

Exam Time ? "But I Don't Wanna!"

By Rebecca Shorten • Contributor

Well, it is that time of year again. We're sneaking up on exams – don't let them sneak up on you! One of the main reasons people don't do well on exams is lack of long-term preparation. If you've been looking over your notes and reviewing at least once a week, then congratulations! But if you haven't, it's still not too late to start. We have a great long weekend ahead of us that we wouldn't normally have for exam preparation, so take advantage of it.

Now is the perfect time to begin preparing for your exams. Here are a few simple rules to guide you through the process.

1. Gather everything you need for each course into one spot, including: textbooks, lecture notes, reading notes, lab books, seminar handouts, etc.

2. Create a schedule. Every student needs to set priorities, such as figuring out how much each exam is worth may determine how long a student spends studying for it, especially if you have two exams in one day. Schedule enough time to study for each exam, and leave time for review. It is a good idea to over-schedule time, so that you have that

buffer if there are unforeseen problems. Review is very important to establish the knowledge in your long-term memory, so make sure not to leave it out.

3. Begin your actual studying by taking 30 minutes to review everything, so you know beforehand what you are going to be looking at. This is a kind of "warm-up."

4. Create a detailed listing of everything you will need to know for the exam. During your 30 minute review, write out each topic as you come across it. Take a look at your list and decide what fits and what doesn't, and add things you may have missed. Organize your list appropriately.

5. Review each topic on your list intensively by reading all the material you have on the topic. Read slowly and carefully, then check off each item on your list as you finish it.

6. Practice everything on your list A LOT. This can be achieved by: teaching it to someone else; **making flash cards and using them**; mnemonic devices; creating a song, pictures, or doodles; or

writing.

7. Test yourself frequently on your ability to recall what you know. Flash cards are a good way of achieving this. Or, if you have to write an essay for the exam, write a practice essay.

8. Repeat steps 5-7 until you feel you know the information so well, you hardly need to think about it. You may think you know it now, but will you be able to recall it under the stress of the exam?

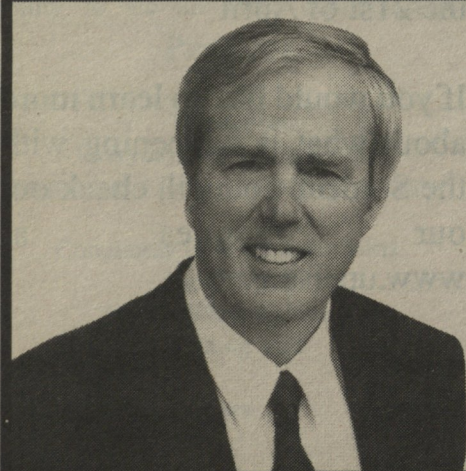
Often, professors will give you hints as to what form the test will take, so skipping the last class is not a good idea – these classes are probably the most valuable to you for the final examination. Professors don't want you to fail, and they don't set out to deliberately trip you up. They are probably your biggest fan-club, and will help you in any sort of way you need to help prepare for the exam. And who knows better than the person writing the exam, anyway?

The night before the exam, make sure you get a good night's sleep, and have a healthy breakfast the next morning. Your brain will

need the extra energy, if you don't normally eat breakfast. Don't try to learn anything new just before the exam – review what you already know. Think positively, and you will do fine. Sit in a place where you are most comfortable, and if you are in the gym, ear plugs have been a good suggestion. Focus on your own work.

Make sure you read **the entire question** before you start writing. This is so important, because if you miss out on part of the question, you miss out on potentially easy marks. If you don't know the answer, leave it and come back to it later; get the easy questions first to give yourself confidence and to warm up your brain. Come back to the questions, and if you still aren't sure, put down anything you think might be correct. The effort to do this may help to jog your memory, and if not, at least you'll have something down that may get you a mark or two.

With these strategies, you can't lose. Good luck on all your exams, and have a great summer!



Shawn Murphy
MP for Hillsborough

For assistance, please contact:

OFFICE: 75 Fitzroy Street, Suite 201
Charlottetown, PE C1A 1R6

TELEPHONE: (902) 566-7770

FAX: (902) 566-7780

EMAIL: murphy.shawn@pei.aibn.com

WEB: www.shawnmurphymp.ca