

APTD and CPTD Exam Preparation Tips

Sourced from current APTD and CPTD credential holders



Learn From Others

- **I belonged to a virtual study group** with a reward system set up across several weeks. We'd meet via Free Conference Call (no Zoom then) weekly. Besides discussing logistics, we would share sample questions we'd written. The reward for contributing questions each week was to receive the correct responses the following week. No contribution? You were on your own. It worked quite well!
- **Have a "study buddy."** I was fortunate to make friends with someone I'd never met before. We kept each other accountable, keeping up with the notifications and updates (being a new program, there were many) and quizzing each other on various things ahead of the exam.
- **Join a study group or find a partner and work together.** Different perspectives help.
- **Form a study group**, connect with a mentor, and reach out to current APTD and CPTD holders.
- **Prepare with someone else.**
- **Try to join any type of study group** (in-person or remote) with others who plan to take the test in the same window.
- **Talk it out**—by yourself or with others.

Focus on Application

- **You can't pass the exam by learning and remembering only.** You have to understand the concepts and models.
- **Collect stories** and find out how things are applied in real life across different industries.
- **Use your existing or recent projects** as cases and apply the concepts. Did you use best practices?
- **The Talent Development Body of Knowledge** covers the "why and the when" but not the "how" of the capabilities. Be sure to use additional resources.
- **Relate what you're learning** to things you are doing in real life.

Use Tools, Resources, and a Style That Work for You

- **Mindmaps!** There are no right and wrong ways of doing this. They are an amazing tool to represent the main topics visually and to link between them.
- **The prep course is targeted** and provides you case studies, videos, and interactive reviews, and you can build flash cards directly within the course. Plus, you will be given formative/summative knowledge checks throughout.
- **Take your notes using visuals and colors and images.** Several topics I recalled in the test I was able to pull up the imagery and remember that way.
- **Use Quizlet** to find different quizzes as well. I'd also recommend looking up an external resource for each topic just to broaden your study materials a bit.
- **CPTD advice: Have a study plan plus purchase the prep course** then print the content outline and review key learning objectives and fill in your knowledge gaps.
- **Use flash cards.** The Talent Development Body of Knowledge has a feature that creates them.
- **Identify your learning style** and plan your learning based on your learning style.
- **Take one of the ATD prep courses.** They give you a great overview and context for the content.
- **Use all the resources that ATD has available** to prepare for certification then go over them again and again.
- **Gap analysis!** Figure out where you're already strong and where you really need to focus.
- **Use the Talent Development Capability Model** self-assessment tool as a mainframe and a guideline to set priorities and arrange the topics.
- **One of the things that made all the difference** for me to get the maximum benefit from the learning journey was my mindset. I embraced an open/growth mindset to learn, validate, and widen my set of skills and knowledge base as L&D professional.
- **Take the practice test early.**
- **Don't just study.** Immerse yourself in the content and in what it means to you and the profession. Recall how you best remember and acquire the knowledge and do that. It will take as many weeks as they tell you—then double that. Anything worth doing is worth doing right.
- **Use more than one resource to study.** It helps you see the bigger picture when reviewing concepts as opposed to just memorizing terms and theories.

Manage Your Time

- **Make a study plan** including when, where, and how you will study. Make it part of your daily routine and take full advantage of the time between registration and exam day.
- **Find a regular day and time every week to prepare and study.** During this regular interval, don't just study content. Review the practice questions.
- **Schedule time to study.** Put time on your calendar as nonnegotiable study time.
- **It's a marathon, not a sprint.** Have a plan for sustaining that high level of motivation throughout your journey. It's a long path toward certification but 100% worth it!
- **Time management** is the top priority study tip for any credential preparation to large extent.
- **Try not to stress.** You know this. You do it every day. Harness your superpower and focus on one area at a time.
- **Begin preparing several months in advance.** There are several disciplines within the three capabilities within the certification. I needed time to break it down. Prepare and practice.
- **Go all in!** Study like it matters and fully commit. You've totally got this!

Access resources to help you prepare for the APTD and CPTD certification exams at td.org/certification/preparation.