

Blueprints for Success: Linking Study Strategies to NAPLEX Outcomes

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Abstract

Background: The National Association of Boards of Pharmacy's North American Pharmacist Licensure Examination serves as a critical benchmark for assessing pharmacy graduates' readiness for clinical practice. Recent national declines in first-time pass rates have raised concerns about student preparation and highlighted the need to better understand which study strategies support successful outcomes. This study aims to focus on what students reported as their study methods to identify trends and determine which methods are linked to successful NAPLEX outcomes and to provide actionable insights to enhance future student preparedness and improve first-time pass rates.

Methods: A 17-question anonymous Qualtrics survey was distributed to all 65 members of the SIUE Class of 2025. The survey asked questions to provide data on resources used, weekly study hours, perceived helpfulness of preparation methods, and first-attempt exam results. Responses were analyzed descriptively.

Results: 94% reported they passed the NAPLEX on their first attempt. Most participants began studying two to three months before the exam and dedicated more than 16 hours per week to preparation. Practice questions and the RxPrep review book were the most frequently used and most highly rated resources, ranked as extremely helpful by the majority of respondents. Common reflective themes included wishing they had started earlier, completed more practice questions, and strengthened calculation skills.

Conclusions: Students who relied heavily on practice questions, used RxPrep and UWorld resources, and reported higher confidence levels were more likely to pass the NAPLEX on their first attempt, and although most began studying one to three months before the exam, many later wished they had started earlier or adjusted their study methods.