

Ep #35: Choosing the Right Board Prep For You!



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Sarah Michelle

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Welcome to *Becoming a Stress-Free Nurse Practitioner*, a show for new NPs and students that want to pass their board exam the first time and make that transition from RN to NP as seamless as possible. I'm your host Sarah Michelle. Now, let's dive into today's episode.

Hey, hey, my friends, this episode is going to be for all those future real deal nurse practitioners out there that are wanting to get a jump ahead on their board preparation and figure out what is the best move for them. And so I thought there's no better way to spend this episode than by walking you through how to choose what is the best board preparation option for you.

Whether that be the self-paced route with my recorded courses, or through that intensive live study group program. I get asked daily how to make the decision between the two. And I felt that I could give you guys just a few tools and some questions to ask yourself, so that you can ultimately make the right decision for you and your needs.

I offer this flexibility in my programs so we can truly try to meet every student where they're at and give you guys the skills and the confidence that you need to pass this exam, get that license, and become real deals. Because that is truly what we are all here for. Right?

And so I want you to have the knowledge that you need to make the best decision you can about what is right for you personally as an individual. And that answer is going to be different for everyone. I think the best way to dive into this is to tell you exactly what I tell you about choosing a board exam as well.

When it comes to doing the self-paced courses or the live study group program, there is no wrong decision. Because at the end of the day, you are going to get that content knowledge that you need, period.

The difference between the two, well, one of the differences between the two is the level of support involved and how that content is actually delivered to you. The delivery in the live study group program is pretty

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unique, which is part of why I wanted to give you guys this episode as a reference point.

I know it can be difficult to wrap your head around a five week program to prepare you for boards when most of the programs out there are a couple of days at most. But this was in every way purposeful because I never want for your board preparation process to be remotely close to anything like a cramming fest. I want you to have the setup necessary to study, pause, do practice questions, take breaks, and feel as rested as possible leading up to your exam.

Now the biggest question you need to ask yourself is what is your timeline? Are you a student who is planning a couple of months in advance? Or are you a student trying to study for boards in just a couple of weeks? While I usually suggest a bare minimum of five to six weeks to work your way through content and practice questions, I know for some of you out there that just simply will not be the reality.

And so if you fall into this category of having less than six weeks, if you're going to do it in a couple of weeks, which I do want to caution you to do very wisely if you're going that route, it's likely that the recorded courses are going to be your best bet. The best part of the recorded courses is that you have unlimited access to them for as long as you have that active subscription.

And what most students find themselves doing is listening to the courses once at home, all the way through. But then plugging into our mobile app to listen while driving in the car, on walks, et cetera. If there's ever a video that you want to listen to again to make sure you have it down or just ingrain it a little bit deeper then you absolutely have the flexibility to do that any time of day within your account.

If you have that five weeks or more though to prepare, I would suggest taking a look at the live study group program instead, where you are going to be fully immersed in board preparation with a dedicated plan the entire way. As a caveat to this timeline question though, I want to add in here

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really quickly, that one of the biggest questions that I get asked about our live study group program is can I work full time and participate in this program?

And that answer by far is absolutely a yes. When I created this program, when I had this crazy idea in my head of what this could look like, I created it in bite sized segments with someone working full time in mind because when I was preparing for boards, I was personally working two full time jobs.

And so don't let that time piece be a concern or worry for you if you are working full time. You can most definitely have a life, have a full time job, and still participate in the live study group program and prepare for boards adequately. We actually purposely have breaks built in along the way for you and that's why it's spanned out over five weeks.

Another question you can ask yourself is, are you a student looking for a schedule or a calendar? I know many of you are because one of the biggest points of contention when preparing for boards is that most students don't know how much is too much time or too little time. Or have any earthly idea on how to set up a study calendar that makes sense for them to be able to be prepared, but also have a real life as well.

If you're a student who likes to have that set daily calendar, the live study group program provides that for you while the recorded courses just by themselves do not come with a calendar. Within our live study group program you are literally told what videos from the courses to watch day by day. And most days it's usually less than 45 minutes at the most.

We give you this bite size steady calendar, so that you can take your time with the material, re-watch it as often as you need that day, re-ingrain the things that you need to, and then feel like you have plenty of time to follow up behind those videos and do some practice questions as well.

Having that calendar allows you to work ahead a little bit too if you're going to be taking some break days, and that way you don't end up behind. And

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so you can take that calendar as your core base of knowing what you have to get done and really make it fit you and your lifestyle and what you need.

Which brings me to another heavily asked question, does the live study group program include all of the recorded courses? Yes, absolutely. You get all of the courses for five weeks as part of the live study group program. And then that day by day calendar tells you the order of how to complete them over the span of that five weeks.

Something that I think some students overlook, but is definitely important to ask yourself when it comes to this decision is do you feel like you need someone to hold you accountable to making it through the courses and making it through your board preparation?

Do you feel as if you can hold yourself accountable enough to work your way through the courses on your own time? Or are you a student who needs that additional accountability factor of knowing that you have that live study group coming up that you're going to need to be prepared for to participate?

Only you can answer this question. But I know for many students out there with live being so crazy and so hectic, it can be super hard to make yourself actually get through the courses and put the work in that's needed to pass this exam.

Within the live study group program though, you will know that you have that session coming up soon. And that it's going to be really hard to actively participate if you haven't reviewed that content ahead of time. Just that alone usually helps students to make sure that they do find the time in their day or week to complete those videos.

If you are a student, however, that knows they can commit to board preparation, you know you can do it on your own time and schedule and you can actually get through it, then you can really do either of the programs or maybe you'll just get by with the recorded bundle.

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You also want to ask yourself the amount of support that you feel like you will need during this process. For example, are you a student who wants to be able to ask questions about the content along the way? Or do you want to handle that process on your own? That's really the biggest distinguisher between not just the live program and the recorded courses, but really the difference between the law program and other board prep in general.

When you're in the live program you're placed in a private community where you're able to ask any and all content questions that you wish and a member of our nurse practitioner success team will get back to you within 24 hours. Within the live study group program you have a team of people who have done this before and they are on your side to guide you through because we've all been in your shoes, right?

And not only do you have that, but you also have your community too, of fellow students who are right there with you all working alongside you to achieve this goal of becoming a real deal nurse practitioner too.

The support piece is really what our students love most outside of the content. We are all one big team rooting for each other's success throughout literally the entire process.

Now before I close out this episode, I do also want to give a snippet of what our live study groups themselves, like the actual sessions look like. I think that's where a lot of students get hung up about whether the live study group is a good fit for them because it's just a little bit different, or maybe a lot a bit different than your normal board preparation.

And so the way that the live study group sessions work is that after you've completed videos on that calendar about certain topics, for example, cardiac and respiratory, then we all meet up together on Zoom. And I'm going to present different patients and case scenarios.

And these are not boring case scenarios like during school. Instead, we are literally walking through patient situations piece by piece. And I'm basically quizzing you the entire time. So I'll say we've got this patient who has come in with his acute complaint, what are some possible differentials? Then I'll

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let the students raise their hand in their cameras for me, and I call on someone.

And from that point, we can walk through questions from there like, was this differential appropriate for this patient? Is there another path that we could have went down? And ultimately, I'm going to walk you through to the main point where maybe we discuss hypertension guidelines, or antibiotic treatments, or lab results, or whatever else.

And we do it this way to get you to critically think, which your board exam is definitely going to want to see you do. But also to prepare you for how patients are going to present in practice. And these live sessions are totally judgment free in every way.

And I always tell my students at the very beginning, there are no wrong answers in the live sessions. There's always a chance to phone a friend if you don't know, get some help along the way. And every answer that's a little bit off is just a learning opportunity and definitely something that you're going to remember now and not miss on your exam.

And not only do we work through those case scenarios, we also work through lightning rounds, which are just quick recall quizzing to see if you know it or you don't. And students every single session are truly amazed at how much they know. And that can serve as such a huge confidence booster before your boards. And confidence is exactly what we are looking for before you take that exam.

And so to tie this episode up, in my personal opinion, I really think the recorded courses are best utilized during school. And then doing the live program that includes all of those courses again for you with that extra degree of support is best right before you test.

However, how you complete board preparation is entirely up to you. I want you guys to always remember that. It doesn't matter what your preceptor did, or your classmate did, or whoever else, you have to do what feels the best to you because at the end of the day you are going to be the one who

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is taking that exam. And you are going to need to feel confident in yourself to be able to do so and pass.

Regardless of which route you choose, I am so excited to guide you through this process of becoming the real deal someday super soon. And I'll talk to you guys next week.

As an extra bonus, friends, if you're looking for support no matter what phase of your nurse practitioner journey that you're currently in I have communities available for both students and new nurse practitioners. In these communities, we work to uplift one another and grow this profession together every single day. Links to join will be included for you in the show notes.

Thanks for listening to *Becoming a Stress-Free Nurse Practitioner*. If you want more information about the different types of support we offer to students and new NPs, visit stressfreenp.com. See you next week.