

How to Succeed on the NKE

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Housekeeping

- Slides, archived webinar, and Q&A to be posted on HRPA website on the Office of the Registrar page by next week
- Time has been set aside for questions at the end of the webcast but you can submit your questions at any time
- All questions and their answers will be posted on the HRPA website

About the Exam

How is the NKE developed and scored?



June 22 webinar
How the national exams are developed and scored

How do I register for the exam and what are the logistics of writing the exam?



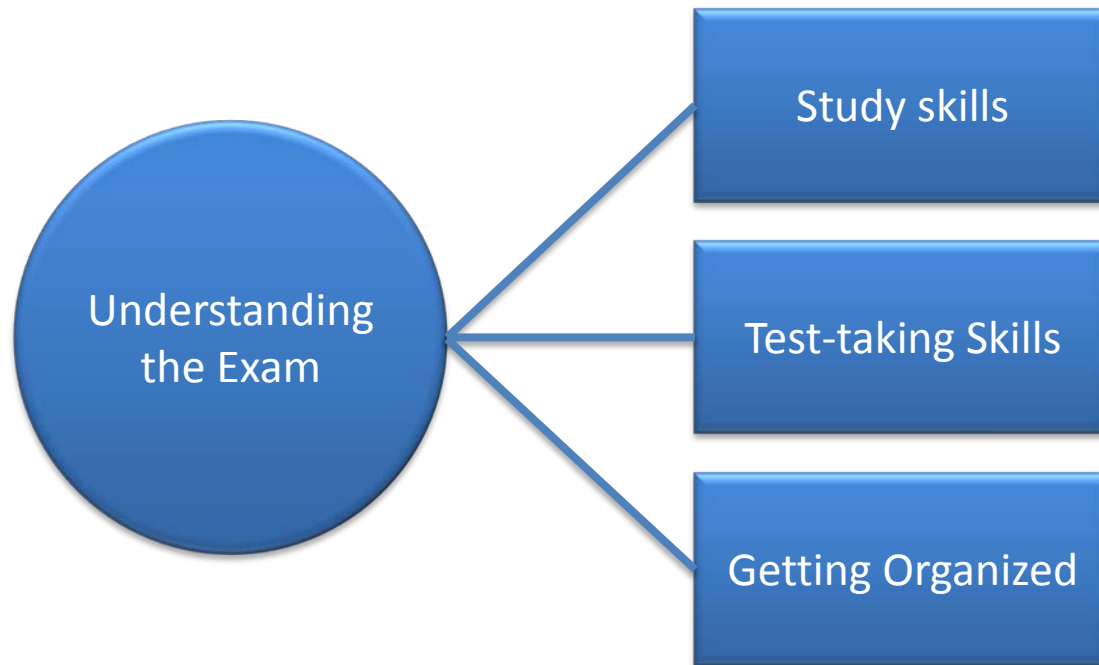
July 13 webinar
Writing the NKE in October 2010

What is the best way of preparing for the exam and what resources are available to prepare for the exam?



Today's webinar
How to succeed on the National Knowledge Exam

Webinar Map



Notice

- The NKE is developed by CCHRA's Independent Board of Examiners (IBE)
- Anyone who is involved in the development of the exam (item writers, item reviewers, Angoff panel members, members of the Independent Board of Examiners, printers, CCHRA staff) must sign a non-disclosure agreement
- Individuals who have written the exam in the past are also bound by a non-disclosure agreement

Disclaimer

- This presenter has not seen the exam questions
- No developer of prep programs has access to the questions, even the vendor that offers the prep program sponsored by CCHRA does not have access to the questions
- The CCHRA IBE does not help, provide feedback, or endorse, any prep program vendor

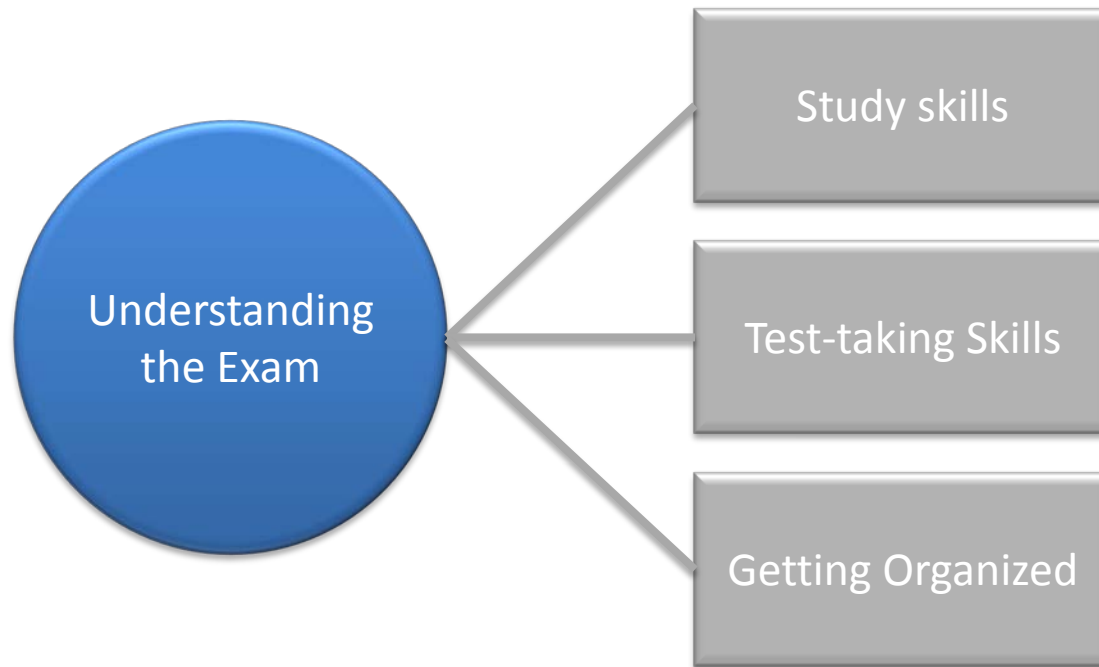
Preparation and Execution

- It is about practice
- For instance, test-taking strategies are not something that should be left to exam day, they need to be practiced such that they are well-honed skills come exam day
- Test-taking skills are developable

You Are Responsible for Your Exam Preparation

- After every exam, some unsuccessful exam-writers come to us and complain that certain areas were not covered in their exam prep seminar, or study guide, or program
- Remember, you are responsible for your own preparation!

Webinar Map



What is Important to Know About the NKE?

- We must start with the exam itself
- Information about the NKE that makes a difference as to how one should study for the exam and how one should approach the exam

What is Important to Know About the NKE?

- What kind of test is the NKE?
- What is the test intended to measure?
- What is the test format?
- Who writes the test?
- How are the questions written?
- What are the test specifications?

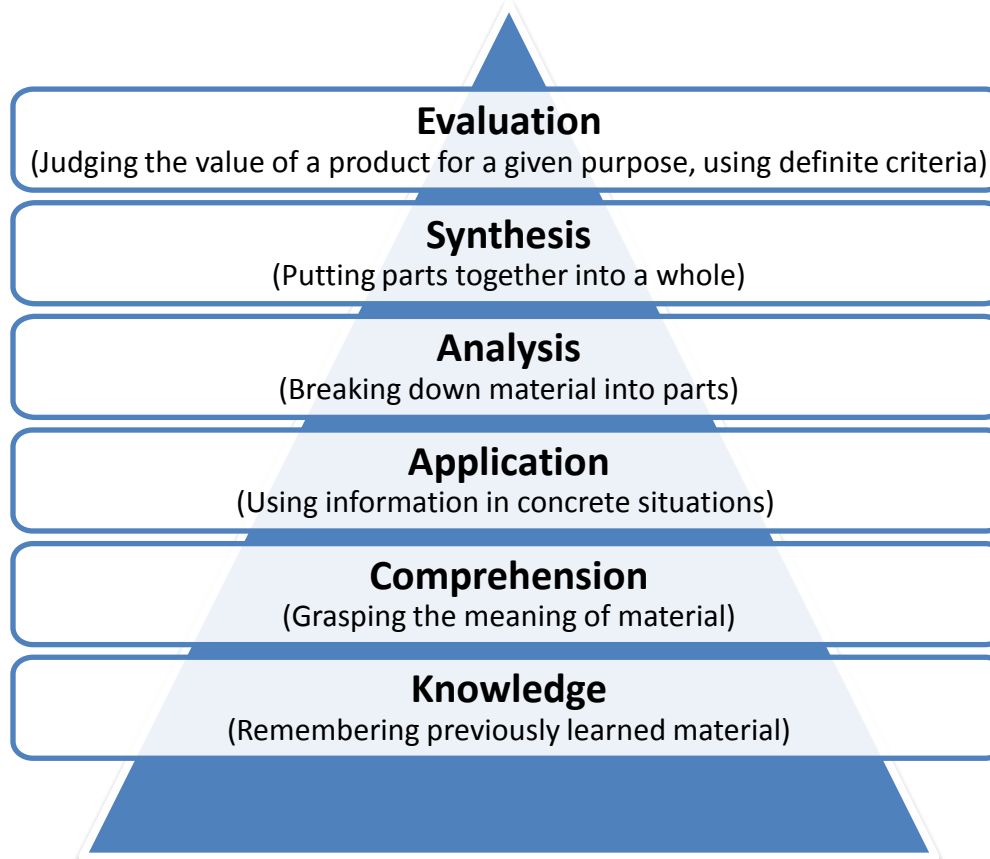
Criterion-Referenced Measurement

- The NKE is a criterion-referenced test—there are no quotas, there is no target pass rate, there is no ‘bell curving’
- The cut-score reflects a consistent level of proficiency across exam forms
- As exam-writers you are not competing against other exam-writers

What is the NKE Intended to Measure?

- It is meant to assess **academic knowledge**
- **Academic knowledge** refers to basic facts, policies, practices, methods, legislation, etc. It is information that can be written into procedures and transferred fairly accurately during the learning process.

Bloom's Taxonomy



Multiple-Choice Format

- The fact that the NKE is a multiple-choice exam is important for more than test-taking strategies, it impacts how one studies for the exam

Multiple-Choice Format

- Pulls for a certain kind of knowledge (well matched for knowledge and comprehension levels)
- Recall as opposed to production
- Four option multiple-choice
- No penalty for guessing

Who Wrote the Exam?

- It is written by academics
- It is written by many different item-writers
- This means that the style of question will vary

Link to HR Body of Knowledge

- The test specifications reference the HR Body of Knowledge (a.k.a., the RPCs)
- But the RPCs are quite broad
- Make sure that you read the RPCs related to the NKE
- The RPCs are quite inclusive however

Test Specifications

		Academic Knowledge	
Content Domain	Total Number of RPCs®	Number of Academic Knowledge RPCs®	Percent of Academic Knowledge RPCs®
Professional Practice	42	24	25.0
Organizational Effectiveness	22	8	8.3
Staffing	30	18	18.8
Employee & Labour Relations	25	10	10.4
Total Compensation	25	10	10.4
Org. Learning & Training	26	18	18.8
Occupational Health & Safety	17	8	8.3
Total	187	96	100.0

Test Specifications

Detailed test specifications (the ‘Academic Knowledge RPCs’ and the RPC elements) are found on the CCHRA website and in an appendix to HRPAs *Certification Handbook*

Required Professional Capabilities (RPCs) relevant to the National Knowledge Exam (NKE®)

Professional Practice		Communication theories, tools, techniques, and processes	
RPC-3	Contributes to development of an environment that fosters effective working relationships	3.01	Work processes, the inter-dependence of workers and their productivity
		3.02	General influences on human behaviour (e.g., motivation theory)
		3.03	Behaviour of individuals, groups, and organizational units
		3.04	Techniques in managing workforce diversity
		3.05	Methods of creating interpersonal effectiveness
		3.06	Employee recognition and reward strategies and practices
		3.07	Employee recognition and reward strategies and practices
RPC-5	Keeps current with emerging HR trends.	5.01	HR issues, trends, developments and best practices
		5.02	Business issues, trends, and developments
		5.03	The importance/benefits of HR Planning
		5.04	Trends in all functional areas of HR practice
		5.05	Trends in labour force characteristics (e.g., labour force growth, employment trends and rates, unemployment, participation rates, occupational distribution of the workforce, and compensation)
		5.06	Trends and issues affecting the particular industry
		5.07	Global trends and issues in business/industry
		5.08	Organizational behaviour, leadership and management practices in an international context
RPC-8	Provides the information necessary for organization to effectively manage its people practices.	8.01	Career and succession planning and management
		8.02	Nature of internal working procedures and information flows
		8.03	Contract administration
		8.04	HR planning techniques
		8.05	Trends in human resources information management.
		8.06	HRMS concepts and techniques
		8.07	Procedures for collection, manipulation, and analysis of information
		8.08	The organization's strategic business plan and the goals of the business unit
		8.09	Use of business software
		8.10	Statistical analyses and evaluation
		8.11	HRMS project planning and management
RPC-11	Gathers, analyses, and reports relevant business and industry information (including global trends) to influence the development of strategic business	11.01	Sources of business/industry information
		11.02	Global trends in business/industry
		11.03	Analytical techniques/tools
		11.04	Data validation techniques/tools

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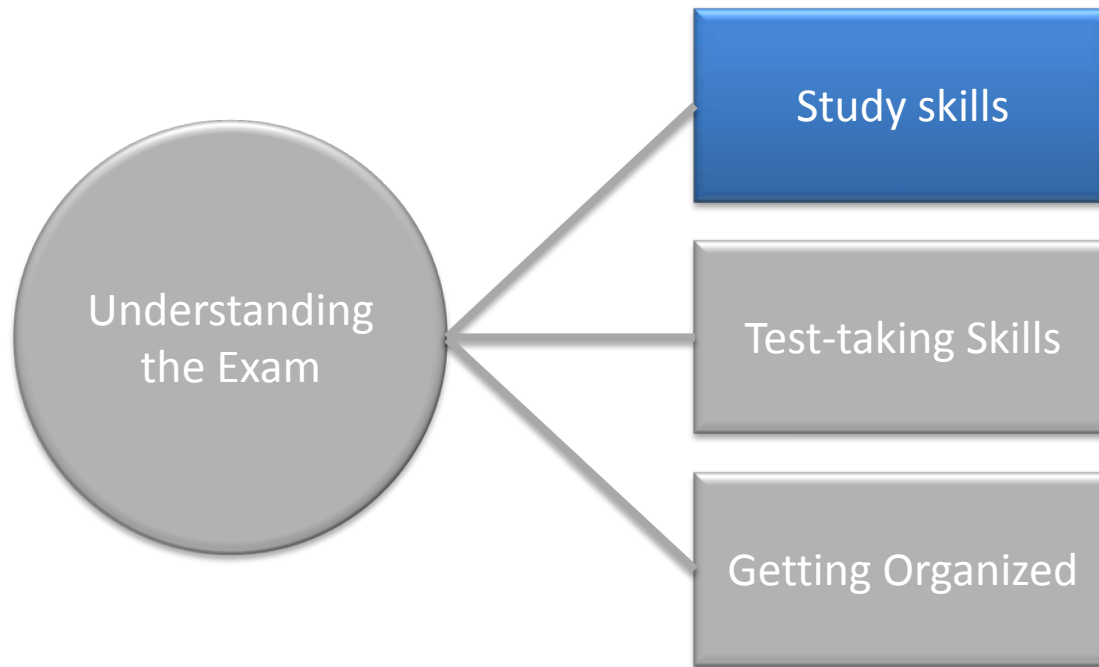
Power vs. Speed

- The NKE is a power test, not a speed test
- It is intended that most exam-writers will be able to complete the exam in the time allowed

Implications for Studying

- The challenge of breadth
- Fact-oriented approach
- Cover all areas
- Study for facts and an understanding of facts
- Breadth more than depth
- You may know more than you think (recall)
- Exposure to terms and definitions is useful

Webinar Map



Resources

	Frequency	Percent of Cases
Textbooks	371	70.0
Review of class notes	315	59.4
HRPA HRwrx on-line prep course	297	56.0
Sample questions from the CCHRA web-site	271	51.1
Canadian HR Press print study guide	199	37.5
Study group	107	20.2
CCHRA/Captus Press on-line prep course	70	13.2
College/University exam prep course	66	12.5
Online discussion group(s) (e.g., Facebook)	48	9.1
Live prep workshop	26	4.9
Other, please specify	19	3.6
Total	1789	337.5

Data from May 2010 HRPA pre-exam survey

Textbooks

- For most topics there are usually two textbooks
- If you used one text for a course, perhaps it would be a good idea to look at the other
- Read glossaries and definitions
- List of textbooks available from the HRPAs website

Prep Programs

- HRPAs HRwrx
- Canadian HR Press
- CCHRA Captus Press

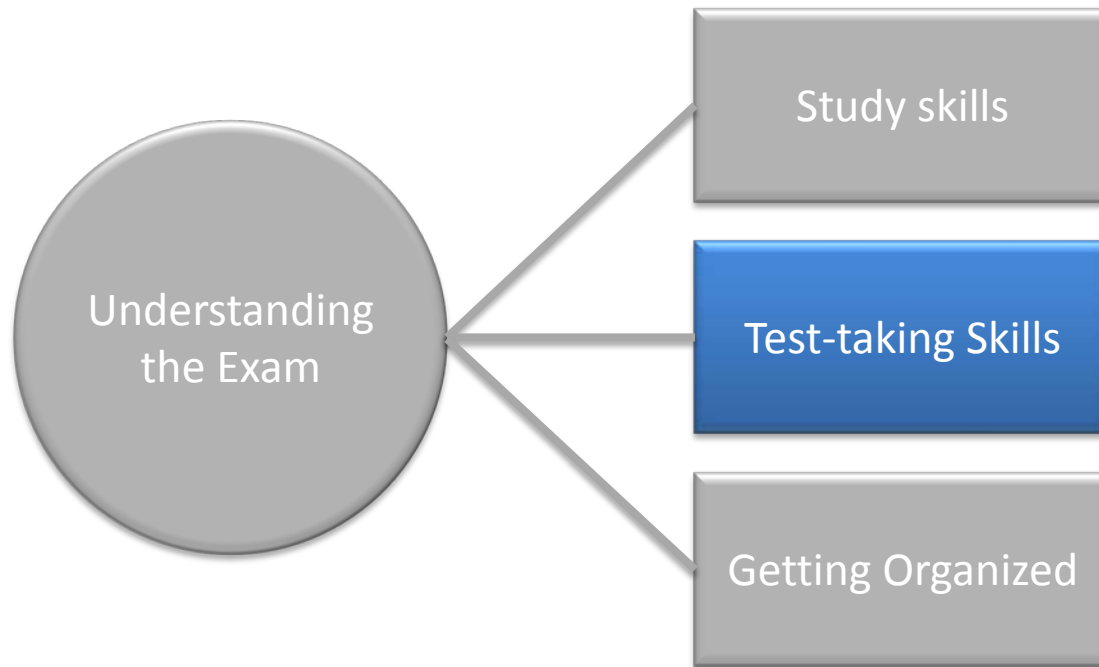
Sample Questions from CCHRA Web Site

- They're free
- 66 questions with answers
- Demonstrate negative and double negative questions
- Questions have been around for awhile

Study Groups

- Organized by chapters and educational institutions
- How study groups work best:
 - Each group member develops questions for others to answer
 - Get feedback on question answering strategies

Webinar Map



Test-taking Strategies for Multiple-choice Exams

- Time management
- Answering questions

Work Quickly

- Keep a good pace
- Don't get bogged down
- Don't argue with the question

Quick Skim

- Some suggest a quick skim of the exam before starting to answer questions
- The idea is to get a feel for the exam—don't start answering the questions
- But take no more than a couple of minutes for this

Pace Yourself

- Use your watch effectively (do not count on your exam room having a clock on the wall)
- 150 items in 3 hours means, 50 items per hour
- Aim for a question a minute, 30 in first half hour, 60 in first hour
- Check your progress every half hour (but don't obsess about it)
- You are likely to find that you are making better progress than you think

Skip difficult questions on first pass

- In general, a good strategy for taking multiple-choice tests is to first go through the test, answering all the questions you can, without worrying about the ones you cannot answer for the moment
- There are three reasons for this:
 - doing the easier questions first may help allay some of the anxiety that tests often evoke; and
 - sometimes seeing the answer alternatives to later questions will remind you of the answer alternatives to earlier questions. Subsequently, go through the test again, answering all the questions about which you are uncertain
 - It keeps your pace up
- Don't leave a question without some notes, preferably a preferred answer

Wait until the end to bubble in your answers

- Transfer all responses to the answer sheet at the same time, once you have marked all questions on your exam. (If you try to do several things at once, you increase the probability of making a mistake. Saving the relatively mindless job of filling in bubbles until the last step reduces the probability of making silly errors)
- But manage your time

Time Management Strategies Recap

- Work quickly
- Quick skim
- Pace yourself
- Skip difficult questions
- Bubble in answers at the end

Anatomy of a Multiple-Choice Question

Stem

1. In an attempt to improve organizational productivity and morale, employers are giving employees increased control over the hours they work. Which of the following is not an example of more common alternative work schedules?

- a. Flextime
- b. Telecommuting
- c. Dual career pathing
- d. Job sharing

Correct answer

Distractors

Writing on Exam Forms

- You are allowed to write on exam forms
- It is smart to develop a consistent way of marking up your questions. For example, if unsure, what is your preferred response at the time, which options have you eliminated, etc.
- You are allowed to bring a highlighter if you wish

Use a Coding System

- Don't be afraid to write on the exam form
- As you recognize alternatives that are false, scratch them out on the test booklet so there will be less to read if you have to come back to the question later
- Circle your preferred answer (if you run short on time, you would use this answer)

Read Questions Twice

- Read questions carefully, do not rush yourself
- Read the questions twice--on the first read, identify the topic; on the next read, identify what specifically the question is asking about that topic
- Pay attention to the small but important words, like adverbs—underline these words

Cover-up Strategy

- Use the “cover up strategy” try to recall a concept from memory or think out the answer before looking at the options. This helps minimize confusion and may speed up your decision making

Read All Alternatives

- When you are ready to read the answer alternatives, always read all answer alternatives carefully before jumping to the conclusion that a particular one must be the best
- Don't reject an option because it seems too obvious

Careful About Negative Wording

- Pay attention to the use of negatives, such as *not, unless, except, or none*.
- 'Which of the following is not...'
- Be especially careful with double negatives—
'*None of the following is true except*'
- Rephrasing in the positive is a strategy that some use

Use the Multiple True/False Approach

- For 'none of the above,' 'all of the above,' 'a and b above,' and similar set of options the best strategy is to use the true/false approach.
- Label each alternative answer as a true or false statement and then use the resulting pattern to identify possible answers: usually the item that breaks the pattern is the answer

Absolute Terms

- Pay attention to absolute terms in the options, such as *never*, *always* or *none*. They often (but not always) indicate that the statement is false

Don't Out-think Yourself

- Don't dismiss an alternative because it seems too obvious an answer. While some questions may require more complex application of concepts, others may only require straight recall. If you're well prepared for the exam, these questions may appear simple. Keep this in mind if you tend to dismiss some alternatives because you assume that multiple-choice tests are tricky, so the answer couldn't be so obvious

Change Answers

- Some say that you should never change your answers. That is not true.
- In general, when reviewing answers, you should only change an answer if you have a specific reason for doing so

Guessing

- There is no penalty for guessing
- It is to your advantage to guess

Caution

Careful

- “When guessing b and c are best.”
- “There couldn’t be four d’s in a row”
- “The longest option is usually correct”
- “The grammar is right for this choice”

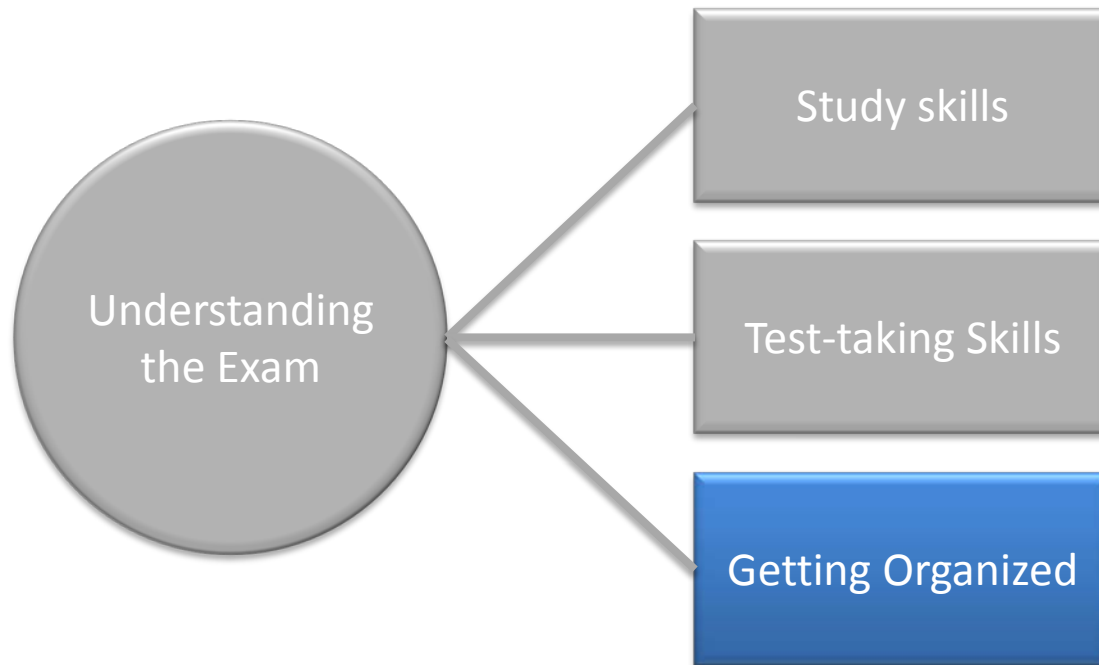
Answering Questions Strategies

Recap

Reading questions

- Read questions twice
- Cover-up strategy
- Read all alternatives
- Careful about negative wording
- Absolute terms
- Multiple true/false approach
- Don't out-think yourself
- Change answers
- Guessing is better than no answer

Webinar Map



The Days Before the Exam

- Figure where the exam is, the building, the room
- Figure out the parking situation beforehand (the last thing you want to do is get to the exam late and all out of sorts)
- Get a good night's sleep

Exam Day Checklist

- Eat a good breakfast
- Use a checklist if you need to but don't forget anything (Photo ID, authorization to write letter, pencils, eraser, watch)
- Give yourself adequate time to get there
- Take a few deep breaths

Exam Protocol

- Admission into the exam room will not be allowed after the first half hour
- Make sure that you bubble in your ID number correctly
- Execute what you have been practicing all these weeks
- Stay focused on the task at hand

Q&A



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