From Chemical Engineering Education, 33(2), 136-137 (1999)

## **MEMO**

TO: Students who have been disappointed with their test grades FROM: Richard M. Felder, North Carolina State University

Dear Student,

Many of you have told your instructor that you understood the course material much better than your last test grade showed, and some of you asked what you should do to keep the same thing from happening on the next test.

Let me ask you some questions about how you prepared for the test. Answer them as honestly as you can. If you answer "No" to many of them, your disappointing test grade should not be too surprising. If there are still a lot of "No"s after the next test, your disappointing grade on that test should be even less surprising. If your answer to most of these questions is "Yes" and you still got a poor grade, something else must be going on. It might be a good idea for you to meet with your instructor or a counselor to see if you can figure out what it is.

You'll notice that several of the questions presume that you're working with classmates on the homework--either comparing solutions you first obtained individually or actually getting together to work out the solutions. Either approach is fine. In fact, if you've been working entirely by yourself and your test grades are unsatisfactory, I would strongly encourage you to find one or two homework and study partners to work with before the next test. (Be careful about the second approach, however; if what you're doing is mainly watching others work out solutions you're probably doing yourself more harm than good.)

The question "How should I prepare for the test" becomes easy once you've filled out the checklist. The answer is...

Do whatever it takes to be able to answer 'Yes' to most of the questions.

Good luck, Richard Felder

## **Test Preparation Checklist**

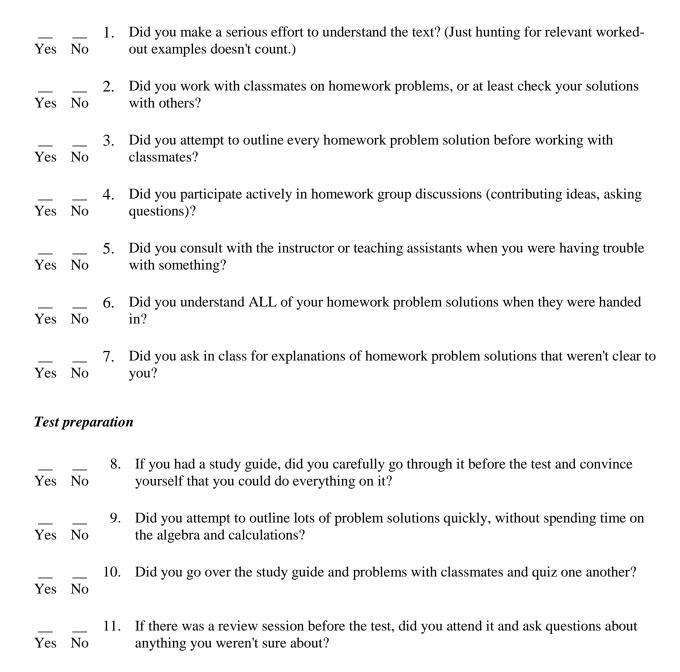
Answer "Yes" only if you usually did the things described (as opposed to occasionally or never).

## Homework

No

Yes No

**TOTAL** 



The more "Yes" responses you recorded, the better your preparation for the test. If you recorded two or more "No" responses, think seriously about making some changes in how you prepare for the next test.

answers to 1-11 may not matter.)

12. Did you get a reasonable night's sleep before the test? (If your answer is no, your