



Saint Ignatius' 4-Step Plan to Succeed in Exams

(compiled by Fr. Dan Joyce S.J.- Saint Joseph's University)

Advice from the spiritual tradition of Saint Ignatius Loyola on how to succeed in exams comes from the time-tested, honored wisdom of the largest and oldest global educational system in the world – Jesuit Education engages over 2.2 million people in almost every country.

Rule #1 - **Agere Contra** – to “go against the grain”. In planning your studies do first and foremost the stuff that you are least willing to get done. By doing the hard stuff up front, the rest of the work that you need to get done seems easier. Thus, you are more motivated and more able to cover all of the necessary studying.

Rule #2 - **Schola Brevis** – Get organized and be real about your expectations. Begin early with a **quick review** that offers you a sense of what is needed and all the material you need to review, re-learn or learn. Exercise patience and understanding with yourself on this. This prevents you from being overwhelmed and giving into defeatism.

Rule #3 - **Repetitio est Mater Studiorum.** Repetition is the mother of learning. Review some material for an exam quickly as a first attempt to know it. Then put it down so you can work on something else. After a while go back to it with a more thorough repetition. Your mind will recognize it and take it in more readily and help you retain it in a more lasting way.

4.) **Consolatio** – Saint Ignatius talks about “consolation without previous cause” as the thing which God will give you for what you need so that you can do what is needed. “The enemy of your human nature”, as Ignatius calls evil or damaging negativity, will work doubts in you. Move forward with consolation and confidence. When the test comes you ask for the grace to be consoled and confident – this is what Saint Ignatius calls the “..id quod volo...” of prayer – to be explicit with God about what I want. So ask clearly for success on the test and be confident in your prayerful request.

Remember, if you do well – thank God – as all is from and for “*Ad maiorem Dei gloriam*” – “the greater honor and glory of God.”

Consider a retreat where you can achieve self-awareness and a key to living the magis

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Enjoy the break

St. Ignatius of Loyola once told a young Jesuit teaching high school in Sicily “Make use of every acceptable recreation suggested to you, because all the sooner, then, with God’s help, you will be freed to give yourself to the greater good.”

