



RETHINKING YOUR STUDY STRATEGIES

Berkeley Law
Academic Skills
Program

RETHINKING YOUR STUDY STRATEGIES



Assess Exam
Performance

Assess Study
Strategies

Adjust Study
Strategies

BIG PICTURE



How did you spend your time?



What was helpful? What turned out not to be helpful?



What method(s) did you use to prepare for exams?



Did you have sufficient time to prepare and practice?

MORE
SPECIFICALLY

Reading and preparing for
class

Taking notes and
participating in class

Preparing for exams:
what + when

Time management

I. READING AND PREPARING FOR CLASS

- Where and when did I do the reading? Was I alert and engaged when I did the reading?
 - Did my reading process (highlighting, case briefing, supplements, etc.) help me understand class lectures and discussions?
 - Did I take too many or too few notes on the readings? Did I prioritize preparing for class at the expense of preparing for exams?
 - Do I know how to identify the key components of a case, including extracting rules from cases?
 - Is there any part of my class preparation (aside from reading the cases) that I can spend less time on or omit? What ultimately was unnecessary or not helpful?
-

II. TAKING NOTES IN CLASS

- Was I distracted during class or engaged/focused? If distracted, can I pinpoint why (family, housemates, internet access, phone, current events)? Is there anything I can change about my workspace to reduce distractions?
 - Did I take notes in class? If so, did I transcribe the lecture/discussion, or did I listen for and note the key information?
 - Did I keep my class notes separate and distinct from my reading notes?
 - How were my class notes structured or organized? Were they easy to read and understand later?
 - **Do I have a system for indicating important information?**
 - Do I have a system for indicating where I have questions?
-

III. HOW DID I PREPARE FOR EXAMS?

- Did my outlining process help me understand the rules and how to apply them?
 - Was my outline helpful? What was not helpful? What changes can I make (regarding both content and organization/structure) to make it more useful *on the exam*?
 - Did I write out short hypo answers as part of my reviewing and outlining process? If so, did I get feedback from a Senior ASP Fellow?
 - How many full-length practice exam questions did I write out an answer for? Did I do any under time pressure?
 - Did I work with a study group? How did we use our group time?
-

IV. WHEN DID I START PREPARING FOR EXAMS?

- When did I start reviewing the material?
 - When did I start outlining? How frequently did I update my outline?
 - When did I start doing short hypos?
 - When did I start doing full-length practice exam questions?
-

V. TIME MANAGEMENT

- How did I keep track of classes, deadlines, meetings, and other obligations? Did I create a weekly schedule?
 - Where and when did I study? Was I productive during study time? Did I procrastinate?
 - Did having a study group help me or did it cause me to be less efficient and/or more stressed out?
 - Compare the amount of time spent preparing for class with the amount of time spent after class reviewing, outlining, and doing hypos and practice questions.
 - Did I spend too much time preparing for class?
 - Did I spend enough time doing hypos and practice exam questions?
 - Did I strike the right balance between law school and personal time/family/friends?
-

IDENTIFY WHAT WORKED, WHAT DIDN'T, AND WHAT YOU CAN TRY THIS SEMESTER

1

Write down three specific study strategies that were helpful/effective and that you will continue this semester.

2

Write down any study strategies that were not helpful or worthwhile that you will discontinue this semester.

3

Write down three specific study strategies that you will adopt this semester.

Case Briefing Exercise – “book briefing” a case to prepare for class and help with outlining later

BEST PRACTICES

- In addition to reading for class, prioritize reviewing, outlining, and practicing
 - During class, avoid transcribing every word (especially from the slides) and instead use active listening to identify and note key information
 - **Do not spend lots of time going back to watch class recordings (except maybe for a discrete issue (~5-10 mins) you missed or want refreshed)**
 - Start outlining early in the semester and update your outline on a regular basis
 - Prioritize writing out hypo answers and, later in the semester, practice exam answers
 - Create a weekly schedule and designate time for both outlining/hypos and life outside of law school
 - Designate half the week to preparing for class (reading) and the other half to outlining and practice questions.
 - E.g., Sunday-Wednesday for reading and Thursday-Saturday outlining and practice questions
-