

Standardized Test

Let's say you're going to write a standardized exam, like the SAT or the MCAT or the GMAT where you are writing an exam where there is a similar exam format and it's repeated every year. How can you study for that?

Well, one advantage you have in doing that kind of exam over a normal exam is you have an abundance of practice tests. When you're doing another class where you don't have access to a lot of how they're going to be testing you, then you really have to have very comprehensive knowledge because you're not sure exactly which direction they're going to examine you from and you're not going to be able to be entirely sure of which types of concepts are most important.

In a standardized test, you have an abundance of resource of all these old exams that you can go through and look to them to figure out, "Okay, this is how they evaluate these kinds of questions and this is the type of content that they focus on. Practice exams also serve another purpose in that in doing a practice exam, you're really able to highlight what you don't understand. So, if you do a two-hour practice exam, you'll be able to eliminate a lot of topics which you sufficiently understand and focus narrowly on the few things that you're not able to perform well on during the exam.

So, what I suggest doing, if you're studying for this type of exam, is to split up your normal setting efforts. So, this is getting involved with the holistic learning techniques, like metaphor, visualization, notes compression, all of those other learning techniques that we talked about early in the course. But, on top of that, you want to periodically intersperse doing practice exams, because doing a practice exam will help you immediately identify, "These are the trouble areas that I really need to focus on when you're doing the actual exam."

Even if you're not taking a standardized exam, if you have access to prior practice exams, that can really help you cut down your studying time by making you highly focused and highly efficient on the few things that you don't understand. Instead of trying to relearn and master things that you already have an adequate ability going into these actual exams.