



Contents

UNIT I NCLEX-RN® PREPARATION

Chapter 1	Clinical Judgment and the NCLEX-RN® Examination	2
Chapter 2	Self-Efficacy and Profiles to Success	13
Chapter 3	The NCLEX-RN® Examination: A Graduate's Perspective	17
Chapter 4	Clinical Judgment and Test-Taking Strategies	19

UNIT II CLIENT NEEDS

Chapter 5	Client Needs and the NCLEX-RN® Test Plan	35
Chapter 6	Physiological Integrity Practice Questions	39
Chapter 7	Safe and Effective Care Environment Practice Questions	232
Chapter 8	Health Promotion and Maintenance Practice Questions	333
Chapter 9	Psychosocial Integrity Practice Questions	433

UNIT III INTEGRATED PROCESSES

Chapter 10	Integrated Processes and the NCLEX-RN® Test Plan	541
Chapter 11	Integrated Processes Practice Questions	547
References		666



CHAPTER 1

Clinical Judgment and the NCLEX-RN® Examination

The Pyramid to Success

Welcome to *Saunders Q&A Review for the NCLEX-RN® Examination*, the second component of the Pyramid to Success! At this time, you have completed your first path toward the peak of the pyramid with *Saunders Comprehensive Review for the NCLEX-RN® Examination*. Now it is time to continue that journey to become a registered nurse with *Saunders Q&A Review for the NCLEX-RN® Examination*.

As you begin your journey through this book, you will be introduced to all of the important points regarding the NCLEX-RN examination, including the process of testing and unique and special tips for preparing yourself both academically and nonacademically for this important examination. You will read what a nursing graduate who recently passed the NCLEX-RN examination has to say about the test. Important test-taking strategies guide you in selecting the correct option, assist you in making an educated guess if you are not entirely sure about the correct answer, and guide you in ways to answer the Next Generation NCLEX® (NGN) test items. Additionally, the Cognitive Skills presented in the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) Clinical Judgment Measurement Model (NCJMM) are identified in practice questions.

About This Resource

Saunders Q&A Review for the NCLEX-RN® Examination contains more than 6000 NCLEX-style practice questions. Question types include multiple choice; multiple response (select all that apply [SATA]); fill in the blank; prioritizing (ordered response); image (“hot spot”) questions; scenario/exhibit questions; graphic options; and audio questions. The Evolve site also includes podcasts for audio review on test-taking strategies for pharmacology, fluids and electrolytes, and acid-base balance. NGN-style questions are also included on the Evolve site. The chapters in the book have been developed to provide a description of the components of the NCLEX-RN test plan, including Client Needs and the Integrated Processes. In addition, chapters have been prepared to contain practice questions specific to each category of Client Needs and the Integrated Processes.

A rationale, priority nursing tip, test-taking strategy, and reference source containing a page number are provided with each question. Each question is coded on the basis of the Level of Cognitive Ability, Client Needs category, Integrated Process, Content Area being tested, Health Problem if applicable, and the Cognitive Skills/Processes of the National Council of State

Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) Clinical Judgment Measurement Model (NCJMM). In addition, two Priority Concepts that relate to the content of the question are identified. This code is helpful specifically for students whose curriculum is concept based. The rationale contains significant information regarding both the correct and incorrect options. The priority nursing tip provides key information to remember about a nursing point. The test-taking strategy maps out a logical path for selecting the correct option, if necessary. The reference source and page number provide easy access to the information that you need to review. The Health Problem code is a unique and helpful feature that allows you to filter and select questions based on a disease process when you are practicing questions on Evolve. For example, if heart failure is your area of interest, you can select “Adult Health, Cardiovascular, Heart Failure” on the Evolve site, and all questions on this content will be generated for practice. Additionally, information about all of the special features of this resource and the question types is located in the preface of this book.


Other Resources in the Saunders Pyramid to Success

There are several other resources in the Saunders Pyramid to Success program. These include the following: *The Saunders Comprehensive Review for the NCLEX-RN® Examination*, *Saunders Clinical Judgment and Test-Taking Strategies: Passing Nursing School and the NCLEX® Exam*, *Strategies for Student Success on the Next-Generation NCLEX® (NGN) Test Items*, *The HESI/Saunders Online Review for the NCLEX-RN® Examination*, *Saunders Q&A Review Cards for the NCLEX-RN® Exam*, and *Saunders RNtertainment for the NCLEX-RN® Examination Review Game*. The HESI® Compass™ Course is also a resource for NCLEX preparation and provides you with an individual coach to guide you in your preparation. Ask your nursing instructors about institutional access to this course.

All of these resources in the Saunders Pyramid to Success are described in the preface of this book and can be obtained online by visiting <http://elsevierhealth.com> or by calling 1-800-545-2522.

Let’s begin our journey through the Pyramid to Success.

Clinical Judgment

 Clinical judgment is the observed outcome of critical thinking and decision-making (Dickison, Haerling, & Lasater, 2019).

In recent years, heightened attention has been paid to clinical judgment as a means of teaching, learning, and assessment

and testing. The Next Generation NCLEX-RN examination requires candidates to demonstrate a higher level of ability in applying clinical judgment in the delivery of client care. Clinical judgment can also be used as a test-taking strategy to answer test questions (see Chapter 4). The NCSBN has created a Clinical Judgment Measurement Model (NCJMM) that consists of applying six cognitive skills or processes. These include: (1) recognizing cues; (2) analyzing cues; (3) prioritizing hypotheses; (4) generating solutions; (5) taking actions; and (6) evaluating outcomes (Dickison et al., 2019). Table 1.1 provides a description of these six cognitive skills/processes identified in the NCJMM. The NCJMM also serves as a guide for the NCSBN to create NGN questions. The NGN was launched in April 2023. Scored stand-alone test items (Bowtie and Trend items) and unfolding case studies are presented in the NGN. Some of these NGN item types can be found on the Evolve site accompanying this book, and an example of an NGN item is located in Chapter 4, box 4.26. We strongly encourage you to frequently access the NCSBN website at <https://www.ncsbn.org> for updates.

The Examination Process

An important step in the Pyramid to Success is to become as familiar as possible with the examination process. Candidates facing the challenge of this examination can experience significant anxiety. Knowing what the examination is all about and knowing what you will encounter during the process of testing will assist in alleviating fear and anxiety. The information contained in this chapter was obtained from the NCSBN website (<http://www.ncsbn.org>) and from the NCSBN 2023 test plan for the NCLEX-RN. It includes some procedures related to registering for the examination, testing procedures, and the answers to the questions most commonly asked by nursing students and graduates preparing to take the NCLEX-RN.

TABLE 1.1 Cognitive Skills/Processes and Descriptions

Cognitive Skill/Process	Description
Recognize cues	Identifying significant data; data can be from many sources (assessment)
Analyze cues	Connecting data to the client's clinical presentation—determining if the data is expected? Unexpected? (analysis)
Prioritize hypotheses	Ranking hypotheses; what are the concerns or client needs/problems and their priority? (analysis)
Generate solutions	Using hypotheses or client needs to determine interventions for an expected outcome (planning)
Take actions	Implementing the generated solutions addressing the highest priorities or hypotheses (implementation)
Evaluate outcomes	Comparing observed outcomes with expected ones (evaluation)

From: Dickison, P., Haerling, K.A., & Lasater, K. (2019). Integrating the National Council of State Boards of Nursing Clinical Judgment Model into Nursing Educational Frameworks, *Journal of Nursing Education*, 58 (2), 72–78.

You can obtain additional information regarding the test and its development by accessing the NCSBN website and clicking on the NCLEX® & Other Exams tab or by writing to the National Council of State Boards of Nursing, 111 East Wacker Drive, Suite 2900, Chicago, IL 60601. You are encouraged to access the NCSBN website, because this site provides you with valuable information about the NCLEX, the test plan, and other resources available to an NCLEX candidate. You are also encouraged to access the most up-to-date *Candidate Bulletin*. This document provides you with everything you need to know about registration procedures and scheduling a test date.

Computer Adaptive Testing

The acronym *CAT* stands for computerized adaptive test, which means that the examination is created as the test-taker answers each question. All the test questions are categorized on the basis of the test plan structure and the level of difficulty of the question. As you answer a question, the computer determines your competency based on the answer you selected. If you selected a correct answer, the computer scans the question bank and selects a more difficult question. If you selected an incorrect answer, the computer scans the question bank and selects an easier question. This process continues until all test plan requirements are met and a reliable pass-or-fail decision is made.

When you take a CAT, once an answer is recorded, all subsequent questions administered depend, to an extent, on the answer selected for that question. Skipping and returning to earlier questions are not compatible with the logical methodology of a CAT. The inability to skip questions or go back to change previous answers will not be a disadvantage to you; you will not fall into that “trap” of changing a correct answer to an incorrect one with the CAT system.

If you are faced with a question that contains unfamiliar content, you may need to guess at the answer. Although guessing is discouraged when taking any examination, there is no penalty for guessing on the NCLEX. Remember, in almost all of the questions, the answer will be right there in front of you. If you need to guess, use your nursing knowledge, clinical experiences, and clinical judgment skills to their fullest extent and all of the test-taking strategies you have practiced in this review program. Refer to Chapter 4 for information on clinical judgment and test-taking strategies.

You do not need any computer experience to take this examination. A keyboard tutorial is provided and administered to all test-takers at the start of the examination. The tutorial provides instructions for the use of the on-screen optional calculator and the mouse and for recording an answer. The tutorial provides instructions on how to respond to all question types on this examination. This tutorial is on the NCSBN website; you are encouraged to view the tutorial when you are preparing for the NCLEX examination. In addition, at the testing site, a test administrator is present to assist in explaining the use of the computer to ensure your full understanding of how to proceed.

The CAT model will not be used for the NGN items. Instead, the NCSBN will be using selected scoring models that will be applied to your test responses. In addition, you will not be able to skip NGN questions or return to earlier questions. For specific information on the scoring models, refer to the NCSBN

BOX 1.4 Figure Question

The nurse performs client rounds and notes that a client with a respiratory disorder is wearing this oxygen device (refer to figure). The nurse would document that the client is receiving oxygen by which type of low-flow oxygen delivery system? **Refer to figure.**



(Figure from Potter, P., Perry, A., Stockert, P. & Hall, A. [2017]. *Fundamentals of nursing*. [9th ed.] Mosby.)

1. Venturi mask
2. Nasal cannula
3. Simple face mask
4. Partial rebreather mask

Answer: 3

Focus on the **subject**, the type of face mask that the client is wearing. For some of these question types, you need to use the computer mouse and point and click at a designated area to answer the question. For this question, use of the computer mouse is not necessary. A simple face mask is used to deliver low-flow oxygen concentrations of 40% to 60% for short-term oxygen therapy. It also may be used in an emergency. A minimum flow rate of 5 L/min is needed to prevent the rebreathing of exhaled air. The simple face mask fits over the nose and mouth, has exhalation ports, and has a tube that connects to the oxygen source. A Venturi mask is a high-flow oxygen delivery system that delivers an accurate oxygen concentration. An adaptor is located between the bottom of the mask and the oxygen source. The adaptor contains holes of different sizes that allow specific amounts of air to mix with the oxygen. The nasal cannula contains nasal prongs that are used to deliver oxygen flow rates at 1 to 6 L/min. A partial rebreather mask is a mask with a reservoir bag without flaps. It provides oxygen concentrations of 60% to 75% with flow rates of 6 to 11 L/min.

Registration forms not properly completed or not accompanied by the proper fees in the required method of payment will be returned to you and will delay testing. You must pay a fee for taking the examination; you also may have to pay additional fees to the board of nursing in the state in which you are applying.

BOX 1.5 Scenario/Exhibit Question

Oral prednisone is prescribed for a hospitalized client. The nurse reviews the client's medical record and is **most** concerned about this prescription because of which documented item? **Refer to chart.**

SCENARIO/EXHIBIT

CLIENT'S CHART

History: Diabetes mellitus
Hypertension

Medications: Furosemide 40 mg oral daily

Diagnostic Tests: Electrocardiogram: normal

1. Furosemide
2. Hypertension
3. Diabetes mellitus
4. Normal electrocardiogram

Answer: 3

Note the **strategic word**, *most*. This scenario/exhibit question provides you with data from a client's medical chart, identifies a prescribed medication, and asks about a concern related to this medication. Read all the **data in the question** and the client's chart. Use nursing knowledge about the interactions and effects of prednisone, and recall that this medication may increase the blood glucose level. This will assist in directing you to option 3. For these question types, be certain to read all of the data in the client's chart before selecting the answer. Remember you will be provided with tabs to click to read information.

Authorization to Test Form and Scheduling an Appointment

Once you are eligible to test, you will receive an Authorization to Test (ATT) form. You cannot make an appointment until you receive an ATT form. Note the validity dates on the ATT form, and schedule a testing date and time before the expiration date on the ATT form. The NCLEX® Examination Candidate Bulletin provides you with the directions for scheduling an appointment, and you do not have to take the examination in the same state in which you are seeking licensure.

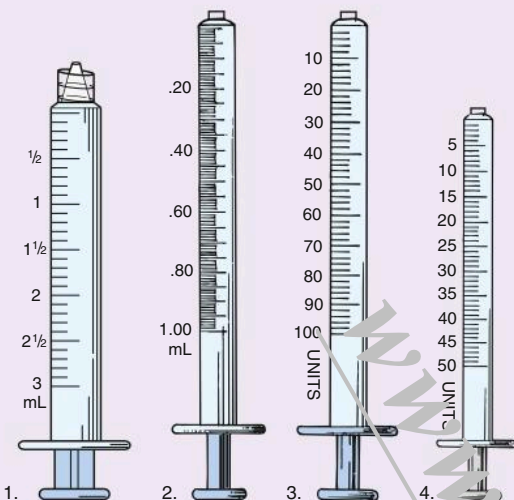
The ATT form contains important information, including your test authorization number, candidate identification (ID) number, and validity date. You need to take your ATT form to the testing center on the day of your examination. You will not be admitted to the examination if you do not have this form.

Changing Your Appointment

If for any reason you need to change your appointment to test, you can make the change on the candidate website or by calling candidate services. Refer to the NCLEX® Examination Candidate Bulletin for this contact information and other

BOX 1.6 Graphic Options Question

The primary health care provider prescribes a tuberculin skin test to be done on a client. Which syringe would the nurse select to perform the test? Refer to Figures 1 to 4.

**Answer: 2**

Focus on the **subject**, the procedure for administering a tuberculin skin test. This question requires you to select the picture that represents your answer choice. To perform a tuberculin skin test, the nurse would use a tuberculin syringe that is marked in 0.01 (hundredths) because the dose for administration is less than 1 mL. Option 1 is a 3-mL syringe and is marked in 0.1 (tenths) and is used for most subcutaneous or intramuscular injections. Insulin syringes are available in 50 and 100 units and are used to administer insulin.

(Figure from Potter, P., Perry, A., Stockert, P., & Hall, A. [2017]. *Fundamentals of nursing*, [9th ed.]. Mosby.)

important procedures for canceling and changing an appointment. If you fail to arrive for the examination or fail to cancel your appointment to test without providing appropriate notice, you will forfeit your examination fee, and your ATT form will be invalidated. This information will be reported to the board of nursing in the state in which you have applied for licensure, and you will be required to register and pay the testing fees again.

The Day of the Examination

It is important that you arrive at the testing center at least 30 minutes before the test is scheduled. If you arrive late for the scheduled testing appointment, you may be required to forfeit your examination appointment. If it is necessary to forfeit your appointment, you will need to reregister for the examination and pay an additional fee. The board of nursing will be notified that you did not take the test. A few days before your scheduled date of testing, take the time to drive to the testing center to determine its exact location; the length of time required to arrive at that destination; and any potential obstacles that might delay you, such as road construction, traffic, or parking sites.

In addition to the ATT form, you must have proper identification such as a U.S. driver's license, passport, U.S. state ID, or U.S. military ID to be admitted to take the examination. All acceptable ID must be valid and not expired and contain a photograph and signature (in English). In addition, the first and last names on the ID must match the ATT form. According to the NCSBN guidelines, any name discrepancies require legal documentation, such as a marriage license, divorce decree, or court action legal name change.

Testing Accommodations

If you require testing accommodations, you should contact the board of nursing before submitting a registration form. The board of nursing will provide the procedures for the request. The board of nursing must authorize testing accommodations. After board of nursing approval, the NCSBN reviews the requested accommodations and must approve the request. If the request is approved, the candidate will be notified and provided the procedure for registering for and scheduling the examination.

Testing Center

The testing center is designed to ensure complete security of the testing process. Strict candidate identification requirements have been established. You will be asked to read the rules related to testing. A digital fingerprint and palm vein print will be taken. A digital signature and photograph will also be taken at the testing center. These identity confirmations will accompany the NCLEX exam results. In addition, if you leave the testing room for any reason, you may be required to perform these identity confirmation procedures again to be readmitted to the room.

Personal belongings are not allowed in the testing room; all electronic devices must be placed in a sealable bag provided by the test administrator and kept in a locker. Any evidence of tampering with the bag could result in the need to report the incident and test cancellation. A locker and locker key will be provided for you; however, storage space is limited, so you must plan accordingly. In addition, the testing center will not assume responsibility for your personal belongings. The testing waiting areas are generally small; friends or family members who accompany you are not permitted to wait in the testing center while you are taking the examination.

Once you have completed the admission process, the test administrator will escort you to the assigned computer. You will be seated at an individual workspace area that includes computer equipment, appropriate lighting, an erasable note board, and a marker. No items, including unauthorized scratch paper, are allowed into the testing room. Eating, drinking, and the use of tobacco are not allowed in the testing room. You will be observed at all times by the test administrator while taking the examination. In addition, video and audio recordings of all test sessions are made. The testing center has no control over the sounds made by typing on the computer by others. If these sounds are distracting, raise your hand to summon the test administrator. Earplugs are available on request.

You must follow the directions given by the testing center staff and must remain seated during the test except when authorized to leave. If you think that you have a problem with



Self-Efficacy and Profiles to Success

Laurent W. Valliere, BS, DD

The Pyramid to Success

Preparing to take the National Council Licensure Examination Next Generation NCLEX® (NGN) can produce a great deal of anxiety in the nursing graduate. You may be thinking that the NCLEX-RN is the most important examination that you will ever have to take and that it reflects the culmination of everything for which you have worked so hard. The NGN is an important examination because achieving that nursing license defines the beginning of your career as a registered nurse. A vital ingredient to your success on the NCLEX is examining your profile to success and avoiding negative thoughts that allow this examination to seem overwhelming and intimidating (Box 2.1). Such thoughts will take full control over your destiny. A strong positive attitude and self-efficacy, a structured plan for preparation, and maintaining control in your pathway to success ensure reaching the peak of the Pyramid to Success (Fig. 2.1). For additional information about study habits and testing and test anxiety, we refer you to *Saunders 2024-2025 Clinical Judgment and Test-Taking Strategies* resource.

Self-Efficacy

The concept of self-efficacy was originally proposed by Albert Bandura in social science research in developing social cognitive theory. According to Bandura (1977), this theory has been

used extensively in the field of psychology. Central to Bandura's work are the concepts of self-efficacy and self-efficacy (outcome) expectations. The concept of self-efficacy is described as a type of self-reflection that affects one's behavior (Bandura, 1977). Self-reflection enables an individual to assess their own experiences, develop perceptions about their own capabilities that guide behavior, and determine how much effort will ensure performance. Thus, self-reflection leads to an individual's self-efficacy expectations and confidence in their ability to succeed.

⚠️ With regard to NCLEX, a study done by Silvestri, Clark, & Moonie (2013) showed that self-efficacy expectations were an important predictor for NCLEX success.

Self-Efficacy Expectations

Self-efficacy expectations are focused on one's belief in their own capacity to carry out particular behaviors. These expectations determine the behaviors a person chooses to perform, their degree of perseverance, and the quality of the performance. Bandura (1997) describes self-efficacy as an individual's belief regarding their own abilities to successfully perform activities or tasks and indicates that the stronger the sense of self-efficacy, the more confident one is to succeed. In applying Bandura's (1977) theory to NCLEX success, if you have high self-efficacy expectations, you will work hard and persevere and believe that you will achieve NCLEX success. Conversely, if your self-efficacy expectations are low, this could lead to self-doubt about your ability to achieve success on NCLEX.

BOX 2.1 Profiles to Success

- Avoid negative thoughts that allow the examination to seem overwhelming and intimidating.
- Develop a comprehensive plan to prepare for the examination.
- Examine the study methods and strategies that you used in preparing for examinations during nursing school.
- Develop realistic time goals.
- Select a study time period and study place that will be most conducive to your success.
- Commit to your own special study methods and strategies.
- Incorporate a balance of exercise with adequate rest and relaxation time in your preparation schedule.
- Maintain healthy eating habits.
- Learn to control anxiety.
- Remember that discipline and perseverance will automatically bring control.
- Remember that this examination is all about you.
- Remember that your self-confidence and the belief in yourself will lead you to success!

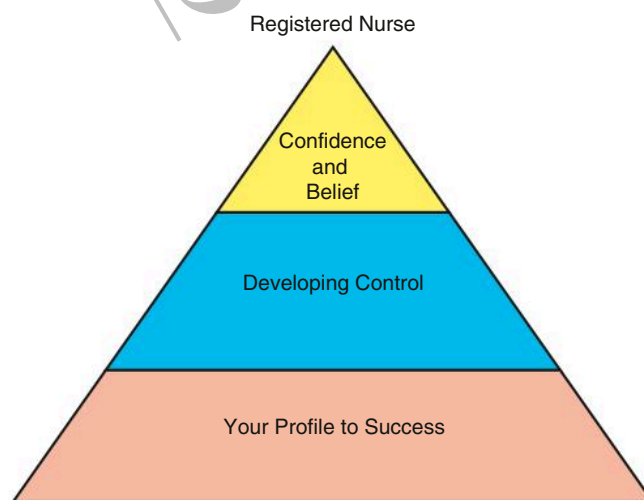


FIGURE 2.1 The Pyramid to Success.

Profiles to Success: Increasing Self-Efficacy

Self-Reflection

Self-reflection enables an individual to assess their own experiences, develop perceptions about their own capabilities that guide behavior, and determine how much effort will ensue for performance. Thus, self-reflection leads to an individual's self-efficacy expectations and confidence in their ability to succeed. According to Bandura (1997), individuals possess a self-regulatory function that provides the capability to influence their own cognitive processes and actions and thus alter their environments. Therefore, whatever self-efficacy beliefs an individual holds will help to determine what activities the individual will pursue, the effort that they will expend in pursuing these activities, and how long they will persist in the face of obstacles and hardships.

To start, take some time to self-reflect. Think about the accomplishments you have achieved and how you have achieved these accomplishments. Journal these accomplishments and keep these in mind. Review them whenever you begin to feel any self-doubt about your ability to succeed on the NCLEX. Some self-reflection questions to ask yourself include the following:

1. Am I a goal-setter?
2. Do I develop a plan and determine what activities I need to pursue to achieve my goals?
3. Do I set goals that are unrealistic to achieve in a specific time frame?
4. Do I accomplish the goals that I set?
5. How much time and effort do I put in to accomplish my goals?
6. Do I find ways to achieve my goals when I am faced with life challenges and obstacles?
7. How do I feel when I accomplish a goal?

Developing Your Preparation Plan

The foundation begins with a strong positive attitude and self-efficacy, the belief that you will achieve success, and developing self-control. Nursing graduates preparing for the NCLEX must develop a comprehensive plan to prepare for this examination. The most important component in developing a plan is identifying the study patterns that guided you to your nursing degree. It is important to begin your planning by reflecting on all of the personal and academic challenges you experienced during your nursing education. Take time to focus on the thoughts, feelings, and emotions that you experienced before taking an examination while enrolled in your nursing program. Examine the methods that you used in preparing for that examination both academically and from the standpoint of how you dealt with the anxiety that parallels the experience of facing an examination. These factors are very important considerations in preparing for the NCLEX because they identify the patterns that worked for you. Think about this for a moment. Your own methods of study must have worked, or you would not be at the point of preparing for the NCLEX-RN.

Each individual requires their own methods of preparing for an examination. Graduate nurses who have taken the NCLEX-RN will probably share their experiences and methods of preparing for this challenge with you. It is very helpful to

listen to what they tell you. These graduates can provide you with important strategies that they have used. Listen closely to what they have to say, but remember that this examination is all about you. Your identity and what you require in terms of preparation are most important.

Reflect on the methods and strategies that worked for you throughout your nursing program. Do not think that you need to develop new methods and strategies to prepare for the NCLEX. Use what has worked for you. Take some time to reflect on these strategies, write them down on a large blank card, sign your name, and write "RN" after your name. Post this card in a place where you will see it every morning. Commit to your own special strategies. These strategies reflect your profile and identity and will lead you to a successful outcome—registered nurse!

A frequent concern of graduates preparing for the NCLEX relates to deciding whether they should study alone or become a part of a study group. Examining your profile will easily direct you in making this decision. Again, reflect on what has worked for you throughout your nursing program as you prepared for examinations. Remember, your needs are most important. Address your own needs, and do not become pressured by peers who are encouraging you to join a study group if this is not your normal pattern for study. Additional pressure is not what you need at this important time of your life.

You may ask, "What is the best method of preparing?" First, remember that you are prepared. In fact, you began preparing for this examination on the first day that you entered your nursing program. The task you are faced with is to review, in a comprehensive manner, all of the nursing content that you learned in your nursing program. It can become totally overwhelming to look at your bookshelf, which is overflowing with the nursing books you used during nursing school, and your challenge becomes monumental when you look at the boxes of nursing lecture notes that you have accumulated. It is unrealistic to even think that you could read all of those nursing books and lecture notes in preparation for the NCLEX. These books and lecture notes should be used as reference sources, if needed, during your preparation for the NCLEX.

Saunders Comprehensive Review for the NCLEX-RN® Examination has identified for you all of the important nursing content areas relevant to the examination. During the comprehensive review, you should have noted the areas that are unfamiliar or unclear to you. Be sure that you have taken the time to become familiar with these areas. Now, you are progressing through the Pyramid to Success and testing your knowledge in this book, *Saunders Q&A Review for the NCLEX-RN® Examination*. Answer all of the practice questions provided in this book and on the Evolve site: practice question, after question, after question! You may identify nursing content areas that require further review. Take the time to review these nursing content areas, as you are guided to do in this book.

Identifying Your Goals for Success

- ⚠ Create a list of your goals related to NCLEX preparation. Open your calendar and start with listing your daily goals and what you want to accomplish each day. Your daily goal could be practicing a specific number of questions or reviewing a specific content area, or it could be a day of rest and relaxation!

BOX 2.2 Healthy Eating Habits

Eat three balanced meals each day.
 Include snacks, such as fruits and vegetables, between meals.
 Avoid food items that contain fat.
 Avoid food items that contain caffeine.
 Consume healthy foods that are high in complex carbohydrates.

energy needs. Remember that your brain works like a muscle. It requires healthy carbohydrates (Box 2.2).

If you are not a breakfast eater, work on changing that habit. Practice the habit of eating breakfast now as you are preparing for the NCLEX. Attempt to provide your brain with energy in the morning with some form of complex carbohydrate food. It will make a difference. On your scheduled day for the NCLEX, feed your brain and eat a healthy breakfast. In addition, on this very important day, bring some form of healthy snack and feed your brain again if you take a break during the exam so that you will have the energy to concentrate, focus, and complete your examination.

Adequate rest, relaxation, and exercise are important in your preparation process. Many graduates preparing for the NCLEX have difficulty sleeping, particularly the night before the examination. Begin now to develop methods that will assist in relaxing your body and mind and allow you to obtain a restful sleep. You may have already developed a particular method to help you sleep. If not, it may be helpful to try the breathing exercise while you lie in bed to assist in eliminating any “mind chatter” that is present. It is also helpful to visualize your favorite and most peaceful place while you do these breathing exercises. Graduates say that listening to quiet music and relaxation tapes assisted in helping them relax and sleep. Begin to practice some of these helpful methods now while you are preparing for the NCLEX. Identify those that work best for you. The night before your scheduled examination is an important one. Spend time having some fun, get to bed early, and incorporate the relaxation method that you have been using to help you sleep.

BOX 2.3 Meeting the Challenge

Believe
 Believe in your success every day.
Plan
 Plan the study strategies that work for you.
Control
 Always maintain command of your emotions, and breathe.
Practice
 Review, review, review: Practice questions, practice questions, and more practice questions!
Succeed
 Believe, plan, control, and practice: “Yes, I can!”

Confidence and Belief in Yourself

Confidence and belief that you have the ability to achieve success will bring your goals to fruition. Remember, Bandura (1997) describes self-efficacy as an individual’s belief regarding their own abilities to successfully perform activities or tasks and indicates that the stronger the sense of self-efficacy, the more confident one is to succeed. Reflect on your profile maintained during your nursing education. Your confidence and belief in yourself, along with your academic achievements, have brought you to the status of graduate nurse. Now you are facing one more important challenge (Box 2.3).

Can you meet this challenge successfully? Yes, you can! There is no reason to think otherwise if you have taken all of the necessary steps to ensure that profile to success. Each morning, place your feet on the floor, stand tall, take a deep breath, and smile. Take both hands and imagine yourself brushing off any negative feelings. Look at your card that bears your name with the letters “RN” after it, and tell yourself, “Yes, I can!!!!”

Believe in yourself, and you will reach the peak of the Pyramid to Success!

Congratulations, and I wish you continued success in your career as a registered nurse!



The NCLEX-RN® Examination: A Graduate's Perspective

Natalie Filer, BSN, RN

To be called to serve in the profession of nursing is an honor. We all have our own reasons why we want to become nurses and in what ways we want to impact the world with having a nursing degree and a license to practice nursing. Each individual path to licensure and practice is different but likely with some similarities as well.

I graduated May 14, 2022, with my Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN). I was enrolled in a traditional nursing program. I began my program in the fall semester. The pandemic completely shifted what I thought nursing school was going to be like. Looking back now I would not change anything about my nursing school experience because it has made me the person and nurse I am today. Nursing school does not only teach you about how to care and advocate for others but also teaches you valuable lessons you need for yourself. The journey may seem long, the process may seem tedious, but I promise it will all be worth it.

Prior to graduating I accepted a position in a level IV neonatal intensive care unit. I began this position in late July after I graduated. I felt a host of emotions from being excited, to nervous, to anxious. Just like many others I was nervous and anxious because now I would be practicing as a nurse, but to do that I knew I had one task in which I had to be successful: the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses, commonly known as the NCLEX-RN®. The thought of taking this exam brought so many emotions because it was the determining factor to finally start the career I always wanted. The first thing I must tell you is this: you know yourself best, so please do whatever works for you and do not compare yourself to anyone! Remember this journey is yours! For myself, I knew I wanted to take my NCLEX closer to graduation. I received my Authorization to Test (ATT) from my State Board of Nursing about 2 weeks after graduation, and I scheduled my NCLEX-RN for June 9.

After graduating I took a week-long break just to enjoy, rest, and take in the huge accomplishment of graduating with a BSN. After the break, on the following Monday, I began to study. I studied using question platforms with rationales and test-taking strategies provided as instant feedback. I found practicing questions really helped me to get in testing mode. I first began by going over specific content and systems to get an overall assessment of areas I was comfortable in and others that I was not. After identifying areas that I was not performing strongly in, I reviewed the pathophysiology and interventions and followed this review by doing practice questions. The last 2 weeks of my studying time, I began to take exams without

instant feedback to mirror the testing experience. I believe using platforms that had this option was tremendously helpful because it prepared me for what the NCLEX would be like. Taking these exams close to the time I knew I was going to take my NCLEX helped me build a routine.

Throughout nursing school, my school required us to take HESI exams in each of our core classes (Fundamentals, Medical Surgical, Community, Pediatrics, Women's Health, Critical Care, and Mental Health), and our last semester we took the HESI Exit. I strongly believe taking these standardized exams throughout nursing school really helped prepare me for the NCLEX. Taking these exams taught me test-taking strategies that I used while taking the NCLEX. This is a reminder that you have worked hard and studied hard all throughout nursing school, so you can do this. You are more prepared than you think you are.

About a week and a half before my exam, all the emotions started to hit me. The test anxiety started to really impact me, and this is when I was reminded to take breaks. It was not ideal to constantly study and bombard myself with information, and I had to tell myself it is okay to take a break and do things that you love. You must take breaks when studying for anything, whether that be in nursing school or for the NCLEX. Taking breaks to do things you enjoy ultimately helps you in the long run. Having discipline is what is most important. The second thing I realized was to lean on my support system. Reaching out to my close friends, family, and my school faculty and staff really helped me so much because, in that moment, I needed the reassurance and support that they were giving me. This brings me to my last point, repeat to yourself positive affirmations; write them down and say them to yourself! Your mind believes whatever you tell it. Throughout nursing school and while studying for the NCLEX, I would journal and write on sticky notes, "I will be a nurse," "I will achieve this or that," and it worked wonders for me. You must believe in yourself!

I took my NCLEX on a Thursday. That week I did not bombard myself with information or practice questions. I truly did things I enjoyed and engaged in self-care that entire week. That Sunday while I was out, I drove pass the testing center so that I could know where it was and where I would be going. I highly suggest doing this; that alone relieved anxiety. I scheduled my exam for 0800. Again, you know yourself best! Throughout nursing school, I preferred early morning exams and felt this is when I functioned best, so that is why I chose that time. Once I arrived at the PearsonVue Center, I did all the biometric requirements and put my belongings