Dedicated Study Plan – Step 1

Class of 2025

Dr. Dolly Anadkat

Learning Specialist

Office # 530 C, OME,

5th floor-Murphy Bld.,

TUSOM

danadkat@tulane.edu

General Guideline vs Individual approach

- Everyone is different and at different stage of preparedness
- Feel free to individualize this approach that suits your need
- All are welcome to have one to one meeting if you need help in customizing this approach
- All are welcome to have one to one meeting if you run into some challenge during prep time
- danadkat@tulane.edu
- Office # 530C OME, 5th floor, Murphy
- Zoom: Personal Meeting ID 766 799 2136

Overview

1. Step 1 – Outline, System & Subject distribution
2. CBSSA – Overview
3. CBSSA – Report Analysis/Interpretation
4. "Dedicated Time" Planning based on CBSSA report
5. Simulated Step 1: Practice test (@280 Q)
6. Stress Mgt & Test Anxiety
7. Other resources

Step 1

- https://www.usmle.org/step-exams/step-1
- 280 MCQ – 8 hours
- 7 blocks of 60 min + Total 45-60 min break time
- 40 or less Q per block – about 90 sec per question
- Once exit a block – Can't review or edit answers
- MCQ – One best choice, No negative point for wrong answer – so don't leave any blank!

Table 1: Step 1 Test Content Specifications*

System	Range, %
General Principles**	12–16
Blood & Lymphoreticular/Immune Systems	7–11
Behavioral Health & Nervous Systems/Special Senses	9–13
Musculoskeletal, Skin & Subcutaneous Tissue	6–10
Cardiovascular System	5–9
Respiratory & Renal/Urinary Systems	9–13
Gastrointestinal System	5–9
Reproductive & Endocrine Systems	9–13
Multisystem Processes & Disorders	6–10
Biostatistics & Epidemiology/Population Health	4–6
Social Sciences: Communication and Interpersonal Skills	6–9

* Percentages are subject to change at any time.

** The Step 1 General Principles category includes normal and abnormal processes that are not limited to specific organ systems.

Table 3: Step 1 Discipline Specifications*

Discipline	Range, %
Pathology	44–52
Physiology	25–35
Pharmacology	15–22
Biochemistry & Nutrition	14–24
Microbiology	10–15
Immunology	6–11
Gross Anatomy & Embryology	11–15
Histology & Cell Biology	8–13
Behavioral Sciences	8–13
Genetics	5–9

* Percentages are subject to change at any time.

How do I know if I am ready for Step 1

CBSSA for Readiness = Gold standard

How do I best prepare for Step 1

CBSSA as Diagnostic tool = to identify strong and weak areas

To strategize the prep time

CBSSA for Diagnosis

- Feb 27-March 3, 2023
- Voucher provided for taking CBSSA as diagnostic tool
- 7 versions available
- Recommend to take version - FORMS 25, 26, **27**, 28, 29, 30, 31(latest)
- 200 Q – 50q x 4 blocks
- 5 hours – 1hr:15min for each block (90 sec/Q)
- Testing mode ([Std paced/Accommodation paced](#) required)

- So, results can be used to plan for "preparation" in a realistic way
 (identifying your strengths and weaknesses)

NBME® SELF-ASSESSMENTS

COMPREHENSIVE BASIC SCIENCE SELF-ASSESSMENT (CBSSA)
EXAMINEE PERFORMANCE REPORT

NBME®

Name: Student A   Test Date: 5/1/2022
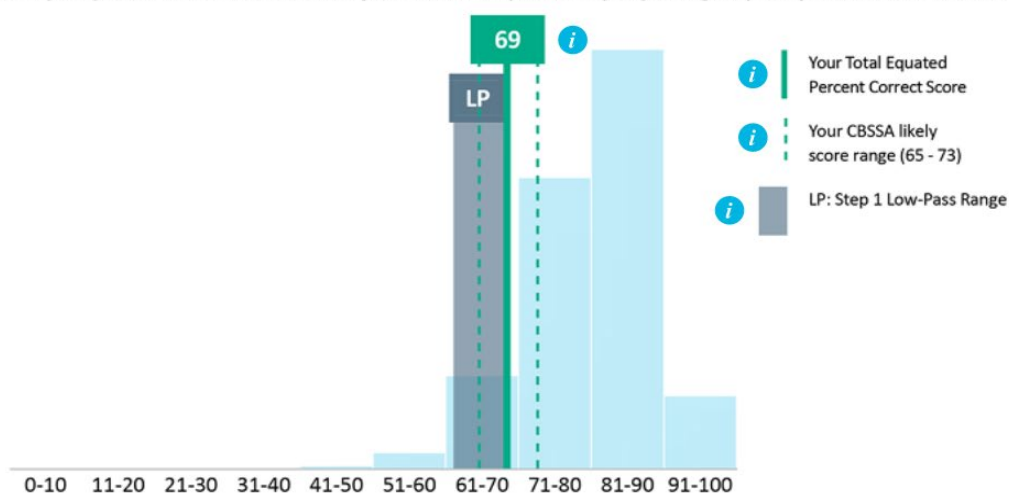
Total Equated Percent Correct Score: 69% ⓘ

BEGIN ROLLOVER EXPLANATIONS HERE

The chart below represents the performance of a 2020 national cohort of students from LCME-accredited medical schools. Your score is shown along with a range that corresponds to low passing performance (above but near the passing standard) on the United States Medical Licensing Examination® (USMLE®) Step 1.
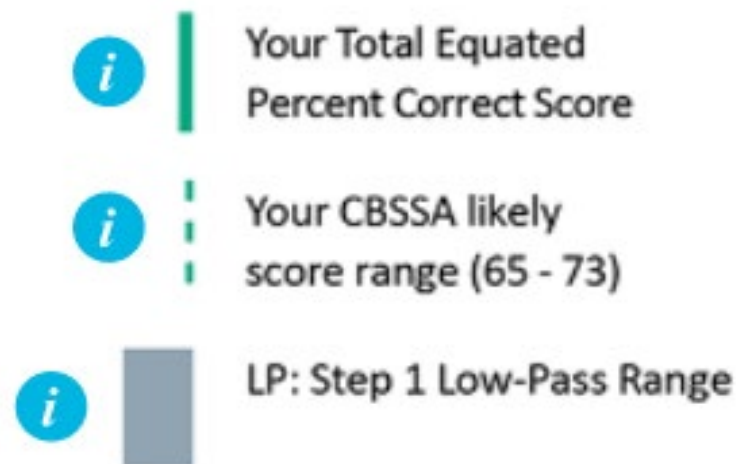
Based on your performance on this CBSSA, your estimated probability of passing Step 1 if you test within a week is 97%.

Your Total Equated Percent Correct Score	(green solid line)
Your CBSSA likely score range (65 - 73)	(green dashed line)
LP: Step 1 Low-Pass Range	(gray bar)

Chart x-axis: 0-10, 11-20, 21-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60, 61-70, 71-80, 81-90, 91-100
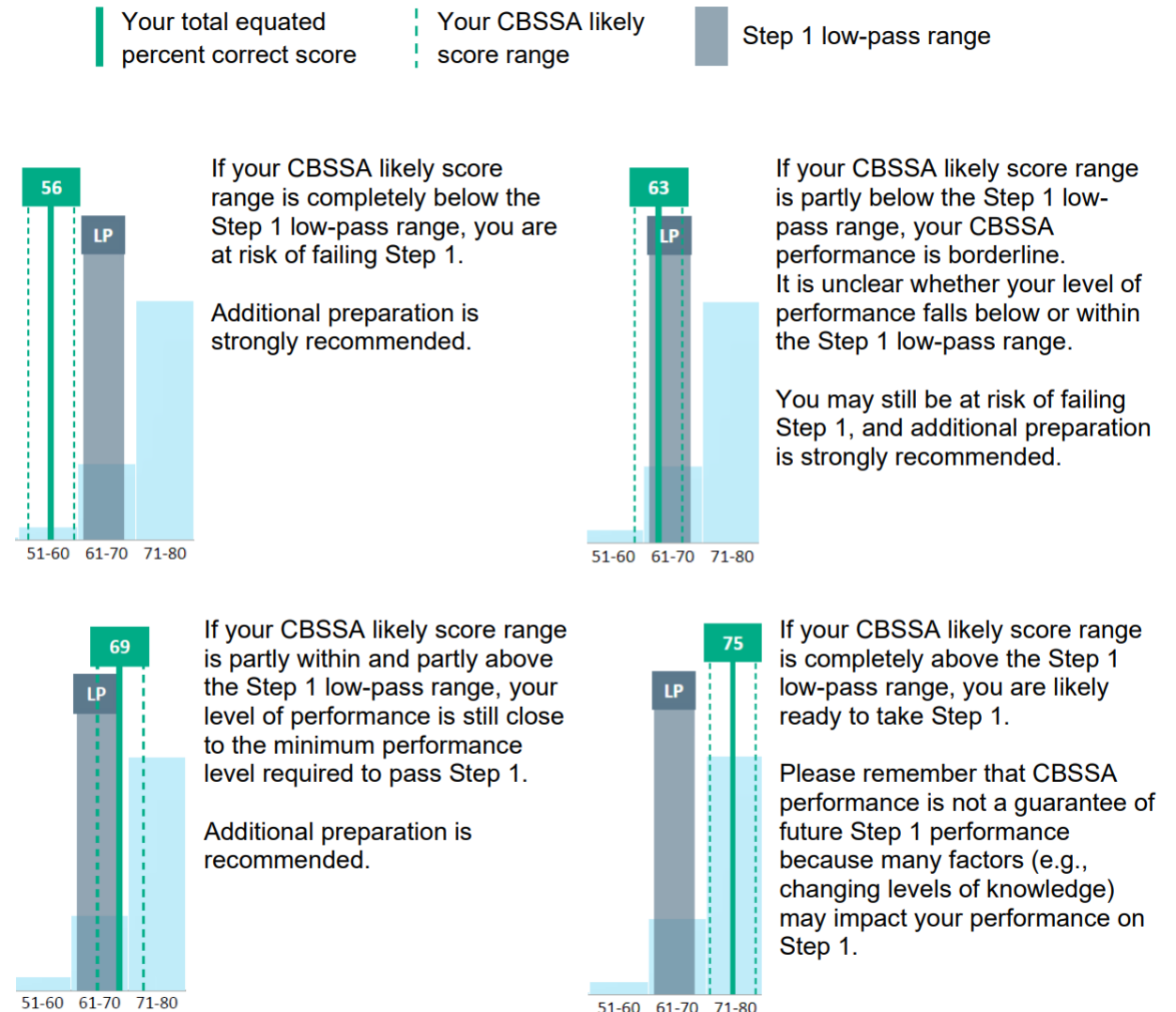
Interpreting Your Overall Results: ⓘ

- **Readiness for Step 1:** CBSSA performance can be used in conjunction with other information to assess readiness for Step 1.

- **Your CBSSA equated percent correct score** represents the percentage of the content that you have mastered. It has been statistically adjusted to account for slight variations in exam form difficulty and may be slightly lower or higher than the actual percentage of questions you answered correctly on this specific form.

- **Your estimated probability of passing Step 1** is calculated using a statistical model based on examinees who tested within one week of taking Step 1 for the first time. If you tested more than a week before you are scheduled to take Step 1, your estimated probability may be different. Your estimated probability is not a guarantee of your future Step 1 performance. Many factors (e.g., changing levels of knowledge) may impact your performance on Step 1.

- **Your likely score range** indicates how much your score could change if you tested again without learning or forgetting. Under those conditions, your CBSSA score would fall within 4 points of your current score two-thirds of the time.

- **A PDF version of your report** is typically available within 4 hours. To review your score before then, log in to MyNBME, click on the registration ID associated with this assessment, then click Review Your Results Interactively.

CBSSA for Readiness

- CBSSA – best tool for readiness assessment

- CBSSA – lowest possible step 1 passing @ 61% in CBSSA

- Target score of CBSSA – > 70
  (61 + 4 point variability + 5 point safety factor)

- https://www.nbme.org/sites/default/files/2023-02/CBSSA_Guidance.pdf

GUIDANCE BY SCENARIO

| Your total equated percent correct score | Your CBSSA likely score range | Step 1 low-pass range |

56
If your CBSSA likely score range is completely below the Step 1 low-pass range, you are at risk of failing Step 1.

Additional preparation is strongly recommended.

51-60 61-70 71-80

63
If your CBSSA likely score range is partly below the Step 1 low-pass range, your CBSSA performance is borderline.
It is unclear whether your level of performance falls below or within the Step 1 low-pass range.

You may still be at risk of failing Step 1, and additional preparation is strongly recommended.

51-60 61-70 71-80

69
If your CBSSA likely score range is partly within and partly above the Step 1 low-pass range, your level of performance is still close to the minimum performance level required to pass Step 1.

Additional preparation is recommended.

51-60 61-70 71-80

75
If your CBSSA likely score range is completely above the Step 1 low-pass range, you are likely ready to take Step 1.

Please remember that CBSSA performance is not a guarantee of future Step 1 performance because many factors (e.g., changing levels of knowledge) may impact your performance on Step 1.

51-60 61-70 71-80

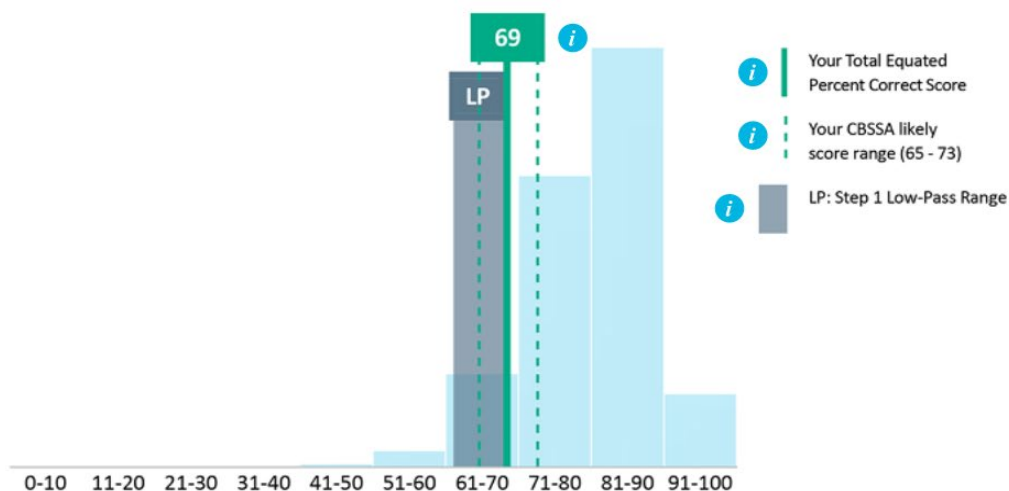Name: Student A   Test Date: 5/1/2022

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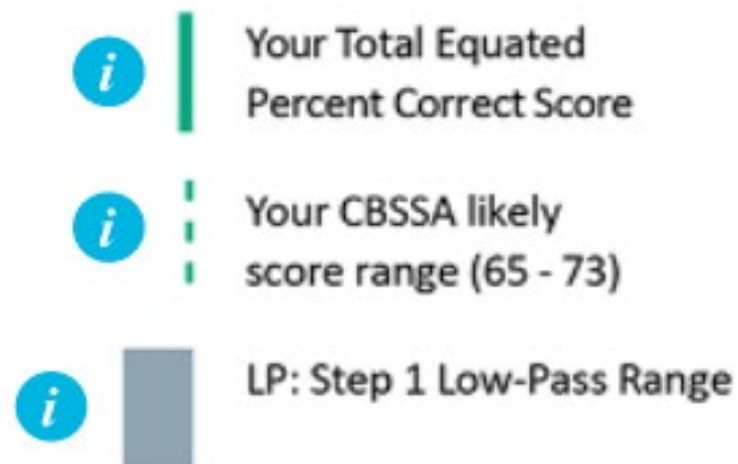
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69	Your Total Equated Percent Correct Score
LP	Your CBSSA likely score range (65 - 73)
	LP: Step 1 Low-Pass Range

0-10 11-20 21-30 31-40 41-50 51-60 61-70 71-80 81-90 91-100

Interpreting Your Overall Results: ⓘ

- **Readiness for Step 1:** CBSSA performance can be used in conjunction with other information to assess readiness for Step 1.

- **Your CBSSA equated percent correct score** represents the percentage of the content that you have mastered. It has been statistically adjusted to account for slight variations in exam form difficulty and may be slightly lower or higher than the actual percentage of questions you answered correctly on this specific form.

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ⓘ **Your Total Equated Percent Correct Score**

ⓘ **Your CBSSA likely score range (65 - 73)**

ⓘ **LP: Step 1 Low-Pass Range**

Report
By System

NBME® SELF-ASSESSMENTS

COMPREHENSIVE BASIC SCIENCE SELF-ASSESSMENT (CBSSA)

EXAMINEE PERFORMANCE REPORT

Name: Student A   Test Date: 5/1/2022

	Your EPC Score	Comparison Group Average EPC Score	Score Comparison: Lower Same Higher	% of Items
Performance by System ⓘ				
General Principles	68	78	Lower	12-16%
Behavioral Health & Nervous Systems/Special Senses	61	80	Lower	9-13%
Reproductive & Endocrine Systems	61	81	Lower	9-13%
Respiratory and Renal/Urinary Systems	72	79	Higher	9-13%
Blood & Lymphoreticular and Immune Systems	69	81	Lower	7-11%
Multisystem Processes & Disorders	73	82	Lower	6-10%
Musculoskeletal, Skin, & Subcutaneous Tissue	88	82	Higher	6-10%
Cardiovascular System	59	79	Lower	5-9%
Gastrointestinal System	77	80	Higher	5-9%
Biostatistics & Epidemiology/Population Health	56	80	Lower	4-6%

Report
By Discipline

NBME® SELF-ASSESSMENTS

COMPREHENSIVE BASIC SCIENCE SELF-ASSESSMENT (CBSSA)

EXAMINEE PERFORMANCE REPORT

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	Your EPC Score	Comparison Group Average EPC Score	Score Comparison: Lower Same Higher	% of Items
Performance by Discipline ⓘ				
Pathology	72	81		44-52%
Physiology	74	80		25-35%
Microbiology & Immunology	67	81		16-26%
Biochemistry & Nutrition	75	81		14-24%
Pharmacology	87	83		15-22%
Gross Anatomy & Embryology	62	76		11-15%
Behavioral Sciences	82	87		8-13%
Histology & Cell Biology	73	78		8-13%
Genetics	69	80		5-9%

Rank order by System

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COMPREHENSIVE BASIC SCIENCE SELF-ASSESSMENT (CBSSA)

EXAMINEE PERFORMANCE REPORT

NBME®

Name: Student A   Test Date: 5/1/2022

	Your EPC Score	Comparison Group Average EPC Score	Score Comparison: Lower Same Higher	% of Items
Performance by System ⓘ				
6 General Principles	68	78	◼ Lower	12-16%
7 Behavioral Health & Nervous Systems/Special Senses	61	80	◼ Lower	9-13%
8 Reproductive & Endocrine Systems	61	81	◼ Lower	9-13%
4 Respiratory and Renal/Urinary Systems	72	79	◼ Higher	9-13%
5 Blood & Lymphoreticular and Immune Systems	69	81	◼ Lower	7-11%
3 Multisystem Processes & Disorders	73	82	◼ Lower	6-10%
1 Musculoskeletal, Skin, & Subcutaneous Tissue	88	82	◼ Higher	6-10%
9 Cardiovascular System	59	79	◼ Lower	5-9%
2 Gastrointestinal System	77	80	◼ Higher	5-9%
10 Biostatistics & Epidemiology/Population Health	56	80	◼ Lower	4-6%

Highest weight

Select strongest system
With highest priority system

Highest Priority

strongest

| | 6 | 7 | 8 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 9 | 2 | 10 |

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Musculoskeletal, Skin, & Subcutaneous Tissue	88	82		6-10%
Cardiovascular System	59	79		5-9%
Gastrointestinal System	77	80		5-9%
Biostatistics & Epidemiology/Population Health	56	80		4-6%

Highest weight

Rank order by Discipline & Rank order by High Priority Discipline

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COMPREHENSIVE BASIC SCIENCE SELF-ASSESSMENT (CBSSA)

EXAMINEE PERFORMANCE REPORT

Name: Student A — Test Date: 5/1/2022

	Performance by Discipline ⓘ		Your EPC Score	Comparison Group Average EPC Score	Score Comparison: Lower Same Higher	% of Items	
6	Pathology	1	72	81		44-52%	Highest Priority
4	Physiology	4	74	80		25-35%	High Priority Disciplines
8	Microbiology & Immunology	5	67			16-26%	
3	Biochemistry & Nutrition	3	75	81		14-24%	
1	Pharmacology	2	87	83		15-22%	
9	Gross Anatomy & Embryology		62	76		11-15%	
2	Behavioral Sciences		82	87		8-13%	
5	Histology & Cell Biology		73	78		8-13%	
7	Genetics		69	80		5-9%	

Select strongest discipline with highest priority discipline

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NBME®

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Test Date: 5/1/2022

		Your EPC Score	Comparison Group Average EPC Score	Score Comparison: Lower Same Higher	% of Items
Performance by Discipline ⓘ					
6	Pathology	**Highest Priority** → 1	72	81	■	44-52%
4	Physiology	4	74	80	■	25-35%
8	Microbiology & Immunology	5	67			16-26%
3	Biochemistry & Nutrition	3	75	81	■	14-24%
1	Pharmacology	**strongest** → 2	87	83	■	15-22%
9	Gross Anatomy & Embryology		62	76	■	11-15%
2	Behavioral Sciences		82	87	■	8-13%
5	Histology & Cell Biology		73	78	■	8-13%
7	Genetics		69	80	■	5-9%

Highest Priority

High Priority Disciplines

Study Plan – 2 elements

1. Scheduling

2. Resource

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
26	27 Today	28	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18 Step 1	19	20	21	22

Scheduling

- Date for step 1
- Blocking day/time slots for life events
- Blocking 2 half days or 1 full day every week for rest
- Blocking buffer days.
- Blocking days for practice test – CBSSA or other (shelf) & blocking time for review of incorrect questions on test
- Blocking day for simulation test a week before Step 1 date
- Count available days/hours
  - Questions/blocks distribution/review incorrect answers/review high yield material

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
26	27 **Today**	28 CBSSA Diagnostic test	1	2	3	4
5 Rest ½ D	6	7	8 Rest ½ D	9	10	11
1 Rest ½ D	13	14 CBSSA Test review	15	16	17	18 Rest Day
19	20	21	22 Rest ½ D	23	24	25
26 Rest ½ D	27	28 CBSSA Test review	29	30	31 Family event	1
2	3	4	5 Rest ½ D	6	7	8
9	10 Rest ½ D	11 SIM test	12 Test review	13	14	15
16	17 Rest Day	18 Step 1	19	20	21	22

Creating sample weekly schedule

- Block times for basic important activities
  - Sleep, personal hygiene, food etc.
  - Exercise (yoga, gym, running, walking etc. at least 20 mins 3-4 times a week)
  - Block 10-15 mins daily for some kind of relaxation / meditation practice
  - Anything else that you may need to relax and unwind daily

  Keep a buffer time (few hours to half day) every 3-4 days at least to begin with that can help you catch up with your schedule if you fall behind for whatever reason. Also block rest day.

  Now finally plan your study time which includes 1) practice questions, 2) learning from incorrect answers, and 3) rapid review of high yield information on a daily basis (more about this later).

  Make sure to have multiple small breaks between study sessions.

Resources for Step 1

Too many options ?

Primary

• U-World Learning Tool

• First Aid Learning Resource

• Flash Cards: Make your own, U World, Anki, ETC

• U-World Assessment Evaluation

• NBME Practice tests: Assessment

Secondary

• Pathology : Rapid Review or Pathoma

• Physiology: BRS

• Micro Biology Sketchy Micro

• Pharmacology Anki, Osmosis

U-world questions

- No of questions to be aimed at least 75% @ 2700 in UWorld
- Timed Vs Tutor mode
  - Tutor mode:
    Immediate feedback
    Not practicing test day timing
  - Timed mode: → Recommended
    Practicing test day timing
    Delayed review of questions

- Questions based on Sub/System Vs Random
  - Subject/System
    - See all diseases for a topic at once
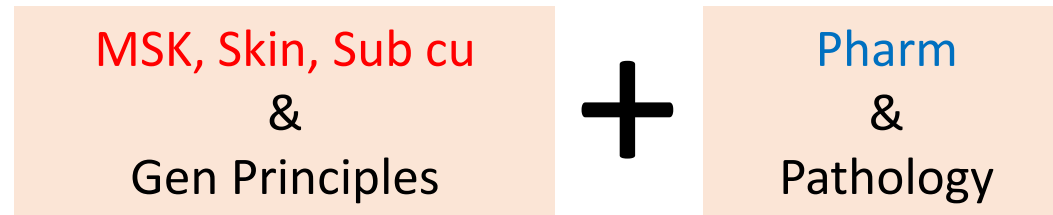   - Doesn't simulate exam day
  - Random topics
    - Mimics actual exam
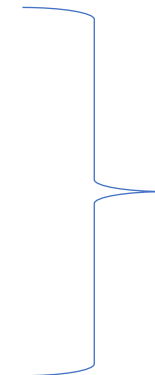
→ Combination approach... Begin with Syst/sub... Move towards Random

Begin in U-world with following combination

- Combine 1 strongest system with Gen Principles
- Combine 1 strongest subject with Pathology

MSK, Skin, Sub cu
&
Gen Principles

+

Pharm
&
Pathology

How to make progress using Uworld Q-bank

- Start with 2 blocks (40-Q each) daily
- In Q set - always include General principles + 1 strongest system & Pathology + 1 strongest subject
- Once the score is 55% correct, add another subject. Do this until all subjects are in the question set.
- Next add another system. Continue to add systems when the last set is at 55% or better.
- Once all systems are in the question bank begin doing random Q and try to do 3 blocks (120 question)
- Then about 5 days later add another block if possible.

Recap

- So far we have understood

    - Blocking events on your calendar between now and step 1
    - Creating sample weekly schedule
    - Rank ordering systems and disciplines based on your individual score
    - Selecting high priority and strongest system and discipline to begin with
    - Incorporating all systems and disciplines

Core elements of a Step 1 dedicated plan

- Questions (block) in timed mode
- Processing of wrong questions to extract high yield material
- Rapid, high repetition, high yield reviews of previous wrong questions

- 5-20% time for "non-Q based" topic review (from secondary resources)

Begin in U-world with following combination
- Combine 1 strongest system with Gen Principles
- Combine 1 strongest subject with Pathology

MSK, Skin, Sub cu
&
Gen Principles

+

Pharm
&
Pathology

- 1 block of 40 question

- Review wrong answers
  - U-world explanation & Extract "high yield"

Anki   Concept   Mark/tab in first
              mapping   aid

- Rapid repetition of previously extracted "high yield" on daily basis

Defining High Yield: What do multiple choice question exams measure?

A. Your level of knowledge

B. Your understanding of a topic

C. Your ability to become a competent physician

D. Your ability to choose the correct answer choice out of multiple answer choices

Defining high yield: What do multiple choice question exams measure?

A. Your level of knowledge

B. Your understanding of a topic

C. Your ability to become a competent physician

D. **Your ability to choose the correct answer choice out of multiple answer choices**

Processing of wrong questions to <u>**extract high yield**</u> material

Definition of High Yield
- Anything that allows you to choose the correct answer
- Anything that allows you to not choose the incorrect answer

Tool
- [Comparative answer choice analysis (CACA)][1-3]

Rationale for focusing on wrong questions only
- Objective evidence of weakness
- Avoiding cognitive overload
- Difficult to self assess[4-5] level of guessing/uncertainty especially with stress of Step 1 prep

| 40 Q Block 60 min | CACA (5min/Q) 40-120 min | 40 Q Block 60 min | CACA (5min/Q) 40-120 min |

| 40 Q Block 60 min | CACA (5min/Q) 40-120 min | Review previous days' High Yield material | 40 Q Block 60 min | CACA (5min/Q) 40-120 min |

| 40 Q Block 60 min | CACA (5min/Q) 40-120 min | Review previous days' High Yield material | 40 Q Block 60 min | CACA (5min/Q) 40-120 min |

| 40 Q Block 60 min | CACA (5min/Q) 40-80 min | Review previous days' High Yield material | 40 Q Block 60 min | CACA (5min/Q) 40-80 min |

| 40 Q Block 60 min | CACA (5min/Q) 30-60 min | Review previous days' High Yield material | 40 Q Block 60 min | CACA (5min/Q) 30-60 min | 40 Q Block 60 min | CACA (5min/Q) 30-60 min |

<u>Simulated exams</u> to build cognitive stamina, process for test day

Timing, format of Step 1 exam
- 7 x 40 question blocks with 1 hour per block
- 45 minutes of break time
- Extra break time for finishing early/skipping 15 minutes tutorial
- Extra break time for finishing question blocks early

Purpose
- Cognitive stamina
- Practicing timing
- Practice break use, bathroom use, food/drink, etc

Can be combined with NBME or private company self assessments
- Sim exam with 200Q from NBME self assessment and 80Q from bank
- Sim exam with 160Q from private company self assessment + 120Q from bank

General Guideline vs Individual approach

- Everyone is different and at different stage of preparedness
- Feel free to individualize this approach that suits your need
- All are welcome to have one to one meeting if you need help in customizing this approach
- All are welcome to have one to one meeting if you run into some challenge during prep time
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- Zoom: Personal Meeting ID 766 799 2136

Stress Mgt and Test Anxiety

Combat __burnout__ to optimize Step 1 outcome

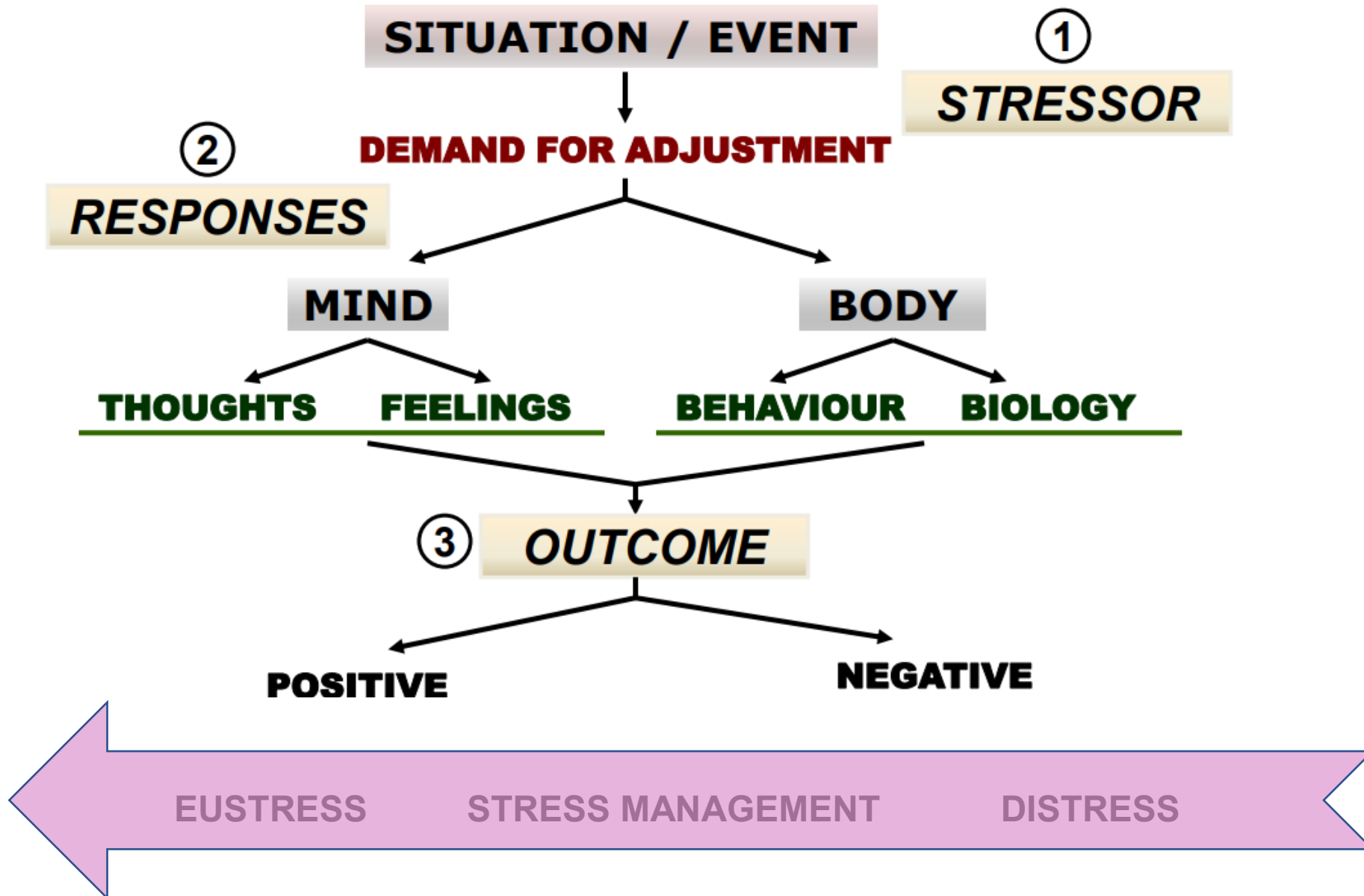During Step 1 dedicated study time[1]

    - 71% of students reported feeling burned out weekly or more often

    - 52% of students reported feeling depressed weekly or more often

Burnout decreases cognitive function[2-4]

Scheduling elements

    - Is your daily schedule realistic?

        - Cutting back on sleep will affect memory[5]

        - Enough break time in daily schedule to be sustainable?

    - Is your overall schedule realistic?

        - Enough days off to avoid harmful burnout?

    - Accounted for known life events?

    - Rest day/light studying day before taking exam to optimize cognitive function?

What is stress and stress management?

SITUATION / EVENT

① STRESSOR

DEMAND FOR ADJUSTMENT

② RESPONSES

MIND

BODY

THOUGHTS   FEELINGS

BEHAVIOUR   BIOLOGY

③ OUTCOME

POSITIVE

NEGATIVE

EUSTRESS   STRESS MANAGEMENT   DISTRESS

From Stress response to

Relaxation response to

Resilience building

STIMULUS ————————————→ RESPONSE

Freedom
to choose

Foundations of Resilience Building

- Nutrition
- Sleep
- Exercise
- Socializing
- Laughter
- Being kind to yourself
- Gratitude
- *Building Relaxation response*

Neuroplasticity & Meditation - Research

Increased neurogenesis (creation of new neurons including gray matter) [1-5]

- brain's frontal cortex (the part of the brain associated with decision-making and logical thinking)
- sensory cortices (the part of the brain associated with sensing, feeling, noticing),
- hippocampal formation (the part of the brain associated with memory
- anterior cingulate (the part of the brain associated with attention),
- insula (the part of the brain associated with gut-responding),
- decreased activity and reduced gray matter in the amygdala (the part of the brain associated with fear)

fMRI of Brain in meditators

- Hardcore Neuroimaging (fMRI) data available on meditation practice and neuroplasticity

The Meditative Mind: A Comprehensive Meta-Analysis of MRI Studies (hindawi.com)
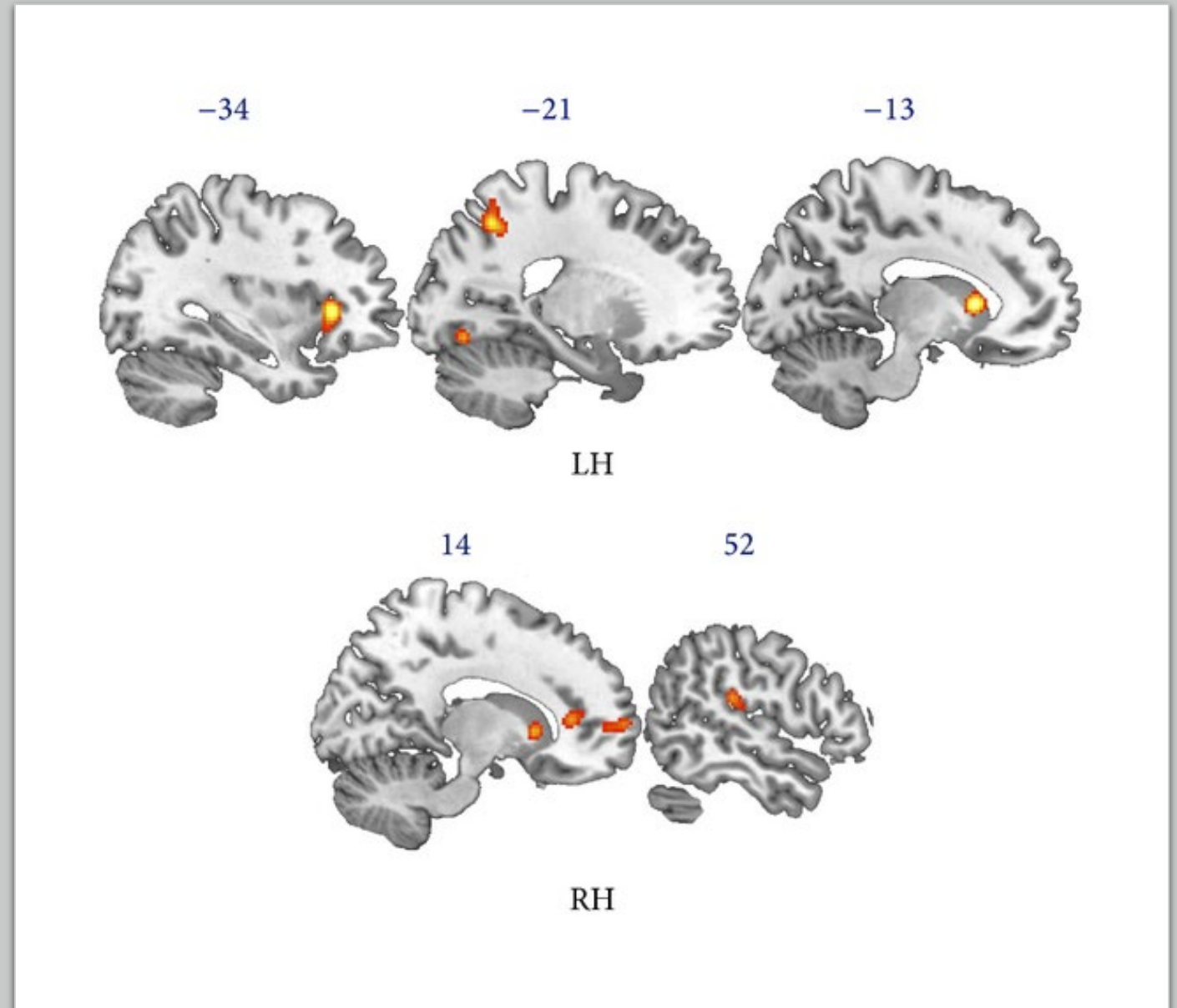
Neuroplasticity and Meditation – My Professional Experience (since 2007)

- Combining learning intervention with meditation practice = Much better outcome

  - Reduction in generalized anxiety
  - Increase in daily productivity
  - Increase in self control and self regulation

  - Increase in retention and recall
  - Decrease in testing anxiety

  - Improved test score

Neuroplasticity and Meditation – TUSOM students' feedback (from Phase 1, 2, 3, and 4 Students, 2023)

- It's strange how those of us on track to become doctors forget what we know about the nervous system when it comes to ourselves. We are tested on how the autonomic nervous system works, but we don't use it to our own advantage. Dr. Anadkat has helped me start to incorporate nervous system regulation into my routine. Taking 10 minutes each day to just breathe, and (try my hardest) to not think about anything has expanded my ability to be mindful during times I feel myself getting stressed and frustrated while studying or in class.

- As a student who experiences bouts with anxiety, hearing that Dr. Anadkat was willing to create a safe space where we can objectively observe what is working and what is not did wonders for my self-esteem. Unsurprisingly, she stayed true to her word during every session we worked together, which boosted my confidence.

- Based on all the commentary about how medical school was challenging, I was at a point where I internalized that having high levels of anxiety every day was a regular part of becoming a physician. Although Dr. Anadkat is not the first person I ever shared these sentiments with, she is one of the few to validate my feelings and offer to actively resolve these issues with me by incorporating relaxation and meditation techniques during our sessions. She also gave me an audio recording for progressive muscular relaxation and another for breathing awareness. These recordings are helpful because they feel personalized and are from someone I know and trust, making it easier to follow along regularly.

- Everything we did helped so much with both test-taking and the test day experience. It was completely different than test-taking in the past - I slept a bit better, was more calm before and during (the test), had more confidence, and separating into blocks of questions with meditation and breathing before allowed me to actually finish the exam on time and without my brain collapsing.

- Since I left your office, I have been breathing more deeply than I have in such a long time. And I have been able to tap into the stillness I need throughout the day. My studying has dramatically improved too. Yesterday I did well on my U-World blocks just because I was calm as I approached each question.

- I especially appreciate the breathing sessions that you find time to do in our meetings. Discussing study schedules and AMBOSS results can be very stressful conversations, yet by taking a break at the end or middle of the meeting to do a mindfulness session can help drastically. It allows me to leave the meeting with a sense of calmness and helps my anxiety/stress feel manageable. It has encouraged me to practice mindfulness on my own at home, and I think it is overall making a difference.

- Learning relaxation techniques gave me the ability to get out of my own way and believe that I could succeed. When your brain is in fight or flight because of test anxiety, the complex thinking needed to pass a STEP exam is inaccessible, even if you have practiced and know the content well. Having tools to help me keep my composure helped me bring my best to every question, and that contributed to my success.

Practice

- Guided meditation to induce "relaxation response"

- Free resource - https://www.calm.com/resources

Acknowledgement