Dear Physician,

Developing an effective plan of preparation for the anesthesia oral boards is very important. I hope that you find “The Ultimate Board Prep Step-by-Step Guide to Preparing for the Anesthesia Oral Boards” to be a helpful tool in developing your own personal plan.

Introduction

The key to passing the anesthesia oral boards is practice, and any course or preparation plan that results in more practice is going to be of benefit to you. However, the way you practice does make a difference. Unfortunately, the vague feedback and superficial clinical discussions provided at many of these courses often fails to improve your test-taking skills beyond that which would have occurred had you spent the same amount of time practicing at home.

Our goal at The Ultimate Board Prep is to do more than simply provide a forum for practice. Our goal is to show you how to master the oral boards…to excel even when presented with the most challenging clinical scenario, and when facing the most difficult and unforgiving examiner.

When you participate in the Ultimate Board Prep preparation program, you are exposed to multiple mock oral exams addressing a multitude of difficult and controversial clinical scenarios covering all the high yield topics associated with the oral boards. The exams tend toward the more difficult end of the spectrum when compared to actual ABA board questions, and are followed by a detailed answers and/or clinical discussion, with emphasis on the management of the most difficult and challenging issues within the exam. At the same time, you will learn how to utilize and apply the various UBP strategies to better communicate your knowledge and defend your anesthetic plan.

Our goal at The Ultimate Board Prep is to do more than simply provide a forum for practice. Our goal is to show you how to master the oral boards. We strive to prepare you to excel even when presented with the most challenging clinical scenario, and when facing the most difficult and unforgiving examiner. For this reason, all the UBP products are designed to work synergistically, utilizing evidentially proven methods of cognitive learning to (1) promote long-term memory,
(2) improve information retrieval (the ability to quickly and efficiently access your knowledge is essential to a strong performance during the oral boards - this is where many people fall short despite an adequate fund of knowledge), (3) stimulate deep conceptual learning, (4) organize your thoughts (which is extremely important due to the speed of the exam and the complexity of the clinical scenarios), and (5) communicate your thoughts clearly and effectively. In short, you will learn how to deliver a substantial amount of relevant information, with clarity, and within a very short period of time, thus making an impression of competence and sound judgment during this important and subjective examination.

In order to maximize your chances of successfully passing the anesthesia oral boards, you should begin your preparation earlier rather than later. Evidence suggests that learning and long-term retention (and exam performance) are vastly improved with a measured approach to preparation that involves shorter and more frequent periods of study over a longer period of time, rather than “cram session” type study periods occurring just prior to an exam. Therefore, we recommend you begin utilizing our preparation program as early in your exam year as possible in order to obtain the study material, learn our strategies and techniques, identify any significant areas of weakness, and ensure adequate preparation time.

Unfortunately, there is no preparation program that can guarantee you pass this subjective and highly stressful examination. However, we can tell you that those who utilize the UBP Ultimate Package for their preparation have a pass rate in the high 90’s. Given the importance of this exam, we recommend this study program for all candidates, especially those who have failed the exam previously. The plan of preparation described in the UBP Step-by-Step Guide below is based on the synergistic use of the programs included with The UBP Ultimate Package, which includes:

- The UBP Online Course (Covering Practice Sets #1,#2, and #3)
- The UBP Live Course (Covering Practice Sets #4, #5, and #6)
  - Participants in the live course have the option of attending in person or via webcast.
- All Six UBP Practice Sets
- The UBP 2-Hour Online Coaching Session
- 9 one-hour Private Online Exam Sessions (8 with our trained examiners and 1 with Dr. George)

**The UBP Step-by-Step Guide to Preparing for the Oral Boards**

**Study Cycle** – the interval of time between initiating preparation and your actual board examination.
The ideal preparation plan would ensure the following:

(1) **Learning that is spaced over time.** Spaced learning over time is an evidentially supported method of improving learning and subsequent exam performance. Coverage of all high-yield material at least twice with several weeks (or even months) between exposures to a specific topic promotes better exam performance than does a single rapid review just prior to your exam. An important component of this learning principle is the “delayed review”. Better exam performance is noted when the review of a covered topic is delayed, rather than occurring right away (e.g. the next day, or even the same week). This is one reason we believe a longer study cycle is beneficial. Therefore, we recommend that you divide your study cycle into halves, covering all the topics in the Practice Sets once in the first half of your study cycle, and then again in the second half.

(2) **Consistent verbalization of your knowledge throughout your test cycle.** Empirical evidence demonstrates that verbalizing your knowledge is far more effective in promoting long-term retention and deep conceptual knowledge than is reading targeted material. Reading is important, but it should be intermingled with verbalization (every study session should include verbalization as well as reading).

(3) **Quality feedback.** All of the UBP preparation materials (e.g. live course, online course, and practice sets) provide immediate “correct answer” feedback. This is another evidentially proven cognitive principle of learning that promotes deeper understanding and prevents the introduction of conceptual misunderstanding. In addition to our provided answers, you can obtain quality feedback by scheduling UBP Private Online Exam sessions at spaced intervals during your test cycle. This third party feedback from experienced examiners can be invaluable in promoting skill development, identifying previously unrecognized areas of weakness, and preventing “preparation plan drift”.

With these concepts in mind, we would recommend the following:

1. Participate in the “UBP 2-Hour Online Coaching Session” as soon as possible. This online session introduces the foundational concepts and strategies of the UBP preparation program, making it possible to start immediately applying our techniques and strategies during study sessions.

2. Cover the material in Practice Sets #1-3.
a. Begin watching the videos provided with the UBP Online Course as soon as you have finished the “UBP 2-Hour Online Coaching Session”. The online course consists of over 40 hours of online video-based training covering the 20 mock oral board questions and 20 extra topic questions included in Practice Sets #1, #2, and #3. Ideally, the videos should be viewed at a convenient pace that allows for consistent review and exposure to our techniques during the first ½ of your study cycle.

b. A “delayed review” of Practice Sets #1-3 could then be completed in the second ½ of your study cycle.

c. Alternative Approach: You could review Practice Sets #1-3 in the first ½ of your study cycle and then participate in the Online Course in the second half. However, we recommend starting with the Online Course, which provides more insight as to how to apply UBP techniques and strategies when formulating your answers.

3. Cover the material in Practice Sets #4-6.

a. Register for the UBP Live Course as soon as possible because your participation will serve to build a more solid foundation for ongoing preparation. The dedicated time you invest at the course will thoroughly cover the topics addressed in Practice Sets #4-6 and further optimize your learning curve by: (1) increasing your familiarity with the UBP techniques and how to apply them, (2) identifying any areas of weakness that require more attention, and (3) helping you to build or adjust your subsequent preparation plan.

We have now made participation in the live course easier and more affordable by offering an option to take part via webcast. Our webcast clients will not only be able to hear the discussion occurring in the live conference room, but you will also have a chat option that allows them to pose questions to the conference administrator (these online questions will be relayed to Dr. George or his co-administrator for a response). This same chat function allows webcast participants to communicate with each other as well. So, now you can enjoy many of the benefits of a live conference, while avoiding the rising costs of travel.

b. A “delayed review” of Practice Sets #4-6 could then be completed in the second ½ of your study cycle.

c. Alternative Approach: It is best to attend the live course in the first ½ of your test cycle. But, if scheduling makes this impossible, the live course can be attended in the
second ½ of your test cycle and serve as a “delayed review” of Practice Sets #4-6, while at the same time getting you in “test-mode” just prior to your exam.

4. Establish a routine practice schedule designed to cover all the content included in Practice Sets #1-6 within the first ½ of your study cycle (be sure to participate in the “UBP 2-Hour Online Coaching Session” first). It is optimal to practice with someone who is familiar with our techniques and will be able to provide feedback and advice in keeping with our approach to the exam. Therefore, finding a practice partner at the course and/or registering for UBP Private Online Exams are both good options (we make a Peer-Practice Sign-up Sheet available at the live course to facilitate this process). The 48 practice exams and 48 Additional Topic questions included in our six Practice Sets should provide more than enough material for practice.

Keep in mind that short, but frequent, practice sessions are much better than long, but infrequent, practice sessions for promoting long-term recall and developing the mental organization skills and communication techniques needed to pass the anesthesia oral boards. If, for example, you are prepared to dedicate 4 hours per week to preparation, your learning curve will be greatly enhanced by practicing for one hour on each of 4 separate days, rather than practicing for 4 hours on any one day.

5. Plan to schedule your UBP Private Online Exam sessions at regular intervals throughout your study cycle. This will allow you to continually reassess your skills, note incremental improvement, and identify areas that require additional work. I would recommend that you schedule your exam with me earlier, rather than later, so that I can help you with the application of UBP strategies and techniques while you are still in the early phase of your study cycle.

6. Review textbook material, practice guidelines, and resuscitation protocols (ACLS, PALS, Neonatal Resuscitation, etc.) as necessary to fill in information gaps.

   a. Your primary method of preparation should be taking practice exams.

   b. **Do NOT let the review of additional material crowd out or interfere with your scheduled practice exams.** Do not be tempted to put off practice in order to review more material. As has already been discussed, verbalizing your knowledge is far more effective in promoting long-term retention and deep conceptual knowledge than is spending additional time reading targeted material.

   c. The exams in our Practice Sets are followed by a section titled, “Key Topics and Clinical Considerations”, which lists the key topics addressed within the exam, along
Final Thoughts

- While this is our recommended approach to preparing for the anesthesia oral boards, it may not be feasible due to family commitments, scheduling issues, or financial constraints. If this is the case, try to set up a preparation plan that involves routine practice. Avoid the common mistake of delaying practice for additional reading. Rather, verbalize everything. Use the mock exams included in the UBP Practice Sets to provide you with a review of information while at the same time allowing you to practice organizing your thoughts and improving your communication skills. Whether you are practicing with a partner or studying on your own, the most effective way to improve your chances of passing this exam is to verbalize everything using the UBP techniques and strategies.

- In general, these techniques facilitate your ability to access your knowledge, weigh risks and benefits, and organize and communicate a great deal of knowledge in a very short amount of time, while teaching you to avoid those behaviors that slow the progress of the exam and irritate the examiners.

- If you are able to attend the UBP Live Course, try to attend as early as is possible in your exam year so that you can incorporate our communication strategies into your subsequent practice. The skills we introduce at the course are not complicated, but they do require practice for optimal results during your exam. While attending the course for the first time the week before your exam is helpful, it often does not allow enough time to make desired adjustments to the verbal presentation of your knowledge. One of the most common comments we hear from candidates is that they love the course and our techniques, but wish they had attended earlier so that they had more time to practice.

- The Practice Sets provide all the material you need for review and practice. They are designed to review of the most relevant material, while at the same time, placing you in some of the most challenging clinical situations encountered in private practice and/or oral board exam rooms.

- The “UBP Private Online Exams” offered through the “UBP Online” program are designed to maximize your invested time and effort as you prepare for the anesthesia oral boards. The primary advantage of taking UBP Private Online Exams is two-fold:
1. The exam questions are designed to provide a review of the most relevant information, expose you to some of the most challenging clinical situations encountered during the anesthesia oral boards, and greatly improve your ability to access your knowledge, organize your thoughts, weigh risks and benefits, and apply sound judgment.

2. Our examiners are trained to provide feedback and advice that is in keeping with our approach to the exam. This will serve to help develop and reinforce the skills and techniques introduced at our course and/or during the coaching session.

Thank you for allowing us to help with your preparation for the anesthesia oral boards. If you have any questions about our program or your own preparation plan, please feel free to email us at information@ultimateboardprep.com or call us at 316-776-9898.

Dr. Greg George