

Big Journeys begin with Small Steps



“Success doesn't necessarily come from breakthrough Innovation, but from flawless Execution.”



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Often I hear a concern among the students regarding “What should be our strategy to crack ESE/GATE exams? To answer this question in the most simplified way, this article is my sincere effort to strategise things for aspirants, which will be fruitful for young friends.

There are two categories of ESE/GATE aspirants :

- Freshers , preparing first time for the competitive exams (Neophytes)
- Repeaters , who have already given one or more attempts (Rank Improvers)

Strategy for Neophytes:

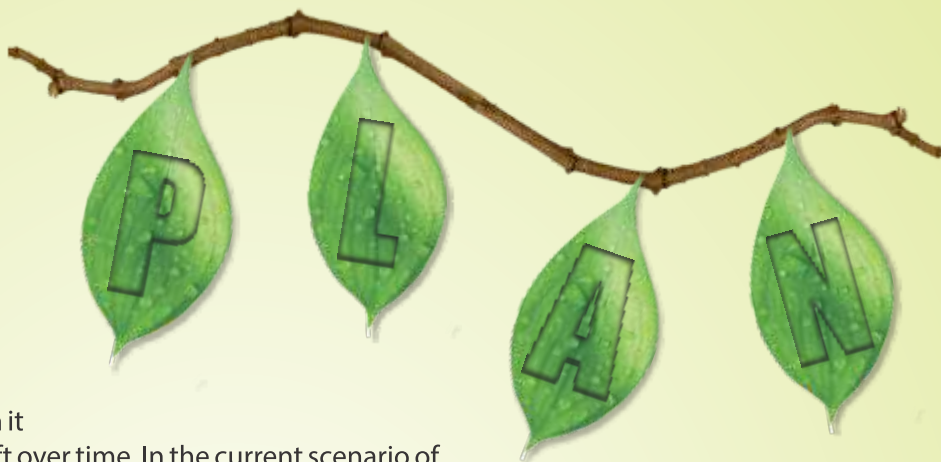
If you are a fresher and preparing first time then I would suggest you the following approach to be adopted:

- Define your aim and target the desired exam right from the beginning. You should examine closely the examination pattern, syllabus and the level of difficulty.
- The first step for amateurs should be, to go through previous years' question papers of the aimed exam and identify what type of questions are asked, like whether it is theoretical (then what subjects/which topics are mostly asked) or derivations or numerical type.
- Keep one best reference book for each subject. You are not advised to read too many books for each subject; practically it is not possible in limited time frame.



The STUDY REGIME:

Make an overall plan of your career; define immediate and ultimate goals of your career, then make a roadmap to execute in most effective manner. Being an engineer you should understand the importance of planning and execution of the plan. Overall plan may be further divided in three stages:



1. Six month /One year plan:

Divide months for different subjects and plan it so as to complete the entire syllabus in the left over time. In the current scenario of high cut-offs, do not go for selective study; instead cover the entire syllabus, because you never know "the Topic Left could be the Topic of Conquest."

2. Subject-wise Plan/ Bi-weekly plan:

For each subject, study should be exam oriented, i.e. you should get acclimatize with the subject, so that you know which area is to be focussed like whether theory has to be focussed or numerical or solving previous years questions will suffice. Every subject requires different approach. For example in mathematics you may be required to focus on practising problems where as in English altogether different approach, similarly in technical subjects the approach may differ from subject to subject.

If you are enrolled in any coaching institute; then concentrate and study well in coaching classroom, your class notes should be full and final and should be ready in classroom itself, with simultaneous marking of IMPORTANT concept/formulae and develop a habit of writing of NOTE points, wherever required. If only self study is your style of preparing without coaching, then also notes making is advisable.

One point to be kept in mind is "Work for Yourself"; i.e. make notes for yourself, it should be self hand written notes, as this will increase your writing efficiency in terms of speed, accuracy and hand writing and also helps in memory retention.

3. Daily To-Do list /Daily plan:

This is basically for effective time management. Plan and freeze the study hours and abstain from using mobile phones, social media, what's app etc during these hours. 10 to 15 minutes are sufficient to plan next day schedule, it will help in removing redundant activities of your schedule and you can make best use of your time for studying. I would also suggest to pre plan your area /subject /topic of your study for next day, it would help in activating senses of your mind to stimulate for study which helps in better memory retention.

Solving previous years' questions of GATE & ESE (at least of last 10-15 years) should be made contemporaneous with class notes. Do not postpone it for later, topic that is covered in class or studied on your own, finish the previous years' questions on priority basis.

While solving questions, mark the questions which you were not able to solve. Refer the reference book for the clarity of concepts, and solve again. In front of the question write the Page Number and Name of the book referred and in the book referred underline or highlight the concept. This above methodology is to be followed for all workbook and other materials also. After a few months while doing revision you should re-attempt these marked questions only and no need to solve other questions.

Make a REVISION plan:

Make a habit of reading and revising simultaneously.

While studying a particular subject; devote 70-80% of self study time in developing concepts of new subject and rest 20-30% time should be religiously devoted for revision of already completed topics/subjects. And, towards months closer to exam, increase the revision time for proper retention of concepts till exam day.

While revising, make sure you do the following:

- Review of class notes.
- Revise underlined/ highlighted portion of text book.
- Then attempt only the marked questions once more. If time permits, then start with new set of questions.



Make Micro notes:

After finishing every subject make micro notes, which have only principal formulae/ diagrams/ concepts of at most importance, especially note down the area which you find difficult to remember. Then, once this is done, take a snapshot and store in your mobile gallery. These will be your Digital Micro Notes, which can be revised anywhere and everywhere, while travelling, gap between two classes, free time.

Flow like a river:

Be loquacious and discussion oriented with friends and seniors and keep on clearing your doubts, don't allow to accumulate the doubts which may result in mental stress. Also interact with successful seniors and fellow mates to know about their path of success/strategy, it is synonymous with river water which when flows gets self purified.

Evaluate yourself:

Take tests in examination environment and make note of areas of difficulty and make a roadmap to improve these before the next test.

Stay away from incompetent and non-achievers. Don't let their failure demoralise you in any sense.

Make holistic and balancing approach:

Cover entire syllabus but more time should be given to important areas. Identify important subjects and mark important topics within a subject. Scoring and low scoring areas should be segregated. Make a balance study plan for technical and non technical subjects. Mathematics and Reasoning Aptitude section is quite scoring in GATE exam.



Strategy for Repeaters:

- Review your past performance and find the reasons of failure. Consider failure as next stepping step. In fact you are not failed your success is little postponed.
- Identify weak areas of each subject and start your preparation by first improving those areas.
- Focus more on solving different types of problems and that too from new source of material in each iteration.
- Plan your study to maintain regularity and self motivation; daily scheduling and subject wise scheduling is very important for a systematic preparation.
- Join some good Test Series & appear for tests with full preparation and take the test in examination environment and solve previous years' questions of various exams. Solving previous papers of GATE, ESE& CSE may be very useful.
- To maintain continuity and keeping up the self motivation, form groups of 3-4 friends and make schedule of group study once in a week to discuss complex questions and doubts.