- o To prepare students for test taking
- o To develop skill in applying knowledge to practice relating to test taking
- o To help reduce test anxiety
- o To learn success tips from high performing students.

Students are encouraged to view Powerpoint titled:
Success Strategies Part I on Student Success Strategies

Preparing for an exam

- o Identify important ideas in the readings/assignments
- o Identify content that serves to accomplish the learning objectives of the course
- o Students should be building new information on what they know already
- o Create practice questions
- o Balance study with sleep, healthy meals and exercise
- o Eat before the exam (food will give you energy)
- o Seek help from professors, tutors or mentor students

Resources

o Textbook Resources:

- o NCLEX Practice Questions: End of chapter & online resources for text books

o Online Resources:

- NCLEX Tips Online at <http://www.nclexonline.com/tips/>
- 6 Tips for Nursing Students to Pass Exams at <http://www.nursetogether.com/tips-for-nursing-students-to-pass-the-exam>
- ****Test Taking Techniques at <http://www.austincc.edu/health/ttt/> ****
- TestTakingTips.com for insights for a variety of different testing formats (multiple choice, true-false, short answer,)

Why, Oh Why? And What is the Purpose?



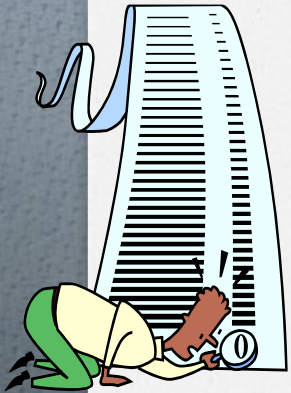
- o Well designed multiple choice questions allow for engagement and evaluation in application of knowledge to nursing practice
- o Multiple choice questions enhance and evaluate critical thinking
- o Optimal patient outcomes are effected by the ability of nurses' to critically think

Colleen Nevins, RN, MN, DNP, Test Taking Tips, 2014

All in the Prep

Learn the content to understand relevancy to practice versus memorizing, which requires:

- * **Reading the assigned material**
 - * **Practicing test questions**
- * **Discussion with others, e.g., group work**
- * **Questioning and seeking more information -
By asking why, when, where, who, how?**



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The BIG Question

NCLEX Style Question Components:

1. Stem: scenario and presentation of issue (key words)
1. Question: what the question is asking
2. Distractors: incorrect but possible answers
3. Key Words: set the direction of care or response

#2 - Sample Question

Sample NCLEX Questions

Stem: In passing the physician for your patient in the hospital hall, he smiles and mentions he will be ordering an x-ray. You enter the patient's room to find her crying. She states "Dr. X was so abrupt and rude. I have never been treated so badly. I want to talk to a supervisor."

Question: As the nurse, your best initial response is?

Distractors:

1. "What level of supervisor do you want to talk to?"
2. "Dr. X is always rude to everyone. Don't take it personally."
3. "What do you want to talk to a supervisor about? Perhaps I can help."
4. **Correct Answer:** "You seem upset."

Look for Cues in Answers

#2 - incorrect vs. correct Responses

INCORRECT

- Do not promote communication
- Discounts patient's feelings
- May make patient feel inadequate or defensive

CORRECT

- Promotes open communication
- Use of paraphrasing
- Acknowledges patient's feelings

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Cues in Key Words

#3 - Key Words

- **Always**
- **Most likely or least likely**
- **Initial**
- **Priority or best**
- **Every**
- **Entire**
- **Only**
- **Never or rarely**

Test Tips

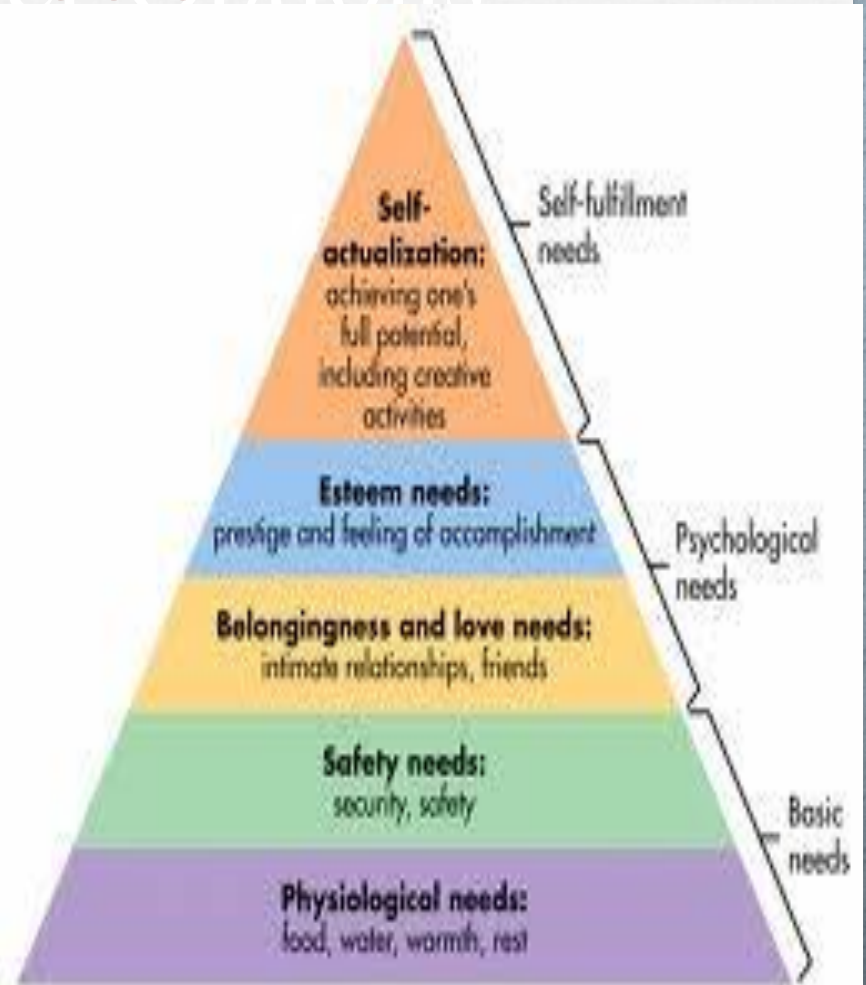
#4 - Tip



- **Read test question carefully.**
- **What is the question asking? Do not read into the scenario or question.**
- **Read the responses carefully.**
- **Re-read the scenario, question, and responses.**
- **Delete the obvious incorrect responses.**
- **Move onto the next question, and come back to the question if stuck.**

Tips #5 - Think Maslow!

- #1. Airway
Breathing
Circulation
- #2. Safety/Disability
- #3. Communication
- #4. Nursing Process



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Question/Answer Sample

Question: As a nurse, which of the following is your **first** priority of providing care?

Answers:

1. Patient needs a dressing change
2. Patient needs suctioning
3. Patient is in pain
4. Patient is incontinent

After answering, now place each in order of priority...

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Question/Answer Sample

Question: As a nurse, which of the following is your **first** priority of providing care?

Answers in order of priority:

#4. Patient needs a dressing change

#1. Patient needs suctioning

#2. Patient is in pain

#3. Patient is incontinent

Question/Answer Options

- o **Important elements:** patient (age, gender, race); issue or medical problem (patho); details (signs/symptoms, medications, surgery); time (early or late, pre- or post-op surgery)
- o **If unsure, make an educated guess by**
 - o Eliminating distractors, which can increase your correct choice of options by @ 25 - 30%
 - o If choice is between 2 answers, choose the most logical or common sense response; 50 - 50 chance of being correct

Remember: Not all Exam Questions will be NCLEX

- o The following slides will provide basic information for answering:
 - o Multiple Choice Questions
 - o True False Questions
 - o Short Answer Questions
 - o Open Book Exam Questions

Basic Info for Answering **Multiple Choice** Questions

- o Go through the test once and answer all the questions you can
- o Go through test again, spend a reasonable amount of time on each question, then move on if you get stuck
- o If you are stuck, try to reason the correct answer from general concept or theory
- o Research shows that students gain more than they lose if they change an answer (Kruger et al., 2005)
- o Save time at the end to double-check answers and ensure there are no clerical or numbering errors

Basic Information for Answering **True-False** Questions

- o Usually there are more true answers than false
- o You have 50% chance of getting the right answer if guessing
- o **Read through each statement carefully**
- o **Pay attention to qualifiers like “never, always, and every” mean that the statement must be true “all of the time”**
- o Qualifiers like “usually, sometimes and generally” mean that the statement can be considered true or false depending on the circumstances
- o If any part of the questions is false, then the entire statement is false

Basic Information for **Short-Answer** Questions

- o Use flashcards; write key terms, dates and concepts
- o Try to anticipate questions that will be asked on the test and prepare for them
- o Usually what your instructor emphasizes in class will be on the test
- o Try not to leave an answer blank. Show your work/write down your thoughts, even if you don't get the exact answer
- o If you can think of more than one answer for a question, ask the instructor to clarify

Basic Information for taking **Open-Book** Tests

- o Spend an equal or great amount of time preparing as you would for a normal test.
- o Open book tests are most likely to be harder
- o Familiarize yourself with the book and assigned material
- o Focus on learning the main ideas and get a feel for where they are located in the book and/or your notes.
- o Answer the easy questions you know off the top of your head
- o Do not expect you will have time to look up every single answer. Most are timed and you cannot look up each in the time allotted.

Reduce Test Taking Anxiety

(excessive worry about doing well on a test)

- o Being well prepared for the test
- o Space out studying over a few days and continually review materials
- o Maintain a positive attitude while preparing
- o Stress reducing activities (yoga, exercise, meditation)
- o Show up to class early to reduce worry of being late
- o Read directions slowly and carefully
- o If you do not understand the directions, ask

Top Performing Students Report the following tips:

- o Regularly attend class
- o Pay attention in class
- o Read strategically (skim; focus on introductions, conclusion and highlighted/boxed texts; pay attention to readings mentioned in class)
- o Spread out studying, as opposed to cramming
- o Seek help from campus resources

Gross Davis, B., *Tools for Teaching*, Second Edition, Jossey-Bass

Study Strategies (Continued)

- o Study in a quiet environment (few distractions)
- o Study with others who are well prepared and can help each other
- o Get enough sleep
- o Vary study activities (re-read text, notes, rewrite class notes, memorize information, pose questions while studying)

Gross Davis, B., *Tools for Teaching*, Second Edition, Jossey-Bass

Focus on Success



SUCCESS

Because you too can own this face of pure accomplishment.

Colleen Nevins, RN, MN, DNP, Test Taking Tips, 2014

References

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- o Sherwood, G., Horton-Deutsch, S., *Reflective Organizations on the Front lines of QSEN & Reflective Practice implementation*, 2015, *Sigma Theta Tau International*, pp38-42