CHAPTER 7

HOW TO STUDY SMART FOR EXAMS?

You Need An Answer To The Title Question?

I will certainly give you one: By studying smart all the time! Then you'll find studying for exams is no longer such a dreadful thing. In fact exams are created to make people study and if you have studied well, you are always prepared to face any examination. Do not try to study last minute, because this is so unlike in primary or secondary school. **University** education covers wider and much more complex topics. Get started from the very beginning! Have you heard of the Malay proverb 'get the umbrella ready before it rains?' That is how careful and artful life was for our elders, not anymore it seems! We prefer to wait for the weather man to tell us the prediction or just get the umbrella out when it already pours!

> *It's not what is poured into a student that counts, but what is planted.*
>
> *Linda Conway*

Do We Need To Study Hard? No, Just Study Smart

Do not learn the hard way. Of course you need to develop a good work and study ethics which include hard work and exclude laziness. However, be smart, there are procedures to follow which will definitely save you time and anxiety:

i) Studying consistently is an important part of exam preparation. If you think you can relax now and cram twelve weeks of learning into a week of study just before the exams, then you are wrong and you are aiming to score low marks.

ii) Good study habits throughout the semester make it easier to study for exams. Each week review your notes, section by section, digesting every important fact and concept. Understand and memorize if you must, how these concepts are applied in engineering problems, step by step. Then move on to similar problems either from tutorials or from text books, eventually try to tackle more complex problems using the same concept.

iii) Organize a group study, you will find studying in a group of people you are comfortable to work with is so much more interesting and effective. A lot will come out of the regular discussions and exchange of ideas.

Collaborative learning where students consistently work together on problems in study groups has proven to benefit students remarkably such as to get higher grades, retain what they learn longer, enjoy classes more, and gain more self-confidence than students who only work individually. Besides, you cannot ignore the side benefits such as tolerance, ability to work in a team, helping each other, improving interpersonal skills and sense of belonging.

iv) Since most exam questions in engineering courses are related to solving problems, the first and most important step is to understand the problem. This means you need to identify exactly which quantity the problem is asking you to find or solve for. Read the problems thoroughly before devising a plan and apply the correct techniques to solve