HESI Remediation Suggestions:

The HESI test is a reliable, valid, nationally standardized test used by many nursing schools to predict success on the NCLEX licensing examination and identify students in need of additional strategies to improve their studying and test taking skills in order to successfully complete the NCLEX testing. The HESI is a computerized, timed, proctored, comprehensive examination of nursing program content with particular focus on application of knowledge using critical thinking and clinical reasoning skills. The successful student will prepare themselves for the critical thinking and clinical reasoning in these tests by reviewing and applying nursing theory in the context of a clinical practice scenario, practicing test taking strategies, and critically thinking at an advanced level. Comprehensive information about the HESI test may be found at http://www.nursingcenter.com/library/JournalArticle.asp?Article_ID=648190.

Here are some common errors to avoid and suggestions to improve your strategies for testing success.

**Before the test:**

1. The HESI and NCLEX tests use the steps of the nursing process (assessment, nursing diagnosis, planning, intervention, and evaluation) to evaluate how you critically think about and apply your knowledge about nursing principles and skills during the care of patients. **Essential review:** Use the Jarvis physical assessment textbook (from NUR 307; borrow one from a classmate or use the library) Chapter 1 to review the nursing process and critical thinking. You need to be very familiar with the stages of the process and the nursing actions associated with each stage, and be prepared to identify whether a certain action is used in the planning or evaluation phase of the nursing process. Jarvis chapter 2 is a good refresher on developmental issues at all stages of life which will help with pediatric, geriatric and adolescent health questions.

2. Use an NCLEX study book to familiarize yourself with the type of questions to expect and review the answers to understand why they are correct. Know the common electrolyte values and signs of abnormal levels, common drugs. Don't read things into the questions or assume things that are not part of the question. After you read the test question only, close your eyes. Think about what the question said and what you know about it, and only then, look at the answers. Practice the questions with same time limit used in the NCLEX testing: 90 seconds per question.

3. You may want to consider use of the clinical reference text, *Clinical Nursing Skills: Basic to Advanced Skills*, by Smith, Duell and Martin (any edition) to review clinical nursing and skills info for the HESI and NCLEX tests.
   a. Each chapter starts with a list of terms that will help refresh your memory.
   b. The nursing diagnoses section, at the end of each chapter, will help you identify diagnoses specific to a certain nursing practice area.
   c. Review Chapter 1 briefly to refresh professional nursing practice issues, Chapter 3 for delegation and care plans, and word roots, suffixes and prefixes (to help recognize words you have trouble recalling).
   d. Many test questions will ask about different components of the nursing process, nursing diagnoses, and critical thinking as each relates to a certain type of patient. Review Chapter 2 to re-establish your foundation in this information.
Starting with chapter 4, each chapter has focused information “Units” (listing starts on page x at the front of the text). These are bulleted listings of nursing process components related to that specific topic (I’d bet these are items more likely to be used in the hospital or covered in the HESI and NCLEX tests). This information could be reviewed to identify more specific information that merits review.

4. Check out the Rio Salado College Test Taking Strategies online at [http://www.riosalado.edu/services/student/support/testing/strategies.shtml](http://www.riosalado.edu/services/student/support/testing/strategies.shtml)

5. If you are feeling stress or anxiety related to the test, or need test taking strategy review, we strongly suggest that you contact the NAU Learning Assistance Centers, North campus 928-523-7391 or South campus 928-523-5524, or [http://home.nau.edu/edsup/lac/workshops.asp](http://home.nau.edu/edsup/lac/workshops.asp) for an appointment for individual instruction on test taking/anxiety reduction strategies ASAP.

6. See a health care provider if severe physical symptoms related to anxiety interfere with your testing ability. Medications to help control these symptoms can be ordered.

7. If you have a learning disability, consult with the NAU Office of Student Life to learn about your rights to obtain support for your academic efforts.

8. Insure sufficient brain energy: eat a good meal before the test, with complex carbohydrates and protein to fuel your brain for 4 hours (veggie/cheese omelet, etc). Avoid simple carbs that will surge the insulin and drop your sugars 1-2 hours after eating (white toast, bagels, sugary foods, fruit juices). Bring water and a complex carbohydrate snack, such as nuts or cheese, to refuel as needed.

**During the test:**

Be careful about

1. Reading too much into the questions. Look at what is there, what you know. Unless it is specified, don't assume that you know the patient's gender, age, diagnoses, situation or where the interaction is occurring (home, street, nursing unit).

2. Reading too much into the answers. See above.

3. Using the answer choices to search your brain for information.
   a. Try covering up the answers and read the question. Think about the distracters (unneeded/irrelevant information and words like "all of the following", "except", "not", etc).
   b. Think about what you know about the subject. If you can't recall anything, look at the words and think about their meaning (dys=not or abnormal, anti=against), or what they sound like (sarcoma sounds like carcinoma, so sarcoma is a type of cancer), or what body system they might be a part of (autonomic=nervous system).
   c. Then, think again about what you know and look at each answer to see if it relates to what you know.

4. Becoming anxious. If you are feeling overwhelmed, discouraged, tired: STOP for a minute or two. Do deep breathing or relaxation or visualization. Use positive, affirmational self talk- NO negativity! You need your mental energy to concentrate, just like you do in the hospital when patient care situations get tough, like severe bleeding or a code.

5. Be sure to print out the test analysis at the end to have as proof of completion of the test and to help guide future review work.
After the test:
1. Review the HESI exam printout to identify areas of weakness. Look at the pages that have categories of questions along with the score you earned and the number of questions you had to answer. The categories with the lowest scores indicate areas that you need to review.
2. Take a look at the number of questions that were asked in the far right hand column. Focus your study on the areas that had larger number of questions.
3. Subjects in which you only had a few questions were either subjects you knew well or which did not make up a significant portion of the test. You can focus less on these subjects. Those subjects that have a larger number of questions are the ones on which you need to focus your studying.
4. The test company, Evolve/HESI/Elsevier, has a website which, using NAU codes, you may access to review your score, get a personalized evaluation of your test results, access to specific reference information related to test questions and more. It is strongly suggested that you complete the Elsevier Evolve HESI remediation program online to review content information and alterations in test taking methods that may be needed. The website is http://www.hesitest.com/.
5. Look at the page that has the nursing process scores and see if there are parts of the nursing process that received lower scores. Essential review: Use the Jarvis physical assessment textbook from NUR 307 (borrow one from a classmate or use the library) Chapter 1 to review the nursing process and critical thinking. (Jarvis chapter 2 is a good refresher on developmental issues at all stages of life.)
6. When you look at NCLEX/HESI study questions, pay attention to the ones that focus on the specific area of the nursing process that you need (look at the answers, which should include indication as to what part of the nursing process is being addressed in the question, i.e. assessment, evaluation, etc). The Lewis Med-surg text, chapter 1, is an excellent review also. Chapter 2 is culture, 4 is teaching, 5 is geriatrics, 6 is community based nursing.
7. You can work with the HESI Case Study modules available on the Nursing computers.
8. You may want to invest in your future by spending money for a reputable commercial NCLEX review course, such as Kaplan, Hurst or Evolve/Elsevier, to help with your preparation work. The online course is flexible, but in person courses allow personal counseling and assistance prn. Choosing one with a money back guarantee is a good strategy.
9. Maintain an ongoing relationship with your faculty or advisor to get support and continue problem solving and remediation efforts until you successfully complete the HESI examination. Meeting with your faculty advisor is strongly recommended if you score < 850 on the first attempt and mandatory for a score <850 on the second attempt, as a formal remediation plan is required.
10. Please remember that, by policy, to improve the usefulness of the HESI test as a predictor of NCLEX success, the test should not be repeated earlier than 4 weeks after the previous testing date. See the NAU School of Nursing Undergraduate Student Handbook for complete HESI testing policies.