

Prepare For Exams

Everything you need to know in order to
prepare for taking exams in college

Goals

1. Learn useful study tips/strategies to prepare you for taking exams in college.
2. Apply one or two new strategies to improve your test-taking skills.



“Why High School Studying Won’t Work”

High School

- You’re typically told what to do (and study) in order to be successful.
- Mistakes are highlighted and corrected.
- Facts and skills are taught and can often be memorized.
- Mastery of a subject is the ability to solve the problems as you were taught.

College

- You’re responsible for knowing the material and what may appear on the test.
- You’re expected to read and understand materials *prior* to class sessions.
- Applying what you learn is expected, not simply mastery of concepts.
- Analysis and synthesis of concepts and ideas are the goals.



Your Professors and Studying

Students & Studying

- It's all about the time I've put in (even if it's not a lot).
- I know "A," "B," and "C" (*or* identification).
- I know what "A," "B," and "C" mean (*or* definition).
- I can work the problems like those in the text.

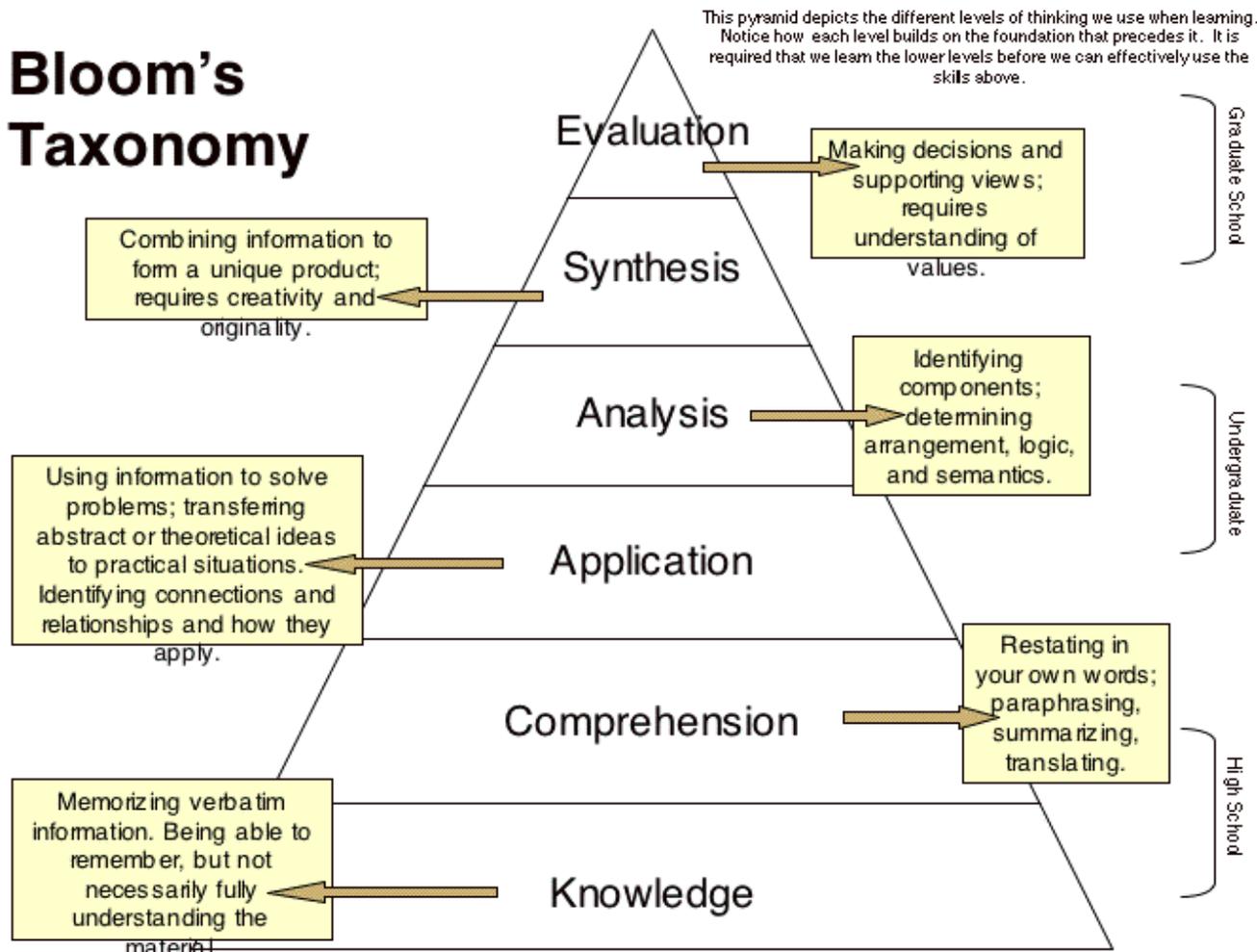
Professors & Studying

- It's not just about the time you put in; it's about the process and the results of that time.
- Students need to distinguish "A" from "B" from "C."
- Students must see why "A" is "A," "B" is "B," and "C" is "C."
- Students must draw connections between and among concepts and ideas.



Bloom's Taxonomy: The Process of Learning

Bloom's Taxonomy



Louisiana State University © Center for Academic Success © B-31 Coates Hall © 225-578-2872 © www.cas.lsu.edu

Bloom's Taxonomy (cont'd)

- Before we can comprehend a concept, we have to know (learn) it.
- Before we can apply the concept, we must comprehend (understand) it.
- Before we can analyze it, we must be able to apply it.
- Before we can synthesize it, we must have analyzed it.
- Before we can evaluate it, we must have synthesized it.
- True education means we must have learned, understood, applied, analyzed, synthesized, and evaluated a concept.



The Take-Away?

- College-level academics will challenge you to dig deeper and to push beyond simple knowledge accumulation (rote learning) in order to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate concepts (meaningful learning).
- Understanding the use of higher order thinking skills will enable you to master your coursework and achieve the academic success you want!



The Successful Study Cycle: Phase 1

- **Phase 1: Preview**

- Read or preview chapters to be covered in class...before class.
- Look over highlighted content, headings, outlines, formulae, graphs.
- Read the summary and what else appears at the end of the chapter.
- Think of questions you might want or need answered by the professor.



The Successful Study Cycle: Phase 2

- **Phase 2: Class**

- Attend class.
- Actively listen and participate.
- Take meaningful notes.
- Reflect on your preview...are you missing anything?



The Successful Study Cycle: Phase 3

- **Phase 3: Review**

- Review, process, and summarize class notes as soon as possible after class.
- Are your notes complete and accurate?
- Note anything you find confusing or that you need more information about in order to understand.



The Successful Study Cycle: Phase 4

- **Phase 4: Implement Intense Study Sessions**



What's an Intense Study Session?

- **An intense study session is a process where you are dedicating approximately one hour, or more, of your time to specific and focused subject matter with limited distractions and a goal in mind.**

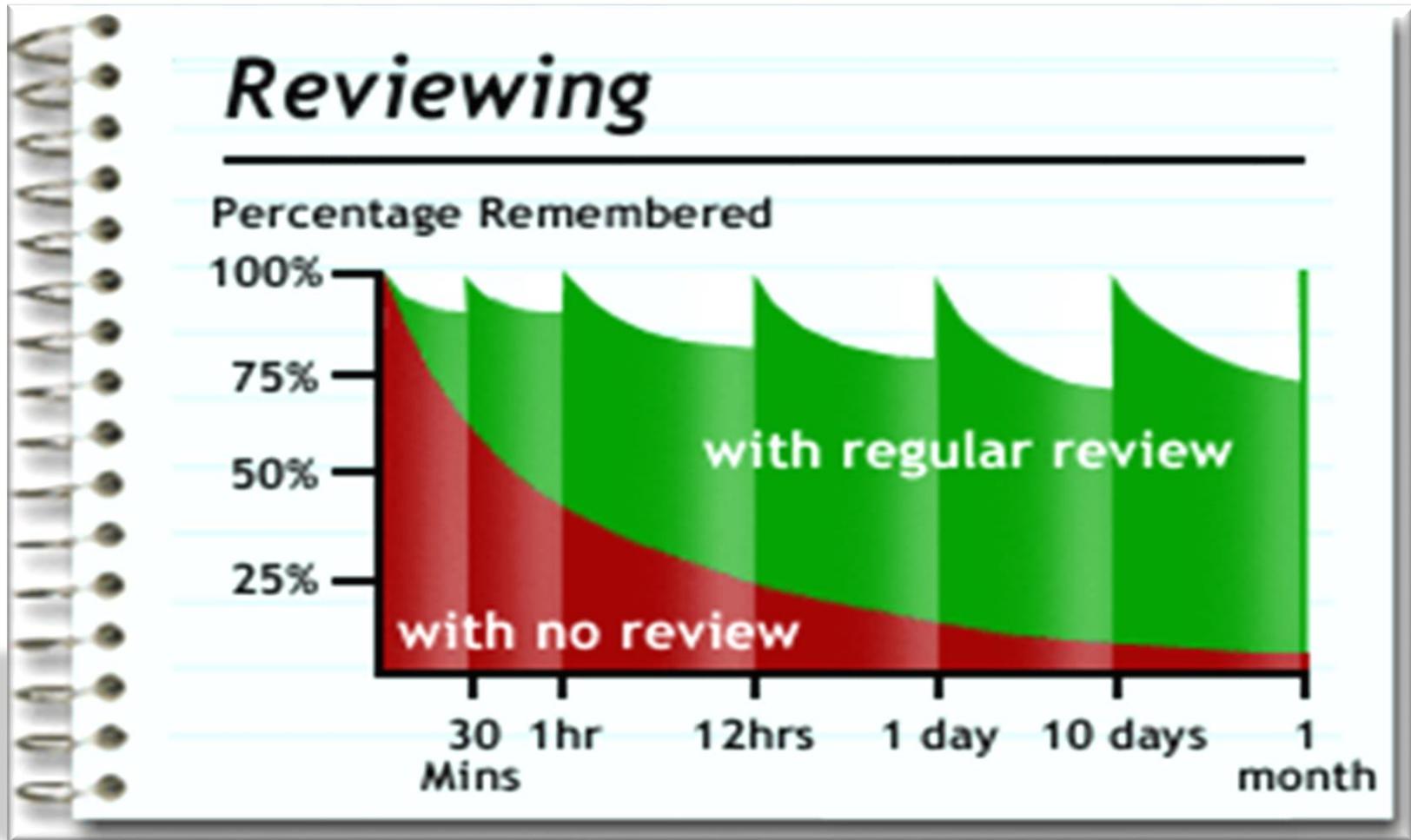


Intense Study Session Process

- **2-5 minutes:** Set specific and realistic goals for the session.
- **30-40 minutes:** Study with focus and action....read text and highlight; summarize readings; work practice problems; develop concept maps; “teach” the material to a partner; *what do you actively do to understand the material?*
- **5 minutes:** Review the material just studied.
- **10 minutes:** Take a break to refresh your mind.
- *Make sure you are consistent with your studying to ensure the best understanding and preparation.*



Reviewing



Taking the Test: Strategies for Success

- **Preview:** Look over the test for point distribution, types of questions, etc. Without previewing, you might find that essay too late!
- **Unload Your Memory:** Jot down equations, formulae, facts, mnemonic devices, whatever it is you use to tackle the subject matter.
- **Start Wherever:** Build your confidence by completing those questions that you are comfortable with – whether that's the essays or the multiple choice.
- **Answer What You Know:** Seems intuitive, huh?
- **Look for Clues:** You may find clues or even answers to questions in the information provided in another portion of the test...be observant and take advantage of that when it does happen!
- **Watch Your Watch:** Pace yourself, keep your time, and budget wisely. An essay question worth half the grade deserves more than that seven minutes left at the end of the test time.



Different Tests, Different Strategies: Multiple Choice

- **Multiple Choice**

- Read instructions carefully.
- Try to figure out the answer **BEFORE** you read the choices.
- Answer all of the questions you know.
- For remaining questions, use the process of elimination.



Different Tests, Different Strategies: True/False

- **True/False**

- Answer what you know.
- If part of statement is true, and part is false, the *entire* statement is false.
- Absolute statements that contain “never,” “always,” or “none” are often false. Conversely, qualified statements are often true.



Different Tests, Different Strategies: Matching

- **Matching**

- Always answer by reading the definition or phrase first and then looking for the correct word.
- Begin by making the matches you are certain about.
- Cross out items as you make matches.



Different Tests, Different Strategies: Essay

- **Essay**

- If there is more than one essay, adjust and monitor the time you spend on each one.
- Look for key words (*next slide*) and underline so you grasp the intent of the question.
- Jot down an outline and frame your question.
- Never leave an essay blank...write something, even if it's just bullet pointed items.



Key Words for Essay Tests

- **Explain:** Tell about & give reasons for something.
- **Discuss:** Give reasons behind points of view.
- **Describe:** Present a detailed picture of something.
- **Compare:** Describe similarities.
- **Contrast:** Compare differences.
- **List:** Present information in an order.
- **Trace:** State a series of events in logical order.
- **Criticize:** Make judgments; analysis is often necessary.
- **Evaluate:** Give your opinion or cite the opinion of an expert. Include evidence.
- **Summarize:** State the major points.
- **Prove:** Give arguments, facts and details to support a statement or theory.
- **Illustrate:** Give concrete examples.
- **Relate:** Show the connections between ideas or events.



Making a Plan!

- Planning your work, classes, fun, and study times can help provide direction and allow you to set realistic goals.



But Don't Forget...

- All the strategies in the world only go so far.
- Successful test taking requires these things:
 - Preparation
 - Confidence
 - Technique
 - Health



Questions?

If you have any questions or need further assistance,
please contact us in the
Center for Academic Success
& Exploration (CASE)
in Jordan Hall 144,
or email us at learning@butler.edu.