Test Taking Tips and Study Strategies

Lisa Glantz Williamson, MSN, NNP-BC
Neonatal Nurse Practitioner
Blank Children’s Hospital, Des Moines, IA

The speakers have signed a disclosure form and indicated that she has no significant financial interest or relationship with companies or the manufacturer(s) of any commercial product/service that may be discussed as part of this presentation.

Session Summary

This session is presented in two parts. First, the presenter will provide an overview of the certification examination and its rules, regulations, eligibility and format. Participants will be given evidence-based study and test taking strategies as preparation for taking a multiple-choice certification examination. Secondly, the participants will be encouraged to take part in answering practice questions in a relaxed, fun game show atmosphere.

Session Objectives

Upon completion of this presentation, the participant will be able to:

- site internet resources that will assist in examination preparation;
- define the NCC and understand the mechanism by which questions are formulated;
- understand the format of the examination;
- anticipate eligibility requirements;
- know how to proceed with application for the examination;
- formulate a study plan using the examination content outline;
- anticipate anxiety and identify mechanisms by which to minimize stress;
- understand the importance of a study plan as it relates to examination preparation;
- choose recommended study resources, references, and texts;
- identify areas of strength and weakness, enhancing study plan;
- formulate multiple-choice question test-taking strategies;
- be adequately prepared to take the NCC NNP certification examination;
- participate in a game-show style practice question event.

Session References


References (Test Preparation 2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Study</td>
<td>Brodsky and Martin, Neonatology Review, Hanley &amp; Belfus, 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study</td>
<td>CCPR – Center for Certification Preparation and Review, <a href="http://www.ccprnet.org">www.ccprnet.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study</td>
<td>Pediatrix University, <a href="http://www.pediatrix.com">www.pediatrix.com</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NCC Bibliography – www.nccwebsite.org**

NCC Recommended Periodicals

- Advances in Neonatal Care
- Clinics in Perinatology
- MCN, The American Journal of Maternal/Child Nursing
- Neonatal Network
- Journal of Pediatrics
- Journal of Obstetric, Gynecologic and Neonatal Nursing (JOGNN)
- Newborn and Infant Nursing Reviews
- Seminars in Perinatology

Session Outline

See handout on following pages.
Test Taking Tips &
Study Strategies for
Passing the NCC
NNP Exam

Lisa Glantz Williamson
MSN, ARNP, NNP-BC

Test Taking Tips &
Study Strategies for
Passing the NCC
NNP Exam

• The Test.
• Tips & Study Strategies.
• Practice Questions in a
  Game-Style Format.

Congratulations Super Stars!

Look at what you have accomplished!
Pat yourself on the back!
Be proud of yourself!

The Test
Important Internet Resources

National Certification Corporation (NCC)
www.nccwebsite.org

The Center for Certification Preparation and Review (CCPR)
www.ccprwebsite.org

Pediatrix University
www.pediatrix.com/homepage_university.cfm?id=92&TopID=92

Important Internet Resources

The National Certification Corporation (NCC)
www.nccwebsite.org

2011 Neonatal Nurse Practitioner Registration Catalog
2011 Candidate Guide Neonatal Nurse Practitioner
Catalog & guide discuss eligibility criteria, important facts, content outlines with study resources, bibliography, testing options, scoring, payment and general policies.

Online Exam Registration
Register for the exam completely online! Simple, easy to follow directions.

Important Internet Resources

The Center for Certification Preparation and Review (CCPR)
www.ccprwebsite.org

• Provides test-taking tips
• On-line practice test ($52)
• Core text (Manual of Neonatal Care, Cloherty, et al., 6th edition) with exercise workbook ($94)

Important Internet Resources

Pediatrix University
www.pediatrix.com

NPN Certification Prep Course

• 7 modules, each with a self-assessment quiz:
  Pulmonary - Perinatal Risk Factors - General Management - Cardiac and Gastrointestinal - Integument, Hematopoietic and Genetics - Multi-System Review - Infectious Disease and Neurology
• Multiple choice, 125-question exam
  Presented in 3 segments
Flashcards...Another way to study!

- Available from www.flashcardsecrets.com
- Cost $69.99 plus shipping
  OR
- Make your own

Who is the NCC?

The National Certification Corporation.

Not-for-Profit organization.

Provide certification credentials via voluntary examinations that validate entry level knowledge.

Neonatal Nurse Practitioner 2011 Exam Content Team

Catherine Theorell, NNP-BC, Ph.D.
Chicago, IL

Terri Cavaliere, NNP-BC, MS
Manhasset, NY

Jan Sherman, NNP-BC, Ph.D.
Columbia, MO

Ellen Tappero, NNP-BC, MS
Scottsdale, AZ

NCC NNP Certification Exam
How to Apply

- Your application, fee and documentation MUST be submitted together...
  - Completed application
  - Official transcript issued from the registrar
  - Copy of master's diploma/master's degree
  - Post master's candidates must also include a copy of post master's certificate
- Processing can take up to 4 weeks
- Apply online or via mail
NCC NNP Certification Examination
Eligibility
Beginning in 2010, the exam must be completed within 3 years of graduation date.

• All requirements for graduation must be completed before application is filed.
• Current RN in USA or Canada.
• Graduation from an accredited NNP program after January 1, 2005.
• Certification is maintained by completing 45 continuing education contact hours or re-examination every 3 years.

NCC NNP Certification Exam
Format & Fees
2 exam formats...
1) Computer → available on demand with a 90 day testing window
2) Paper and pencil → offered only 1 time/year

Application fees...
• Computer - $300 (online) vs. $325 (mail)
• Paper and pencil - $250 (online) vs. $275 (mail)

Computer testing myths:
Must have computer savvy - NOT!
You cannot revisit questions - NOT!
The computer test content is harder - NOT!

NCC NNP Certification Exam
Format
• 3 hour examination.
• 175 questions counted for scoring with up to an additional 50 pre-test questions.
• Each question has three possible answers.
• Tests knowledge and application of knowledge.
• Lab data, conventional measurements.
• Generic and trade drug names.
• Passing scores are predetermined and based upon Item Response Theory (Rasch analysis)...in other words “criteria” based.

NCC NNP Certification Examination
Content

General Assessment (15 - 20%)
General Management (20 - 30%)
The Disease Process (45 - 55%)
Professional Issues (<5%)
Test Taking Tips & Study Strategies for Passing the NCC NNP Exam

Lisa Glantz Williamson
MSN, ARNP, NNP-BC

The Test.

Tips & Study Strategies.

Practice Questions in a Game-Style Format.

Congratulations Super Stars!

Look at what you have accomplished!
Pat yourself on the back!
Be proud of yourself!
Important Internet Resources

The National Certification Corporation (NCC)
www.nccwebsite.org

The Center for Certification Preparation and Review (CCPR)
www.ccprwebsite.org

Pediatrix University
www.pediatrix.com/homepage_university.cfm?id=92&TopID=92

Important Internet Resources

The National Certification Corporation (NCC)
www.nccwebsite.org

2011 Neonatal Nurse Practitioner Registration Catalog
2011 Candidate Guide Neonatal Nurse Practitioner
Catalog & guide discuss eligibility criteria, important facts, content outlines with study resources, bibliography, testing options, scoring, payment and general policies.

Online Exam Registration
Register for the exam completely online! Simple, easy to follow directions.

Important Internet Resources

The Center for Certification Preparation and Review (CCPR)
www.ccprwebsite.org

- Provides test-taking tips
- Online practice test ($52)
- Core text (Manual of Neonatal Care, Cloherty, et al., 6th edition) with exercise workbook ($94)

Important Internet Resources

Pediatrix University
www.pediatrix.com

NPN Certification Prep Course
- 7 modules, each with a self-assessment quiz:
Pulmonary - Perinatal Risk Factors - General Management - Cardiac and Gastrointestinal - Integument, Hematopoetic and Genetics - Multi-System Review - Infectious Disease and Neurology
- Multiple choice, 125-question exam
- Presented in 3 segments
Flashcards...Another way to study!
- Available from www.flashcardsecrets.com
- Cost $69.99 plus shipping
  OR
- Make your own

Who is the NCC?
The National Certification Corporation.
Not-for-Profit organization.
Provide certification credentials via voluntary examinations that validate entry level knowledge.

Neonatal Nurse Practitioner 2011 Exam Content Team

Catherine Theorell, NNP-BC, Ph.D.
Chicago, IL

Terri Cavaliere, NNP-BC, MS
Manhasset, NY

Jan Sherman, NNP-BC, Ph.D.
Columbia, MO

Ellen Tappero, NNP-BC, MN
Scottsdale, AZ

NCC NNP Certification Exam
How to Apply
- Your application, fee and documentation MUST be submitted together...
  - Completed application
  - Official transcript issued from the registrar
  - Copy of master's diploma/master's degree
  - Post master's candidates must also include a copy of post master's certificate
- Processing can take up to 4 weeks
- Apply online or via mail
NCC NNP Certification Examination
Eligibility
Beginning in 2010, the exam must be completed within 3 years of graduation date.
• All requirements for graduation must be completed before application is filed.
• Current RN in USA or Canada.
• Graduation from an accredited NNP program after January 1, 2005.
• Certification is maintained by completing 45 continuing education contact hours or re-examination every 3 years.

NCC NNP Certification Exam
Format & Fees
2 exam formats...
1) Computer → available on demand with a 90 day testing window
2) Paper and pencil → offered only 1 time/year
Application fees...
• Computer - $300 (online) vs. $325 (mail)
• Paper and pencil - $250 (online) vs. $275 (mail)
Computer testing myths:
Must have computer savvy - NOT!
You cannot revisit questions - NOT!
The computer test content is harder - NOT!

NCC NNP Certification Exam
Format
• 3 hour examination.
• 175 questions counted for scoring with up to an additional 50 pre-test questions.
• Each question has three possible answers.
• Tests knowledge and application of knowledge.
• Lab data, conventional measurements.
• Generic and trade drug names.
• Passing scores are predetermined and based upon Item Response Theory (Rasch analysis)...in other words “criteria” based.

NCC NNP Certification Examination
Content
General Assessment (15 - 20%)
General Management (20 - 30%)
The Disease Process (45 - 55%)
Professional Issues (<5%)
NCC NNP Certification Examination
Content
General Assessment

• Perinatal
  - Antepartum and Intrapartum
• Neonatal
  - Physical Exam
  - Gestational Age/Behavioral Assessment
  - Lab Tests
  - Diagnostic Procedures, Techniques and Equipment
• Family Integration
  - Communication
  - Grief
  - Discharge Planning and Follow-Up

NCC NNP Certification Examination
Content
General Management

• Thermoregulation
• Resuscitation & Stabilization
• Nutrition
• Fluids & Electrolytes
• Pharmacology
  - Principles
  - Drug Therapies

NCC NNP Certification Examination
Content
The Disease Process: Embryology, Physiology, Pathophysiology

• Cardiac
• Pulmonary
• Gastrointestinal
• Renal/Genitourinary
• Metabolic/Endocrine
• Hematopoietic
• Infectious Diseases

• Musculoskeletal
• Integumentary
• Genetics
• Neurological
• Ears, Eyes, Nose & Mouth/Throat
• Intrauterine Drug Exposure

NCC NNP Certification Examination
Content
Professional Issues

• Principles of Nursing Research
• Legal/Ethical Problems
NCC NNP Certification Examination

Content

Expanded outline, sample questions and bibliography located in:

NCC 2011 Candidate Guide Neonatal Nurse Practitioner

http://www.nccwebsite.org

Bibliography and Other Resources

Please refer to the appendix.

Test Taking Tips & Study Strategies for Passing the NCC NNP Exam

Tips and Strategies

Be Prepared!

www.resptrec.org/resources/Test_Strategies.pdf

“For every disciplined effort there is a multiple reward.”

~ Jim Rohn
Start Early!

- Get organized.
- Review content outlines.
- Identify strengths and weaknesses.
- Plan and schedule time for study.
- Develop personalized study plan.
- Select review courses, resources, practice tests.

“Great things are not done by impulse, but by a series of small things brought together.”
~ Vincent Van Gogh

Start Early!

- Customize a calendar.
- Divide and conquer the outline.
- Check off content identified as a strength, highlight content identified as a weakness.
- Practice tests are great tools that can identify strengths and weaknesses!

“Success is the sum of small efforts, repeated day in and day out.”
~ Robert Collier

Plan to study!

- Keep up with your calendar.
- Stay true to your planned study sessions!!
- Work ahead if possible.
- Organize a study group if this approach has proven successful in the past.
- Silence your phone, remove distractions.
- Schedule breaks.

Manage Anxiety!

- Send application early.
- Schedule exam date as soon as eligibility letter received.
- If possible, take time off before and after the exam. Make any necessary work, travel, or childcare arrangements.
Manage Anxiety!

- Consider a dry run to the test site.
- Schedule rest and relaxation time.
- All things in moderation. If it is study time, study. If it is play time, play!

Preparation may be prophylactic treatment for test anxiety!

“Lack of direction, not lack of time, is the problem. We all have twenty-four hour days.”
~ Zig Ziglar

Note case studies that match outline topics ~

- A notorious patient with PPHN.
- Management of a crisis in the delivery room.
- Interdisciplinary rounds regarding a chronic, complicated patient.

How do you learn?

- Seek out clinical experiences matching topics identified as areas of weakness.
- It is easier to remember a story than it is to remember a list of facts.

*See it.  **Hear it.  ***Say it.  ****Do it.  *****Teach it!

Consider preparing an in-service for staff, nursing students or ancillary departments. Choose a topic or a case study that can combine many outline topics.
**Memory Joggers**

- Jingles
- Acronyms
- Acrostics
- Vivid mental pictures

**Memories...Like Footprints on My Mind**

- Create an acronym for a list
- Sing it!
- Practice, practice, practice
- Use flash cards or play games
- Chunk it!
- Use patterns
- Associate
- Visualize it!
- Repeat, repeat, repeat
- Get your ZZZZZs

**The Week Before...**

- Scan entire outline. Determine areas requiring last minute study.
- Allow for small increments of review time for all content topics.
- Put main ideas, information and formulas onto a sheet that can be quickly reviewed many times.
- Verify travel arrangements.

**The Week Before...**

- Locate admission ticket. Get a silent, approved calculator. Assure you have photo identification.
- Review preparations, rules, and regulations relating to the chosen examination format, computer or paper/pencil.
The Day Before...

- Review briefly.
- Review test strategies, time table, etc.
- Travel to stay near test site if necessary.

The Day Before...

- Plan on an early dinner and bedtime.
- Avoid sleep aids, stimulants, alcohol.
- Don’t try or do anything new.
- Set an alarm, consider a wake-up call.

Test Day...Finally!

- Feed your brain. Avoid excess fluids.
- Get an early start. Arrive 30 minutes prior to your scheduled start time.
- Wear layered, comfortable clothing. Go ahead, wear those lucky socks!
- Listen carefully and remain alert.

“One important key to success is self confidence. An important key to self confidence is preparation.” – Arthur Ashe

Specific Test Taking Strategies

- Take advantage of the practice test session.
- Wisely use allotted time. Allow time for review.
- Each exam question has three parts: the question (stem), the correct answer and two distracters.
- Read the entire question thoroughly before looking at the answers.
Specific Test Taking Strategies

• First impressions matter. Think of your own answer before reading choices.
• Read every choice before choosing answer.
• Throw out unlikely answers.
• Correct answers are often longer and more descriptive.

Specific Test Taking Strategies

• Answer the questions in the order that they appear.
• If you do not know the answer, read the questions a second time. If you cannot make a guess, leave it blank and come back. Don’t panic and don’t waste time.
• Don’t allow yourself to become frustrated over a specific question. If it is deemed flawed, statistical standards will not be met and it will be discounted.

Specific Test Taking Strategies

• If “all of the above” is a choice, and more than one of the choices is correct, then choose “all of the above.”
• If two answers are similar, one of them is probably the correct answer.
• Don’t be afraid to change an answer.

Specific Test Taking Strategies

BEWARE of the EXTREME modifiers!
Use of these words usually makes the choice incorrect:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>always</th>
<th>all</th>
<th>never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>only</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>best</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>absolutely</td>
<td>worst</td>
<td>absolutely not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nobody</td>
<td>everybody</td>
<td>certainly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>invariably</td>
<td>no one</td>
<td>everyone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Specific Test Taking Strategies

LOOK for QUALIFIERS!

Use of these words often make a choice correct:
seldom often many
usually frequently sometimes
some much
probably
a majority apt to most
might may a few
unlikely

Specific Test Taking Strategies

• Look for keywords found in the question and in the choices.

• Watch for peculiar wording. If the phrasing does not seem to fit it is probably an incorrect choice.

Specific Test Taking Strategies

• If the choices contain common elements, the choice with the greater number of elements is probably the best answer.

• Look for opposites. One of them is usually the correct choice.

• Leave no answer blank. You are not penalized for incorrect answers. You only risk guessing correctly!

Celebrate!

When the test is over...REJOICE!

If you have taken the computer test, you will know immediately that you have PASSED the exam!

Have fun and treat yourself to something special!

Let it go! Bask in the joy of your accomplishment!