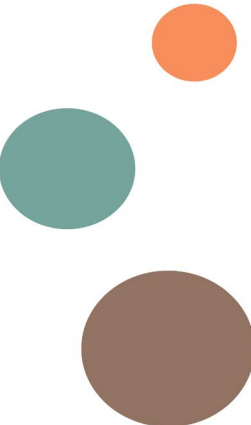




International Consortium for Educational Development
AGENCY AND ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT
June 24–26, 2026. Salamanca, Spain.

The Exam Autopsy: Empowering Learners Through Reflective Assessment

Aebersold, A., Jones, J., & Shea, E. (2026, June 24). Montana State University Billings. [Initiatives | MSU Billings](#)



Disclosure Statement

This presentation has no financial relationships or conflicts of interest and is intended for educational purposes only.

It examines the use of a post-exam reflective assessment tool (“Exam Autopsy”) to evaluate exam errors, study strategies, and future preparation methods to support student performance and program learning outcomes.

The “Exam Autopsy” model was adapted from a Texas program originally presented at the Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis Assessment Conference by Michelle Caetano, Ashley Castleberry, Liz Lafitte, Adam Pate, and Jenny VanAmburgh (2022).



Objectives

01

Introduction of the Exam Autopsy

02

Implementation Among Disciplines & Early Findings

03

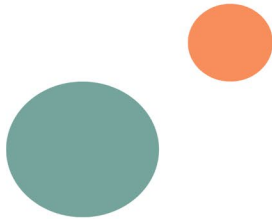
Break-Out Groups for Discussion

04

Sharing of Possible Iterations & Invitation for Future Collaboration

05

Key Takeaways & Questions



What is the Exam Autopsy?

- A metacognitive tool that engages students in a post-exam assessment.
 - <https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:us:827826b1-3be1-4863-b9c9-d07fffe9c40b>
 - What valuable insights can be gained from the Exam Autopsy process?



Identification of Common Error Types

- Analyzes the most frequent error types made by students
 - Test Taking Errors
 - Test Anxiety
 - Concept Errors
 - Careless Errors
 - Proper Instruction



Evaluation of Study Strategies

- Assesses which study methods were most commonly used and their effectiveness
 - Re-reading notes
 - Recording lectures
 - Practice problems
 - Time management
 - Study groups



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Implementation Across Disciplines

- Programs & Courses across the Campus
 - Radiologic Technology
 - Diagnostic Medical Sonography
 - Medical Coding
 - Nursing
 - Mathematics
 - Reading/Writing
 - Communications
 - History, and more...



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From Concept to Practice: Implementing the Exam Autopsy

- Radiologic Technology
 - Jenna Jones
- Reading
 - Erica Shea



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Early Findings

- Radiologic Technology Program
 - Mean exam scores higher for students using the exam autopsy
 - National Registry exam pass rates increased from 78% in 2022 to 100% in 2023 following implementation of the tool.
- Spring 2025
 - Introduction of Exam Autopsy at Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) Faculty Workshop
 - Summer 2025
 - Launch Pilot Study with additional courses/programs



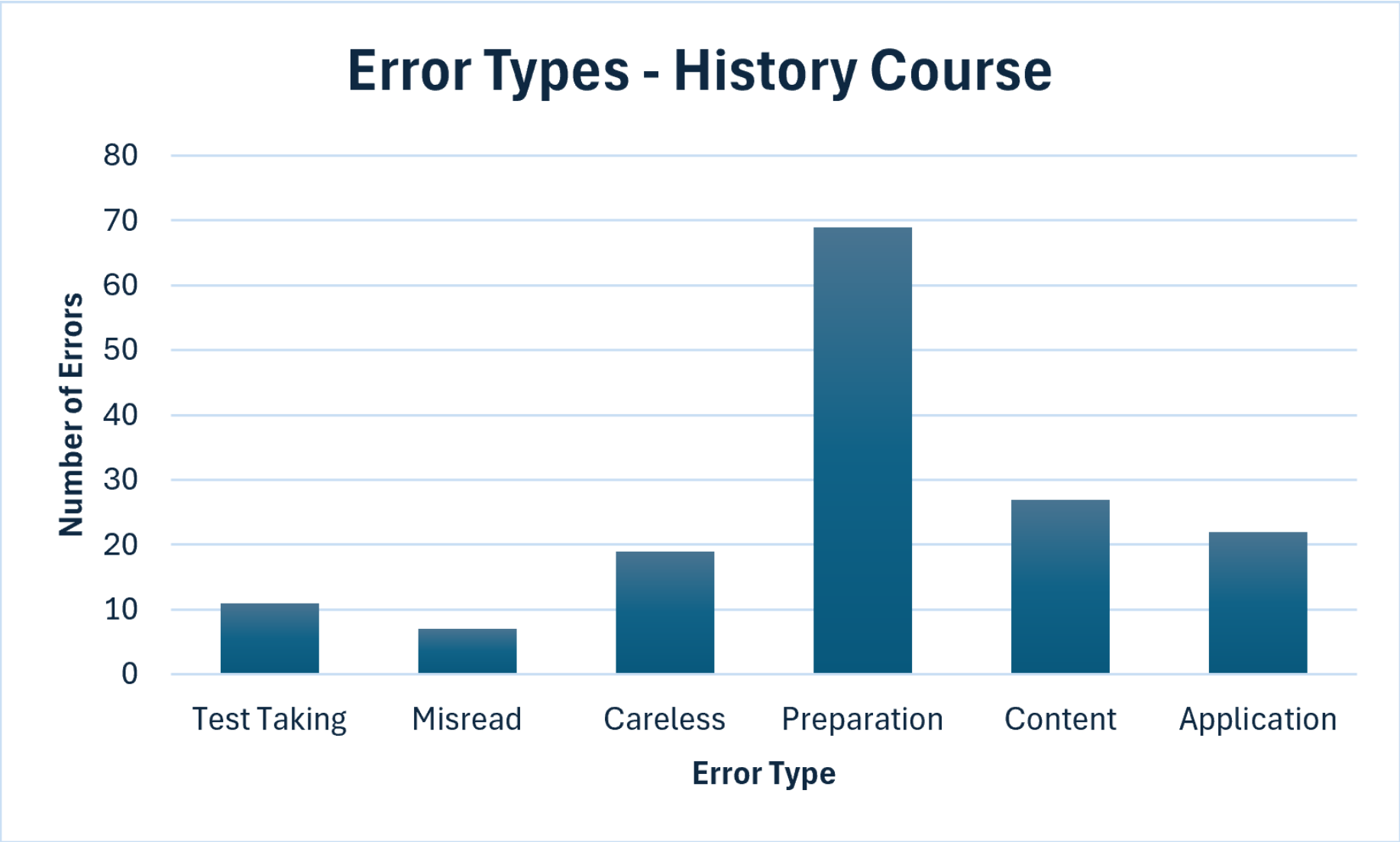
Early Findings Cont...

- Summer 2025 Pilot
 - Every student cited they would use the Exam Autopsy again
 - Error Types (423 total):
 - Student preparation errors (29%)
 - Test taking errors (27%)
 - Application errors (8%)
 - Misread errors (10%)
 - Careless errors (14%)



* Students are struggling more with study habits and test taking strategies than actual course content!

Error Types for History Course in 2025 Summer Pilot

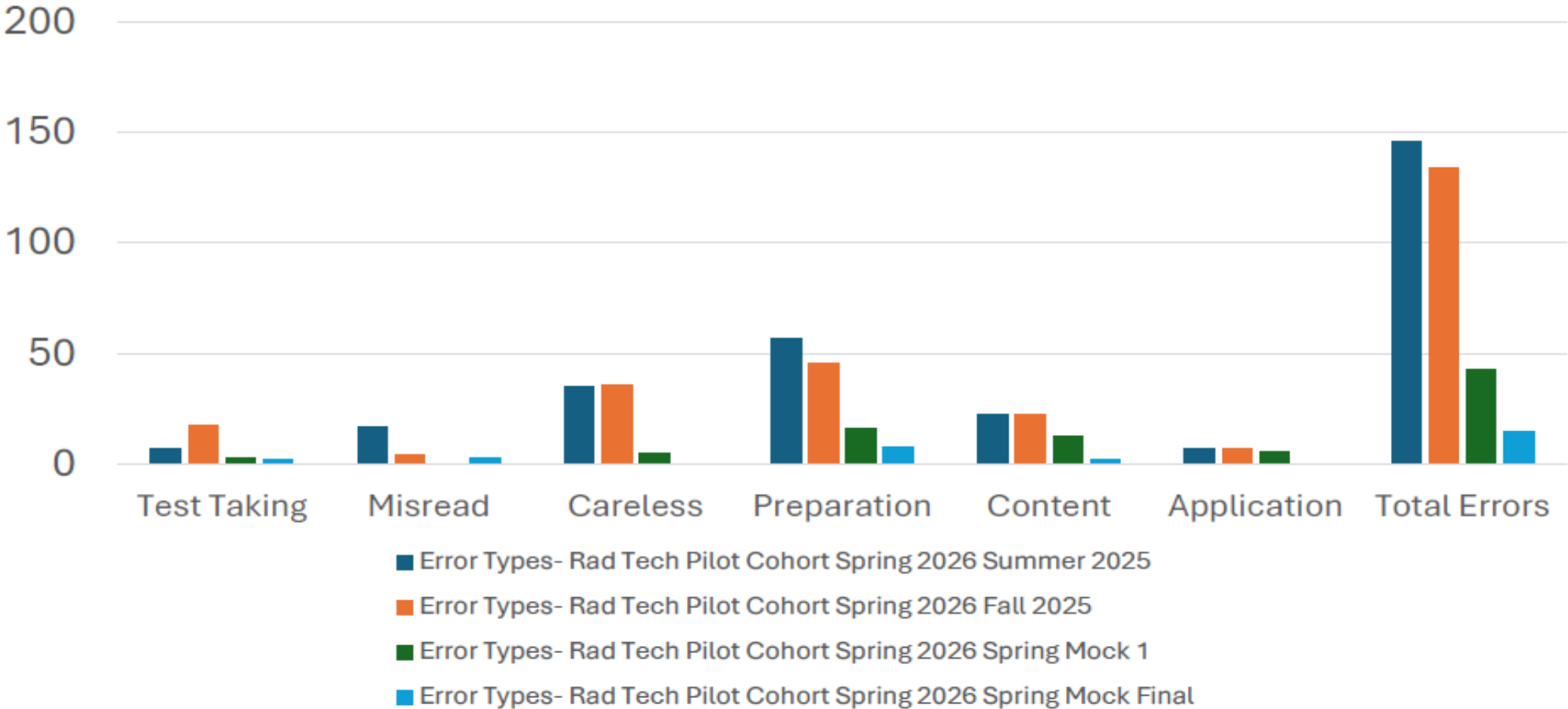


Early Findings Cont....

- Sample Cohort from Radiologic Technology Summer Pilot
 - Fall 2025
 - Evidence of decrease in total # of missed questions over three exams
 - Evidence of continued improvements with less application and test-taking errors, misread errors, and careless errors
 - Spring 2026
 - Significant evidence of improvements specifically in total # of missed questions, misread errors, and careless errors
 - Mean exam scores higher on a class average
 - ** Scoring 80% or higher in all categories on Final Mock Board Registry!
 - **100% First-time Pass Rate on 2026 ARRT Board Registry (as of 6/2026)!

Error Types for Rad Tech Pilot Cohort

Errot Types- Rad Tech Pilot Cohort (Summer 2025-Spring 2026)



Break-out Groups & Sharing of Possible Iterations

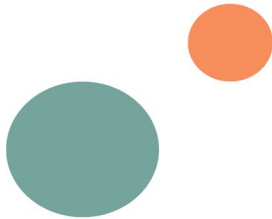
- Please join us for some small group discussions here: [Exam Autopsy Small Group Notes - Google Docs](#)
- What variations of the Exam Autopsy are being used at your institution?
- If you are gathering data, how is it being collected and used?
- What adaptations of the Exam Autopsy can you imagine for papers or projects?
- What collaborations between the Exam Autopsy and your CTL or other student support departments do you foresee working?



Invitation for Future Collaboration

- Together, we can transform assessment into a tool for deeper learning and student success. Interested in:
 - Questions & Conference Reflection?
 - Comments & Feedback?
 - Collaborative Brainstorming?
 - Future Implementation of Ideas?
 - Networking?

Connect with us here: [Exam Autopsy Collaboration](#)



Key Takeaways



Student

Promote student reflection for improved exam performance and empower students to build successful study habits.

Decrease test-anxiety and test-taking errors.



Instructor

Examine error patterns and relate data to learning outcomes for students, instructors, and programs.

Enhance curriculum and instructional practices to promote effective study habits and improved learning outcomes.



Program

Increase Board Exam Pass Rates and Program Effectiveness.

Maintain Accreditation Standards and Compliance.



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