

**Test Taking Strategies for  
CPAN® and CAPA®  
Certification**

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**Practice Makes Perfect !**

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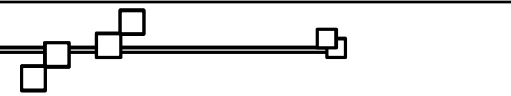
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**Objectives**

- Discuss which credential (CPAN and/or CAPA) is appropriate based on perianesthesia patient needs
- Describe the process for developing the CPAN/CAPA certification exams
- List 8 rules for multiple-choice test-taking success
- Identify study strategies and test-taking strategies

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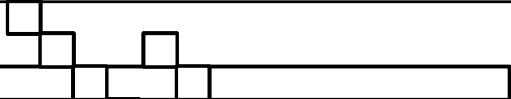
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**CAUTION**

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**THE SURGEON GENERAL  
Has Determined That Doing Just About  
Anything, Anywhere Can Be Hazardous to  
Your Health.**

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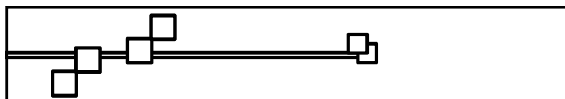
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**ABPANC's VISION**

*Recognizing and respecting the unequalled excellence in the mark of the CPAN® and CAPA® credential, perianesthesia nurses will seek it, managers will require it, employers will support it and the public will demand it!*

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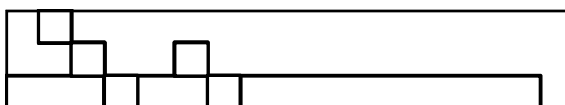
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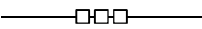
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**CPAN®**



Certified Post Anesthesia Nurse

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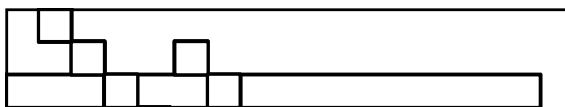
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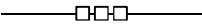
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**CAPA®**



Certified Ambulatory Perianesthesia Nurse

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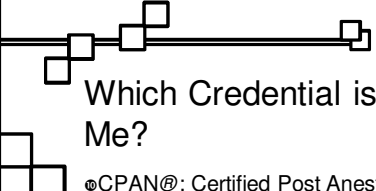
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### Which Credential is For Me?

- CPAN@: Certified Post Anesthesia Nurse
- CAPA@: Certified Ambulatory Perianesthesia Nurse

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### Certification Examinations

Delivered via computer  
175 Questions – (140 scored – 35 pretest of pilot items)  
Multiple Choice  
3 hours to complete exam

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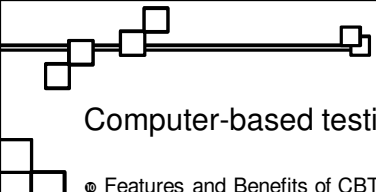
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### Computer-based testing (CBT)

- Features and Benefits of CBT
  - Can apply for the exam on line
  - Can access the online exam application through ABPANC website
  - Can choose 60 days a year to test, rather than just 2
  - Can schedule exams for locations, times, and dates most convenient during 2, six-week testing windows

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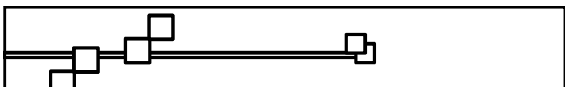
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### Computer-based testing (CBT)

- The computer keeps track of any questions that you skip
- At the end of the exam a summary page showing the questions that were not answered or that you marked so you could come back to them is given

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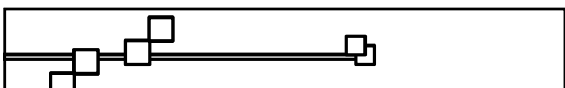
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### Computer-based testing (CBT)

- Will need an e-mail address where information can be sent
- Free e-mail addresses at google.com, yahoo.com, hotmail.com
- Where to access a computer – at work, a friend or relative, internet café, public library
- See [www.cpancapa.org](http://www.cpancapa.org) for more info

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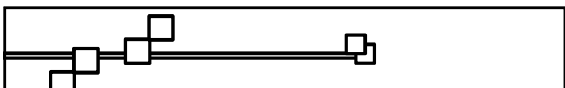
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### Computer-based testing (CBT)

- Features and Benefits of CBT
  - Fall 2012 *Registration* window:
    - July 9, 2012 – September 10, 2012
  - Spring 2013 *Registration* window
    - January 14, 2013 – March 11, 2013
  - May sit for both CPAN® and CAPA® exams in same window – even on same day

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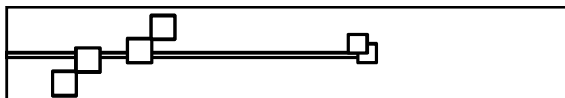
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### Computer-based testing (CBT)

- Features and Benefits of CBT
  - *Upcoming testing windows:*
    - Fall 2012: October 1, 2012 – November 10, 2012
    - Spring 2013: April 8, 2013 – May 18, 2013
  - May sit for both CPAN® and CAPA® exams in same window – even on same day



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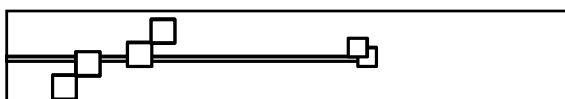
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### Computer-based testing (CBT)

- Prometric selected CBT vendor – hundreds of sites
- *Preliminary* scores available immediately
- No prior computer experience necessary – will receive a tutorial before exam



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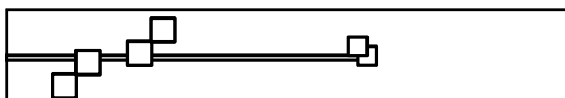
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### There Are No Trick Questions

- There Are No Questions With Multiple Correct Answers



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Percentage of exam questions by domain varies, dependent on exam  
Beginning with Fall 2012 Exams

CPAN® Exam		CAPA® Exam	
Physiologic Needs –	57%	Physiologic Needs –	49%
Behavioral/		Behavioral/	
Cognitive Needs –	20%	Cognitive Needs –	24%
Safety Needs –	23%	Safety Needs –	27%

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### Where Do the Test Questions Come From?

- Submitted by any CPAN® /CAPA® Certified Nurse
- Item Writers
- IWRC & ERC
- Extensive review and revision process.
- Reviewed by several groups before appearing on exam.

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### Levels of Questions

3 Cognitive Levels of Questions on the Exams

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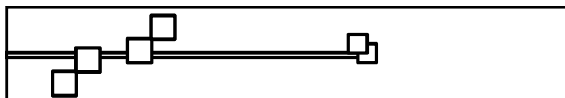
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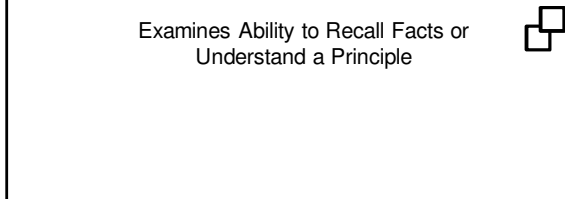
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Cognitive Level One:

Examines Ability to Recall Facts or Understand a Principle



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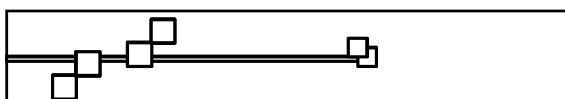
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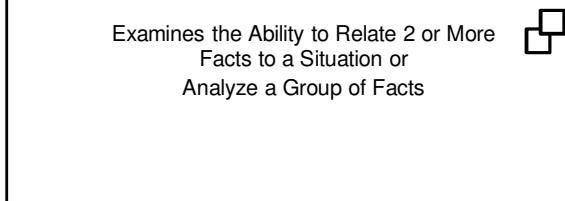
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Cognitive Level Two

Examines the Ability to Relate 2 or More Facts to a Situation or Analyze a Group of Facts



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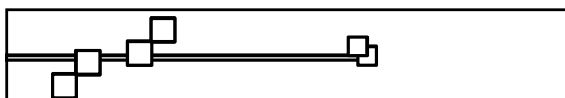
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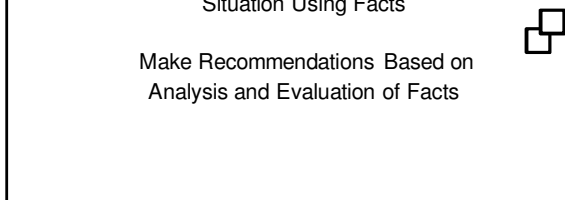
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Cognitive Level Three

Examines Ability to Evaluate a Situation Using Facts

Make Recommendations Based on Analysis and Evaluation of Facts



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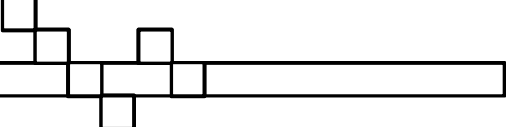
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### Rules of Test Taking Success

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**What are the keys to success?**

**What do I need to do to pass?**

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### Rule # 1

**Know the Parts of a Test Question  
and How to Read Them**

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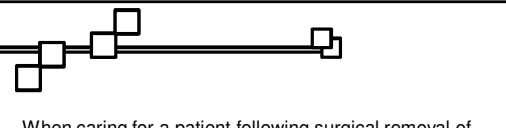
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When caring for a patient following surgical removal of an acoustic neuroma, a common neurological deficit assessed for by the PACU nurse is:

1. facial paralysis
2. memory deficit
3. receptive aphasia
4. visual field deficit.

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STEM

When caring for a patient following surgical removal of an acoustic neuroma, a common neurological deficit assessed for by the PACU nurse is:

1. facial paralysis
2. memory deficit
3. receptive aphasia
4. visual field deficit.

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CORRECT RESPONSE

When caring for a patient following surgical removal of an acoustic neuroma, a common neurological deficit assessed for by the PACU nurse is:

1. **facial paralysis**
2. memory deficit
3. receptive aphasia
4. visual field deficit.

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DISTRACTORS

When caring for a patient following surgical removal of an acoustic neuroma, a common neurological deficit assessed for by the PACU nurse is:

1. facial paralysis
2. memory deficit
3. receptive aphasia
4. visual field deficit.

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**Rule #2**

Read the Question Carefully Before  
Looking at the Options

Identify Key Words in the Stem

Then Read All of the Options Before Selecting the  
Correct Answer

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**Key Words**

First  
Primary  
Initial  
Early  
Important  
Except

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**Rule #3**

Identify the Theme of the Question

Don't Assume Information  
That is Not Given

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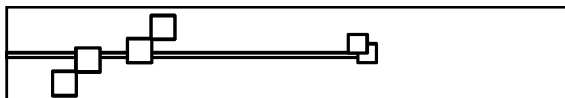
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Rule #4

Answer Difficult Questions by Eliminating  
Obviously Incorrect Choices First

Then Select the Best of the Remaining  
Options

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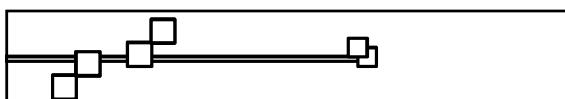
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Rule #5

Know the Basic Principles of your Specialty  
that Guide Your Practice

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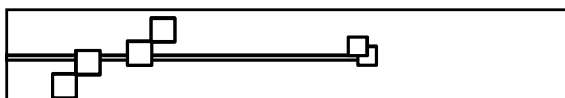
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Rule #6

Manage Your Time Effectively During the  
Exam

- Each question is worth the same number  
of points & contributes equally to your total  
score
- Don't spend too much time on any single  
question

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Rule #6

Manage Your Time Effectively During the Exam

- Answer those questions that you are sure of the correct answer first
- Leave questions that you don't know the answer to blank, and come back to answer them at the end

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Rule #7

Do Not Change Your Initial Answers Without a Good Reason or Sound Rationale

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Rule #8

Identify Your Personal Reaction to Test Taking

Establish Strategies to Improve Test-Taking Skills

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**“Rusher”**



- Hurries through entire process
- Completes exam before forgetting essential facts
- Anxiety causes physiologic responses
- Reads questions and chooses answer quickly

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**Strategy (Improve by...)**

- Focusing on controlling anxiety
- Practicing progressive relaxation techniques
- Practicing sample questions
- Focusing on a slower approach to reading and answering the test questions

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**“Turtle”**



- Does *nothing* fast
- Moves slowly, fearful of missing important points
- Last to finish
- Scores suffer from lack of time, not lack of knowledge of poor preparation

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Strategy

- Focus on amount of time spent on each question
- Have a watch accessible
- Allow one hour for each set of 55 items (i.e., 1 hour for items 1 – 55, 1 hour for items 56 – 110, 1 hour for items 111 – 165)
- Must pace yourself!

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“Veteran”



- Gains knowledge through life experience
- Relies on personal experience, not established standards of care
- Scores may suffer because these may not be the norm, standard or correct choice

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Strategy

- Key principles and standards that support nursing actions
- Formulate decisions based on established standards of care
- Avoid generalizing questions to patients cared for in personal practice
- Review course to expand limited view point

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**“Crammer”**



- Self esteem threatened
- Obstacle to overcome/accomplish
- Fears personal failure
- Attitude “I’ll worry about it tomorrow”
- Avoids exam instead of preparing for it
- When they do study, seldom results in **effective learning**

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**Strategy (Exam Approach)**

- Step by step process
- Establish a progressive, disciplined study plan
- Develop study plan with realistic time frames

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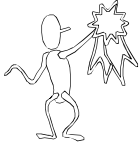
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**“Achiever”**



- Successful student
- Lack of confidence
- Look for underlying meaning in question
- “Read into the question”
- Lose sight of actual intent of the question

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Strategy

- Questions - as they are *written*
- Avoid reading question multiple times
- Develop self esteem and confidence in approach to exam

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"Second Guesser"



- Carefully answers each question
- Reviews questions to catch errors
  - Changes answers
- May change answers because of too much repetition

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Strategy

- Reread only those questions that you are unsure of
- Avoid changing initial response
- Do not review entire exam

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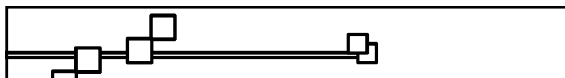
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You May Be a Combination of  
Different Personalities

Focus on the unproductive behaviors and  
improve upon them!

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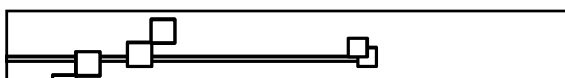
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Above All...

View the Examination as an **Opportunity**,  
Not an Obstacle!!

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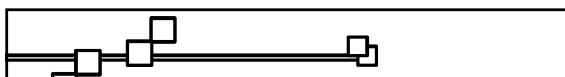
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Rule #9

Avoid Test-taking Myths such as the Correct  
Answer is Most Likely the Longest  
Response or if in Doubt – Select Option #2

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Rule #10

Know How the Test is Scored

- Candidates receive 1 point for each correct answer & 0 points for each incorrect answer
- There is no additional penalty for choosing an incorrect answer
- Answer every question!
- Candidate Handbook explains scoring

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Study Strategy

How Should I Prepare?

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Review the Entire Certification Candidate Handbook CAREFULLY!!!

- Contains valuable information, including policies
- Exam blueprints
- Knowledge statements
- Examination procedure

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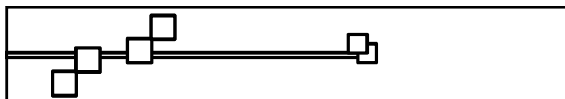
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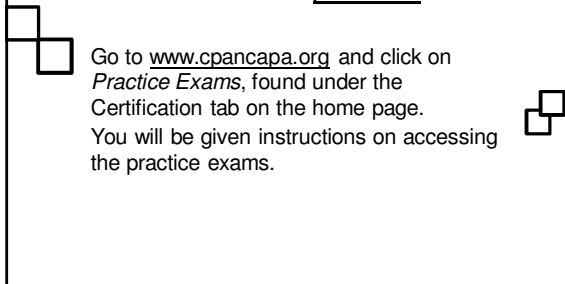
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Take an on-line practice exam!

Go to [www.cpancapa.org](http://www.cpancapa.org) and click on *Practice Exams*, found under the Certification tab on the home page. You will be given instructions on accessing the practice exams.



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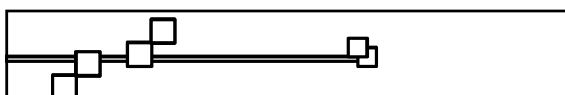
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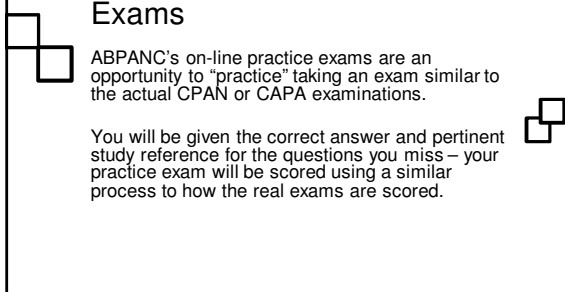
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A Word About the *Practice Exams*

ABPANC's on-line practice exams are an opportunity to "practice" taking an exam similar to the actual CPAN or CAPA examinations.

You will be given the correct answer and pertinent study reference for the questions you miss – your practice exam will be scored using a similar process to how the real exams are scored.



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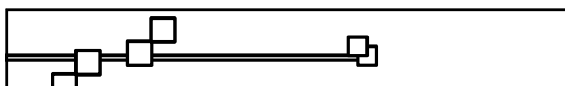
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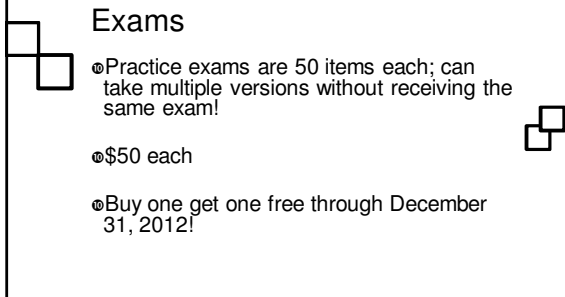
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A Word About the *Practice Exams*

- Practice exams are 50 items each; can take multiple versions without receiving the same exam!
- \$50 each
- Buy one get one free through December 31, 2012!



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**Devise a Study Plan**

- Start Early!
- Study plan that is organized with strong sense of direction
- Broad study resources
- Download ABPANC's lesson plan for studying

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**Study Plan**

- Helps to decrease stress and anxiety
- Decreases unnecessary use of time and energy
- Realistic time frames
- Keeps you **focused**
- Prevents procrastination
- Provides sense of direction

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**Study Plan – for example**

<u>OBJECTIVE</u>	<u>ACTIVITY</u>	<u>DATE</u>
1. Review Anesthetic Agents	Form study group Meet once a week Read anesthetic agent chapter in core curriculum	Week 1

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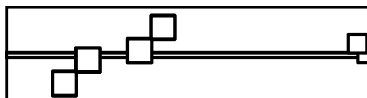
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### Textbooks

List of references found in Appendix D of Certification Candidate Handbook

Don't rely on just one to two texts



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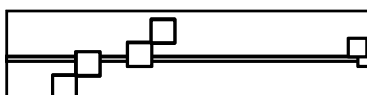
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### Other

- ASPAN Standards of Nursing Practice
- ACLS & PALS Guidelines
- Etc.



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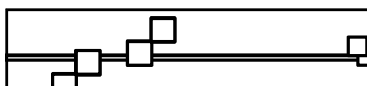
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### Strengths & Weaknesses

You know your individual strengths!!

Study your Weaknesses!!!



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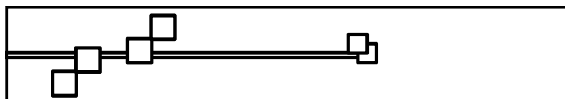
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### Form Study Groups

Effective approach to exam preparation

Share your strengths with others ~ let them share their strengths with you

Establish ground rules early

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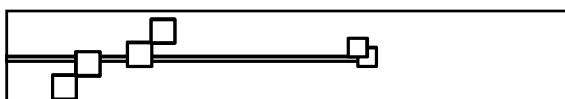
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### We Learn...

- ⦿ 1% by Taste
- ⦿ 1.5% by Touch
- ⦿ 3.5% by Smell
- ⦿ 11% by Hearing
- ⦿ 83% by Sight

**It Takes Effort to Learn!**

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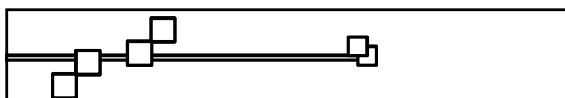
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### Learning is Made Easier by:

- ⦿ Repetition
- ⦿ Satisfaction in accomplishment
- ⦿ Interesting learning environment
- ⦿ Competition against others or yourself
- ⦿ Aroused curiosity

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Learning Becomes Difficult  
With...

**PROCRASTINATION!!!**

- Do not wait until the week before the examination to begin
- Cramming is an attempt to learn in a very abbreviated amount of time

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Observe Commonsense Rules  
of Health

- Mind and body work together
- Sufficient sleep and rest
- Nutrition
- Exercise!

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As the Exam Approaches:

Familiarize yourself with the test site  
(Building, parking, route of travel)

Familiarity equals reduced stress  
& increased confidence

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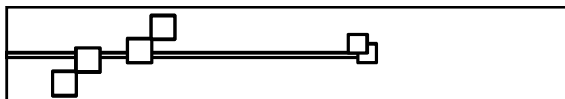
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### The Night Before...

The night before the exam...

**DON'T STUDY!**

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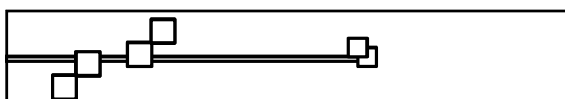
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### Test Day

- Eat!
- Wear bright clothing
- Allow time to travel to the test site!
- Candidates arriving late to the test site will be denied access to the examination

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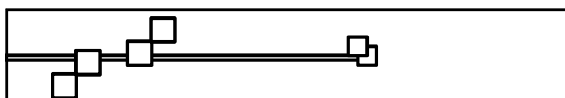
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### What to Bring to the Test Site

- Authorization to Test Letter
- Photo ID (driver's license, passport, employee ID card)
- Be sure names match **exactly** on ATT letter and Photo ID

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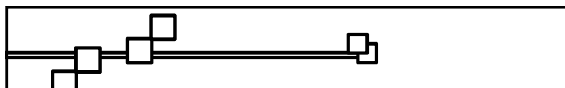
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### Last Minute Preparation

- KEEP CALM!!
- Listen carefully to the test supervisor
- Take the tutorial

BE SURE YOU HAVE THE RIGHT EXAM!!

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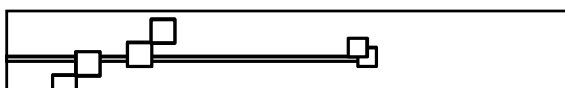
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### Last Minute Preparation

- If you are easily distracted by people typing on a keyboard, wear the headphones provided at the site or bring your own earplugs.

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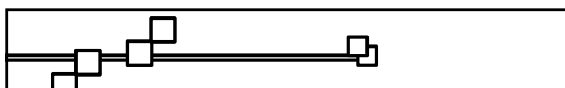
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### Controlling Stress During the Exam

The culmination of preparation.  
BREATHE!!

Remember ~ You have studied and are as prepared as you can be  
Trust you knowledge and experience

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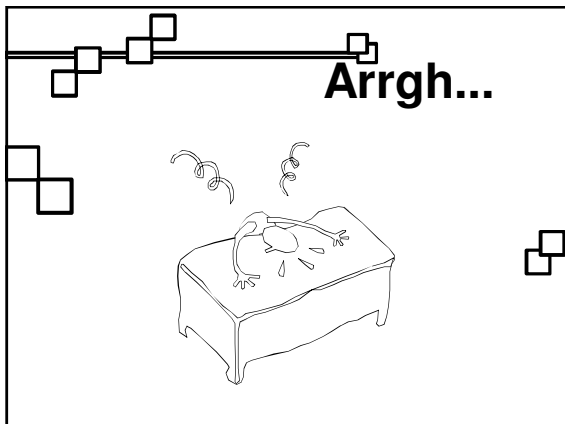
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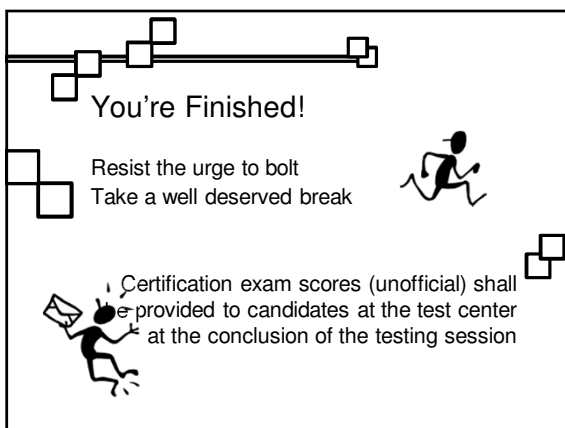
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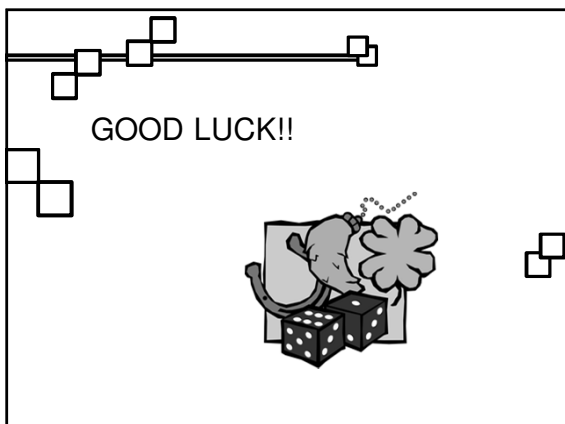
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