Test Taking Strategies for CPAN® and CAPA® Certification:

Practice Makes Perfect!

CAUTION

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

ABPANC’s VISION

Recognizing and respecting the unequaled 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!

CPAN®

Certified Post Anesthesia Nurse

Which Credential is For Me?

- **CPAN®**: Certified Post Anesthesia Nurse
- **CAPA®**: Certified Ambulatory Perianesthesia Nurse

CAPA®

Certified Ambulatory Perianesthesia Nurse
Certification Examinations

- Delivered via Computer.
- 175 Questions - (140 scored + 35 pretest of pilot items).
- Multiple Choice.
- 3 Hours to Complete Exam.

Computer-Based Testing (CBT)

- Features and Benefits of CBT
  - Can apply for the exam online.
  - 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.

Computer-Based Testing (CBT)

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

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, public library.
- See www.cpancapa.org for more info.

Computer-Based Testing (CBT)

- Spring 2013 Registration window now closed.
- Exam administration window open April 8 - May 18
- Fall 2013 Registration window:
  - July 15, 2013 - September 9, 2013
- 2014 and 2015 dates in Appendix E.
- May sit for both CPAN® and CAPA® exams in same window – even on same day.

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.
There Are No Trick Questions

There are no questions with multiple correct answers.

Percentage of Exam Questions by Domain Varies, Dependent on Exam

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CPAN® Exam</th>
<th>CAPA® Exam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physiologic Needs -</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Needs -</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety Needs -</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Where Do the Test Questions Come From?

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

Levels of Questions

Three cognitive levels of questions on the exams.

Cognitive Level One:

Examines ability to recall facts or understand a principle.

Cognitive Level Two

Examines the ability to relate two or more facts to a situation or analyze a group of facts.
Cognitive Level Three

Examines ability to evaluate a situation using facts.

Make recommendations based on analysis and evaluation of facts.

Rule # 1

Know the parts of a test question and how to read them.

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.

**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.

**Rule #3**

Identify the theme of the question.

Don’t assume information that is not given.

**Rule #4**

Answer difficult questions by eliminating obviously incorrect choices first.

Then select the best of the remaining options.

**Rule #5**

Know the basic principles of your specialty that guide your practice.
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.

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.

Rule #7
Do not change your initial answers without a good reason or sound rationale.

Rule #8
Identify your personal reaction to test taking.
Establish strategies to improve test-taking skills.

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

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

**Strategy**
- Focus on amount of time spent on each question.
- Have a watch accessible.
- Allow approx. one hour for each set of 58 items.
- Must pace yourself!

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

**Strategy**
- Know 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.
- A review course may expand limited viewpoint.

“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.

**Strategy (Exam Approach)**
- Step by step process.
- Establish a progressive, disciplined study plan.
- Develop study plan with realistic time frames.
  - Use ABPANC Study Plan to guide study
“Achiever”

- Is a successful student.
- Lacks confidence.
- Looks for underlying meaning in question.
- “Reads into the question”
- Loses sight of actual intent of the question.

Strategy

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

“Second Guesser”

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

Strategy

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

You May Be a Combination of Different Personalities

Focus on the unproductive behaviors and improve upon them!

Above All...

View the Examination as an **Opportunity**, Not an Obstacle!!
Rule #9

Avoid Test-taking myths such as the correct answer is most likely the longest response or if in doubt – select option #2.

Rule #10

Know How the Test is Scored

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

Study Strategy

How Should I Prepare?

Review the Entire Certification Candidate Handbook CAREFULLY!!!

- Contains valuable information, including policies;
- Exam blueprints;
- Knowledge needed based on patient needs;
- Examination procedure.

Take an Online Practice Exam!

Go to 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.

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.

Your practice exam will be scored using a similar process to how the real exams are scored.
A Word About the Practice Exams

- Practice exams are 50 items each; can take multiple versions without receiving the same exam!
- $35 each.
- Buy one get one free.

Use ABPANC's Study Plan

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

Addressing PeriAnesthesia Patient Needs

Time Frame

Topic

Knowledge Required to Meet Patient Needs

- Adverse environmental influences (including, but not limited to, latex and/or equipment failure)
- Exposure to infections and diseases
  - Facilitate patient access to:
    - Appropriate resources and referrals (including, but not limited to, medical equipment, pharmaceutical care, patient care, physical/occupational therapy, case management/social services)
  - Regulated, legal, and ethical guidelines (for example, Patient Bill of Rights, advance directives, informed consent, HIPAA).
  - Quality and risk management principles and guidelines.
- A physical environment that accommodates physical, mental, and emotional abilities/limitations
- An environment that provides for assistance (including, but not limited to, call light, personnel within hearing or at bedside, visitation)

- Perform post discharge assessment (including, but not limited to, follow-up visit and/or telephone call).

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.

Study Plan - For Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Review Anesthetic Agents</td>
<td>- Form study group.</td>
<td>Week 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Meet once a week.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Read anesthetic agent chapter in core curriculum.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Textbooks

- List of references found in Appendix D of Certification Candidate Handbook.
- Don’t rely on just one to two texts.

Other

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

Strengths & Weaknesses

You know your individual strengths!!
Study your Weaknesses!!
**Form Study Groups**

- Effective approach to exam preparation.
- Share your strengths with others – let them share their strengths with you.
- Establish ground rules early.
- Work with a Certification Coach.

**We Learn...**

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

**It Takes Effort to Learn!**

**Learning is Made Easier by:**

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

**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.

**Observe Common Sense Rules of Health**

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

**As the Exam Approaches:**

- Familiarize yourself with the test site (Building, parking, route of travel).
- Familiarity equals reduced stress & increased confidence.
The Night Before the Exam...

DON’T STUDY!

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.

What to Bring to the Test Site

◇ Authorization to Test Letter.
◇ Two Forms of Identification
  • Photo ID (driver’s license, passport, employee ID card).
  • Credit card is ok as 2nd form
◇ Be sure all names match exactly on ATT letter, Photo ID, and 2nd form of ID.

Last Minute Preparation

◇ KEEP CALM!!
◇ Listen carefully to the test supervisor.
◇ Take the tutorial.
    
    BE SURE YOU HAVE THE RIGHT EXAM!!

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.

Controlling Stress During the Exam

◇ The culmination of preparation.
◇ BREATHE!!
◇ Remember – You have studied and are as prepared as you can be.
◇ Trust your knowledge and experience.
You’re Finished!

✧ Resist the urge to bolt.
✧ Take a well deserved break.

Certification exam scores (unofficial) shall be provided to candidates at the test center at the conclusion of the testing session.

GOOD LUCK!!