

Paramedic Program

Student Success Strategies

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Contents

Strategies for Success: in the Classroom..... 3

Strategies for Success: Creating a Study Environment 4

Strategies for Success: Study Log 5

Strategies for Success: in the Lab 6

Strategies for Success: Test-Taking Tips 7

Strategies for Success: Time Management 8

Strategies for Success: Sage Advice from Former Students 9

Recommendations to the New Paramedic Class 9

Food for Thought..... 10

Strategies for Success: in the Classroom

Be present

1. Arrive on time (or early)
2. Bring all necessary resources/tests/equipment
3. Sit where you can see and hear and not be distracted
4. Be alert and mentally present 'in the moment'

Listen

1. Be an active listener; concentrate on what is being discussed
2. Remain open to the ideas and opinions of others – even if you disagree
3. Be non-judgmental
4. Anticipate questions and participate in discussion
5. Remain mindful of your body language – and that of others
6. Tune out distractions; move if your neighbor is chatty or distracting
7. Listen for the main ideas and details – and instructions
8. Listen but also take notes

Take notes

1. Outline as you listen and take notes; it helps organize the information
2. Use concept mapping or diagramming; it activates the right brain
3. Visualize concepts and create your illustrations
4. Use keywords and examples, ex. drawings, symbols
5. Develop your own creative shorthand
6. Copy all information from the board
7. Leave space for additional notations

Review

1. Review your notes soon after class (remember the Curve of Forgetting)
2. Edit and summarize in preparation for examinations
3. Highlight keywords or memory triggers
4. Link the new material to something you already know
5. Short, frequent study sessions are more effective than extended sessions
6. Form study groups with other students
7. Keep a daily record of time spent studying (see [Study Log](#))

Strategies for Success: Creating a Study Environment

Find your learning place

1. Use a consistent study space
1. Comfortable temperature
2. Comfortable chair
3. Resources: texts, computer, other
4. Good lighting

Eliminate distractions

1. Children
2. Pets
3. Phone
4. TV or music
5. Hunger
6. Cluttered environment

Buy-in and support from family and friends

1. Protect dedicated study time
2. Ground rules for interruptions
3. Alerts for coming tests and assignments

Take care of yourself

1. Frequent breaks
2. Relaxation techniques
3. Positive self-talk

Planning for study

1. Select a time that works and that you will adhere to
2. Don't wait until the last minute for assignments and exam prep
3. Begin to prepare for major exams at least three days in advance
4. Plan for at least two hours of study time for each hour of class
5. Use mini-sessions, ex. part of a lunch break, waiting in line

**Strategies for Success:
Study Log**

Date	Topic	Length of Time

Name:		Instructor review:	
Comments:			

Strategies for Success: in the Lab

Skill lab

1. Practice is essential to skill mastery
2. Practice until you are 'unconsciously competent'
3. Peers evaluate and test each other
4. Provide honest, constructive feedback in a positive manner
5. Do not hang back; we learn by doing
6. Learn from others: instructors and peers
7. Skill lab time is practice time, not downtime. Take advantage of every minute
8. All skills must be successfully completed and documented
9. Document all skill attempts in your tracking platform
10. Do not bring food and beverages into the lab setting

Scenarios

1. Scenarios begin to develop realistic patient encounters and situations
2. Scenarios begin to develop critical thinking and connect the dots
3. Listen to instructions carefully and complete tasks as instructed
4. Practice good crew resource management; be a good team member
5. Develop team leader skills
6. Always perform; do not say, "I would do xxxx"
7. Treat manikins with respect; they are your patients
8. Never write on a manikin or apply any substance not authorized by an instructor
9. Safety in the lab is as important as in the field
10. Accept constructive criticism and improve

Simulations

1. Simulations add more realism
2. Opportunity to perfect your scene choreography
3. Opportunity to perfect your skills as a team leader
4. Refines critical thinking
5. Adapt to changing situations and information

Strategies for Success: Test-Taking Tips

Preparation

1. Study and know the topic
2. Do not try to 'cram' for the exam
3. Use available study tools and online quizzes
4. Get adequate rest before the exam; at least seven hours is recommended
5. Maintain a positive attitude; fear is self-defeating
6. On the other hand, do not be overconfident
7. Focus on understanding and not memorization
8. Arrive early and plan for potential delays on the way to class
9. Do not forget adequate food and hydration before the exam

During the exam

1. Relax – deep breathing is not over-rated
2. Pace yourself. For multiple choice exams, one minute per question is typical
3. Read the question carefully and read **all** the alternatives before selecting one
4. Read the question a second time if necessary.
5. More than one answer may be appropriate at times. You must select the one that is the *most* correct, what you would do *first*, what is *most* important
6. If you do not know an answer, go to the next question and then return later if the testing platform permits going back
7. When you are unsure of the correct answer, your first instinct is usually correct
8. Do not become unsettled if other students leave before you are finished
9. If time permits, you may wish to check all your answers in case you misread one
10. Keep your eyes on your own paper or test-taking device; any concern about potential academic dishonesty is serious

After the exam

1. Do not stress until you get your results
2. Look up information that you did not know or were not sure of
3. If permitted, keep a blank sheet of paper to note a topic you want to look at later
4. Remember that some subjects/topics are easier to comprehend than others
5. Reassess your study habits if you did not do well
6. Use your study group to drill each other
7. Find a tutor if needed
8. Remember that you are learning to care for seriously ill and injured patients

Strategies for Success: Time Management

Assess where you are

1. What are your responsibilities:
 - a. Family
 - b. Work
 - c. Volunteer activities
 - d. Community/church activities
 - e. Other?
2. How will this education program fit into your schedule?
3. Have you been realistic regarding the amount of time the program will take?
4. What are your time wasters?
5. Do you have significant events in the future? (i.e., wedding, birth, family event)

Going forward

1. Establish priorities
2. Commit to the amount of time required for study and required clinical and field internship activities
3. Develop a time management plan; look beyond tomorrow
4. Make a schedule
5. Prepare for tomorrow today and plan ahead
6. Checklists can be useful in tracking tasks and activities that must be completed
7. Keep a time log
8. Include time for:
 - a. Exercise
 - b. Relaxation
 - c. Sleep
9. Do not get behind in studying; sometimes, you cannot catch up
10. Make the most of your time in each activity and focus on the event, task, interaction
11. Stay organized
12. Mark your progress and celebrate your successes
13. Communicate with your instructor if you are struggling
14. Tell your family and friends what you need

Strategies for Success: Sage Advice from Former Students

The following advice is from two former students who sat where you are now.

Recommendations to the New Paramedic Class

First and foremost, never miss a day of class! I'm sure you will be finding out why very soon.

Secondly, and most importantly, make sure you have the time to understand the information you must read. I do not mean make sure you have the time to read the material; I mean make sure you have time to understand and really understand the material. Now, the truth is that this class moves along at a very rapid rate. You can be doing Introduction to ECG one day, 12 Lead ECG the next, and have already moved into your ACLS course on the third day. This is the nature of the program, and we must adapt to it.

I started this program working more than full-time, maybe 45 hours a week, at a private ambulance company. After only scoring mediocre on the first couple of tests and attributing that result to the fact that I wasn't able to read all the assigned material before the test because there weren't enough free hours in my day, I decided to go down to part-time.

I have been working part-time at 24-30 hours a week for several months now, and my scores have dramatically improved. Even more important than that dramatic increase in my scores is the retention of the material. Remember that when you get out in the field, you will be responsible for your patients' lives and well-being. Learn and retain everything you can now, or your patients will pay for it later.

So, how do you accomplish this task? In my mind, it is very simple. Read the material, question the material, and understand the material. Reading the material does not in any way ensure you will understand it. For this reason, take your time while reading the information and go as slowly as necessary until you understand every word. If you understand the information, you should do fine in the class. I recommend not stopping at that point. I recommend questioning the material that doesn't make sense to you. Question the book, question handouts, question instructors, question everything. The most important priority is your patient, and to correctly manage that patient, you will need to understand the principles that apply. If a concept does not make sense after absorbing the information, question and search for what makes sense.

Good luck to all of you. I hope you are here for the right reasons and that your dedication to this class and the material will give your future patients the best chance of life, longevity, and as pleasant an experience as possible.

Food for Thought

1. Try to minimize external stressors in your life. This program is tough, regardless. Your attitude can 'make or break' your experience through this course.
2. Determine which method of studying pharmacology works for you as soon as possible and establish good habits early. Take your drug cards with you everywhere. Five minutes here and there helps: waiting in line at the grocery store, sitting in traffic, etc. It's the same thing when you get into cardiac rhythms.
3. If you're in a relationship, be prepared for a year of growth and learning together. Especially if your mate is working hard in life or studying hard. Know that this is a draining year. *But it is only a year!!!* Try to leave a long day at school at school.
4. Get exercise! We sit a lot in class. Enjoy yourself when you can without letting your studies suffer. Once you get behind, it can be challenging to catch up!
5. Be humble! Especially seasoned EMT providers. We are all attempting to accomplish the same goal. Work as a team. Help each other out and sympathize with each person's weaknesses and strengths. Be the better person and attempt to help someone struggling with something you're dialed in on.
6. Don't get too stressed out on points. Take pride in what you do, and, yes, strive to keep your grade the highest you can, but realize this is a long program with tons of tests.
7. Ask questions!! If you do not understand something, don't hesitate to ask your instructor to clarify. Remember, your instructors are here for your education. Don't let pride get in the way. You are probably not the only person 'not getting it.'
8. How much you put into the program is exactly how much you will get from it. Be proactive in labs. It's okay to flail through scenarios (at first). That's how we learn. Don't be shy. The more you can learn from your mistakes during labs, the better off **all** your testing situations will be.
9. If your schedule allows, come in on your days off to practice and ask questions. It's just more confirmation of material and often more geared to what YOU need to know because it's just you and an instructor.
10. Pre-read the chapter material!!!
11. Practice the skills early and often. If you have your skills dialed in by the end of the course, you have only your writing to worry about. Huge!!!
12. Good luck, and congrats on starting your career in a field that might do some good. Believe it or not, the course starts getting fun when things come together.
13. 'The latest you should be is five minutes early.'