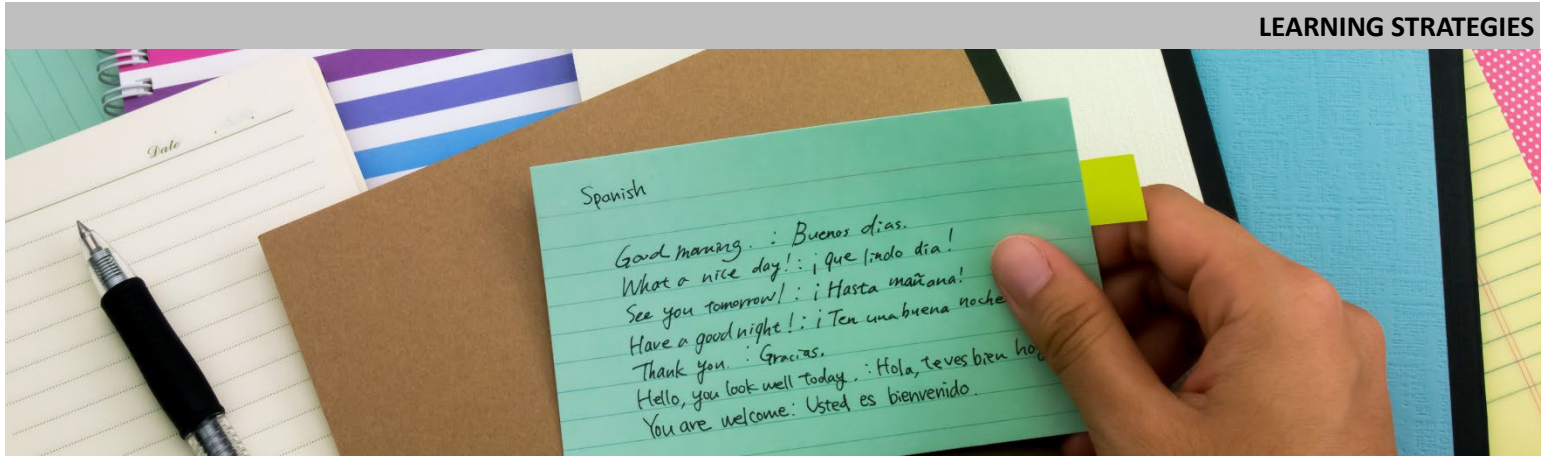


Flashcards



What is it and why do I care?

Flashcards are an underrated tool that powerfully support a variety of proven learning strategies, namely [active recall](#) (remembering information with minimal or no prompts) and [spaced repetition](#) (regular interaction with study material over multiple days and weeks). They are fairly simple to create, portable for learning on the go, and scalable; meaning the cards you create for mid-course exams can be used to prepare for the final and all the cards you create during nursing school can be used to study for NCLEX. A quick word of caution, flashcards are great for learning a lot of standalone data, but generally aren't good for understanding the big picture – so make sure you get the concept before using your flashcards to fill in the details.

Creating your Flashcards

It is always best to **create your own** flashcards because the act of creating them is a form of learning. Whether you write them out or create them electronically, be sure to **use your own words**. When it makes sense, try to **connect them** to things you already understand, even if it's not nursing related (e.g. something you know about plumbing that relates to blood flow). Consider **adding pictures** to make the information more engaging and memorable, this dual coding gives your brain more than one way to recall the information later.

Probably the most important factor when creating flashcards is to **shake up the information**. On one card prompt for the four potential clinical consequences of uncontrolled systemic hypertension (with the consequences listed on the back) on another card create a narrative of those four symptoms (Arthur, a 54-year-old male is complaining of...) with the condition on the back. An instructor accidentally did this exact thing on a test, including the same question in different formats twice; 87% of her students answered the list question correctly, but only 58% were able to recognize the exact same question in a narrative form.

Using your Flashcards

Make yourself **answer the flashcards aloud** before turning them over. We often confuse *recognizing* the information with *knowing* the information; recognizing the information on a test is of little help if you don't actually know the answer. Answering aloud (even just under your breath) makes you commit to the answer before revealing it.

Be deliberate about how you use your flashcards. As you review them, sort them into three main stacks:

1. New - ideas that feel new to you
2. Learning - partially know, but need more work
3. Comfortable - very familiar with

Focus your attention on the “new” and “learning” stacks; while only reviewing the “comfortable” stack every few weeks to make sure you're retaining the information. Move the cards into different stacks as your learning progresses.

Finally, **don't always quiz yourself the same way**. If your cards are words with definitions, sometimes prompt yourself with the word and give the definition and other times prompt yourself with the definition (in other words, quiz from both sides of the card).

Video Resources

Overview:

<https://youtu.be/mzCEJVtEDOU>

Nursing Specific:

<https://youtu.be/Of6903938Z8>

Electronic Option:

<https://quizlet.com/>