

PREPARING FOR THE USMLE 1

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- **What do we know from research in learning that can be applied to the process of preparing for the Board Exam?**
- **How can we use this information to maximize success?**

Goals for Today

- Look at highlights of Jessica's letter
- Briefly look at some principles for recall
- Discuss implications of these principles for the USMLE
- Review some myths about studying for the USMLE
- Preview the Five Part Review Process
- Plan your next steps for USMLE preparation.

Principles of Learning for Recall

- The learner is an epistemologist.
- The learner is a maker of connections
- Learners have individual and unique ways of organizing information
- Learning occurs in a cultural context

Learner as Epistemologist

Research in learning theory shows that the learner is not a receptacle of knowledge but rather creates his or her learning actively and uniquely.

What does this mean?

Learner as Maker of Connections

Learning is about making meaning by establishing and re-working patterns, relationships, and connections.

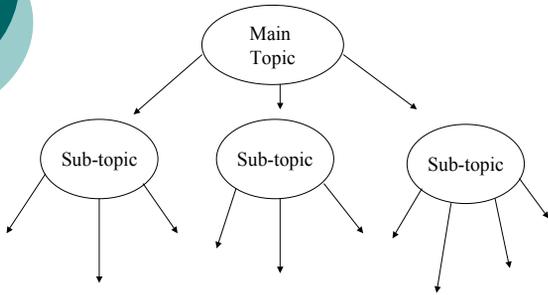
Advance Organizers are the basis for recall.

What is an advanced organizer?

Advanced Organizers

- Incomplete Outlines
- Questions
- Skimming
- Key Words/Concepts
- Graphic Organizers (Maps)

Sample Advance Graphic Organizer



Ask Yourself

- Which of the advanced organizers just mentioned are most appealing to you for your USMLE study plan?
- Why?
- Which ones aren't appealing?
- Why?

Learning occurs best in a cultural context

- Enjoyable interaction
- Personal Support
- Multi-faceted
- Active and Interactive

Implications for USMLE Preparation

- Epistemologist – must create actively and interactively
- Maker of Connections – use advance organizers for large amounts of content
- Interact within a system of personal support
- Use individual strengths for long term recall

WHAT ARE YOUR LEARNING STRENGTHS? How can you capitalize on them?

- **Visual**
- **Auditory**
- **Kinesthetic**
- **Combination**

Myths about the USMLE

- What worked for my friend will work for me.
- I just have to read and remember what I read.
- It's not necessary to take notes.

More Myths

- I'll save practice questions until the end.
- If I've done well in all of my classes, I don't need to study.
- I can just use review books, and I'll be okay.
- I don't need to start too far in advance.

Ask Yourself

- Which of these myths have you been thinking about?
- What can you do to attack it?

Five Part Review Process

- Get started by making a plan
- Review strategies that promote long term memory
- Overcome the exam preparation slump
- Reduce anxiety through stress management
- Make plans for the night before and the day of the exam



Get Started by Making a Plan

- Assess your learning first. How?
- Access the USMLE website and read about what to expect.
- Choose your review materials.
- Rate the topics according to your level of knowledge.
- Pick a study partner or partners.
- Use monthly calendars to organize study time.



Get Started by Making a Plan

- Utilize your learning strengths.
- Identify barriers to preparation and explore ways to address them.
- Consider participating in this Five Part Review Program.



Review Strategies That Promote Long Term Memory

- Quantity vs Quality
- Active Engagement
- Recitation
- Strongest learning modality
- Combination of modalities
- Variety
- Many others

Overcome Exam Preparation Slump

- Recognizing the ebb and flow of study
- Keeping a balance
- Getting stuck and unstuck in the slump
- Motivation strategies

Reduce Anxiety Through Stress Management

- Strategies to Reduce Stress
 - Physical
 - Emotional
 - Cognitive
- Where does most of my stress come from now?
- What do I do to reduce stress now?
- What are some things I could do to reduce stress that I'm not already doing?

Recap

- Effective principles for long term memory require
 - Creating active and unique strategies
 - Making connections and using advanced organizers
 - Working with others in a personally support environment
 - Using your learning style strengths

Recap

- It's important to recognize the myths about studying for the USMLE and overcome them.
- Consider the Five Part Review Process for your study plan.
- Know the steps needed to make your personal plan.
- Get started NOW!

What Will You Do Now?

- Write down your next steps now.
- Make a list of things you need to do to get started.
- Number each item in the order you expect to do them.
- Put an estimated target date next to the top three items.
- Sign up for the Five Part Review Sessions.

Sign Up for the Five Part Review Process

- **Wednesday, March 16 10:30 – 11:00 – Making a Plan**
- **Tuesday, March 29 10:30 – 11:30 – Making a Plan**
- **Tuesday, March 29 11:30 – 12:30 – Long Term Memory Strategies**
- **Wednesday, April 6 11:30 – 12:30 – Long Term Memory Strategies**

To sign up contact Fran Alghini at 708-216-8166, falghini@lumc.edu, or stop by the Teaching and Learning Center in Bldg. 120, Rm. 255.
