

Tutor Cheat Sheets

(adapted from Guerrasio J, Nogar C, Rustici M, Lay C, Corral J. Study skills and test taking strategies for coaching medical learners based on identified areas of struggle. MedEdPORTAL. 2017;13:10593. https://doi.org/10.15766/mep_2374-8265.10593)

Initial Appointment Topic Ideas:

During the first appointment it is imperative that you begin to build a rapport with your tutee. You want them to know that you are there for them and believe in their ability to be successful. Get to know them to show you are invested and can be trusted. Build a safe space where the tutee feels s/he can be honest and open.

- 1.) Explore with student past performances on exams.
 - a. If student has done well in the past help them explore what went wrong this time. Was it the format of Zucker exams that they're unfamiliar with? How can you support them in improving this? Was it simply time management? Did an event happen prior to exam week and this is just a one off?
- 2.) What resources was the student using?
 - a. Were they using too many? Too few? How did they decide on which resources to use? Are they using recommended resources from prework? Why or why not?
- 3.) How much time did the student spend studying for exam?
 - a. Did they consolidate every week? When did they start pulling in old information? Do they feel like they were well prepared for the exam or did they know going in that they could have prepared better? How will they change for next time?

Subsequent Appointment Ideas: Common Issues for Struggling MS1s

1.) Pre-work issues
2.) Don't understand how deep to go with PEARLS LOs
3.) Too tired to study
4.) Unable to recall/retain what was studied
5.) Overwhelmed by amount of info to study
6.) Unable to maintain focus
7.) Too many outside distractions/obligations
8.) Trouble making a schedule
9.) Trouble sticking to schedule
10.) Difficulty adapting to Zucker SOM curriculum
11.) Would rather do or watch videos than read
12.) Study space not conducive to learning
13.) Low test taking confidence
14.) A specific issue had a negative impact on performance
15.) Scored well on some components of exam but not on others
16.) Timing and structure of exam week was an issue
17.) Test anxiety

- 1.) Pre-work issues
 - a. Does the student complete all prework? If not, why? Can they think of any ways to be more efficient?
- 2.) Don't understand how deep to go with PEARLS LOs
 - a. How long does the student spend working up an LO? If too long, why?
 - b. Are they able to pick out relevant info? Do they stay on topic or get distracted?
 - c. Do they feel well prepared before PEARLS sessions? If not, why?
- 3.) Too tired to study
 - a. Is the student getting enough sleep? 6-8 hours is ideal.
 - b. Is the student just reading? Is there anything more "active" they might do- like draw, create diagrams, use flashcards...
- 4.) Unable to recall/retain what was studied
 - a. There have been several studies which demonstrate spaced repetition is the best way to retain new information. This means seeing the information you're learning several times over spaced periods (opposite of cramming). Ideally the student should see the info during prework, then in class, then after class, then during consolidation, then a few weeks out as they start to prep for exams.
 - b. Another learning science trick is recall practice. We spend a lot of time putting info in our heads, but also must practice getting it out. When sitting down to study, have the student recall info first before just rereading notes. Recall can be teaching others, using flashcards, answering questions, reciting what they've learned out loud, drawing from memory- then use notes to fill in gaps.
- 5.) Overwhelmed by amount of info to study
 - a. Teach the student how to triage what they know vs. what they don't know.
 - b. Teach student how to use objectives, see key points, and overall concepts
- 6.) Unable to maintain focus
 - a. Suggest website blocker if distracted online
 - b. Suggest Pomodoro Technique if problems with focus for sustained amounts of time
 - c. Encourage the student to be sure to switch up content intake (videos, reading, images, audio...)
- 7.) Too many outside distractions/obligations
 - a. Consider the Eisenhower Box (see Dr. Katie Romeo if interested)
- 8.) Trouble making a schedule
 - a. Help the student in creating a schedule that works for them (Dr. Romeo has blank schedules if desired).
 - b. Remember spaced repetition is the best way to learn new material, so consider this when talking about timing and designing the schedule.
- 9.) Trouble sticking to a schedule
 - a. How will the student feel accountable? Reporting to you? Dr. Romeo? Family member?
 - b. Encourage student to meet a friend for a study session; therefore the student must be there or they will let friend down.
 - c. Help with goal setting and developing a reward system if daily goal is met (Netflix episode, date with SO...).
- 10.) Difficulty adapting to Zucker SOM curriculum

- a. Validate that change is difficult.
 - b. Encourage student to reflect on what is working and what is not.
 - c. Any tips that worked for you? Share them!
- 11.) Would rather do than read
- a. When reading, encourage the student to try to stay active. This means creating concept maps, charts, graphs, matrixes, talking it out with peers, etc.
 - b. Encourage the student to consider how they'd apply the information when reading. Make it come alive.
- 12.) Study space not conducive to learning
- a. Many students who do well at Zucker study on campus. Help the student figure out if this is feasible for them.
- 13.) Low test taking confidence
- a. Demonstrate a growth mindset. No one is set to be a bad test taker forever. Skills can be learned. If the student needs to improve test taking skills, refer them to Dr. Romeo.
 - b. Being well prepared can increase confidence when entering exam week. Encourage the student to stay on top of prep all along to increase confidence.
 - c. Encourage student to use formative feedback as a gauge as to where they stand. If formative feedback is good, what does that mean? Help student realize how to interpret this evidence.
- 14.) A specific issue had a negative impact on performance
- a. Is this an issue that has resolved? How can you help the student make sure this doesn't happen again?
- 15.) Scored well on some components of exam but not on others
- a. This shows the student can succeed. They have the skills to pass! They might need more time learning specific content areas. Is there anything that helped you balance this? Can you offer any advice?
 - b. Explore with student why they think they did well on some parts and not on others. Any patterns? Did they study in a different way or use different resources?
- 16.) Timing and structure of exam week was an issue
- a. Offer advice on how you structure your exam weeks. How did you decide what to study when?
- 17.) Test anxiety
- a. Remind student that a certain degree of test anxiety is normal.
 - b. Some things that may help are feeling prepared (assist student in this process), keeping up with weekly consolidations, eating and sleeping well, regular exercise...
 - c. If the student feels the anxiety is too much, please refer them to counseling services through Northwell or Hofstra (see Dr. Romeo for contact if needed).