

## ETHICS Is Not An Elective by Nance Wabsbaw, Sr. DH Exam Coordinator

With a number of ethical breaches in dental schools as well as testing environments occurring each year, one is left wondering what exactly is the cultural message students are internalizing that makes this behavior acceptable. With articles in various media proclaiming that probably 80% of all students cheat, what kind of a society is being constructed by the upcoming generation?

One of WREB's main reasons for existence is to protect the public. Having been involved in at least one case of breach of trust by a candidate in the past year, we have been doing a lot of thinking about ethics, dentistry, and the public.

The "it's all about me" culture in which many were reared has done little to promote thinking of others as equally important participants with us in life. Carried to its logical conclusion, without ethics there is no way to ensure that anyone will get quality or even safe treatment. How could we even expect that from someone who cheated his or her way through school?

If, in fact, one is driven to cheating either in school or on a board, it could mean a number of things, not the least of which is the cheater is trying to pursue a profession not meant for them. Worse is the sloth that allows someone to think that someone else can do their work for them. There really is no free lunch. Sliding along on a path others have cleared eventually comes back to haunt in the form of a malpractice suit, a ruined practice, a damaged patient, a devastated sense of self worth...

Wouldn't it simply be easier and less stressful to do your own

work and when tempted to help another cheat, to simply ask them to do their own work as well? No one is hurt in this scenario and, in fact, everyone benefits.

WREB is very proud of the vast majority of our candidates who clearly display ethical behavior in their testing situation. It is very difficult if not impossible to test morals and ethics in dentistry or most other professions. But when something unethical happens in a testing environment we are once again reminded how crucial an ethical underpinning becomes in any field of endeavor. The ripple effect of cheating one's way through life is quite startling to consider.

One practical way to demonstrate your desire to treat your patients ethically and humanely can be accomplished at the board exam. Providing food and water for patients, particularly those undergoing multiple procedures is the right thing to do. WREB has observed a few cases where patients' basic needs during the exam were not met and the patient was unable to continue. That means the candidate fails. So, not only is this ethical treatment but it is in your best interests to make the patient as comfortable as possible.

If you are tempted to cheat in any way on your Boards, we implore you on behalf of a civilized society to consider the possible outcomes to you, your career, and others who care about you and for whom you have sworn to care by becoming a dental professional.



WREB/A National Dental and Dental Hygiene Testing Agency

9201 North 25th Avenue, #185  
Phoenix, AZ 85021



www.wreb.org

Fall 2007

## Wisdom from a Program Director

*Phebe Blitz, RDH,MS, Mesa Community College, AZ*

Hello and welcome back to school! You have come a long way in your professional journey to become a dental hygienist. For many of you this is your final year and you will be taking National Boards as well as the Western Regional Board Examinations for Dental Hygiene, Anesthesia and for some of you Restorative. Sometimes that is a fearful thought! The best way to manage that fear is to be prepared! Your school curriculum has provided a strong foundation for you to be successful in all your exams. Each of your faculty has offered you unique contributions to your overall skill and body of knowledge. You have been actively engaged in patient care for well over a year. This is your chance to "strut your stuff."



Through the years I have watched many students successfully complete the WREB exams. Two words of advice come to mind: preparation and focus.

Preparation can begin immediately:

1. Access the website [www.wreb.org](http://www.wreb.org). Find and download the candidate guides that pertain to the exams you will be taking. Begin to read them carefully to get the sense of the overall exam.
2. Pay special attention to the criteria your patient will need to meet for the dental hygiene exam. Begin to look at each patient you see in clinic to help you become comfortable with your ability to identify each criteria. Selecting the appropriate patient has a big influence on your success with the exam.
3. As you get closer to exam time, re-read the candidates guides. Pay special attention to the step-by-step process of the exam and the forms. As you read, picture yourself going through the process. Write down questions on anything that is not clear to you. You will have a chance to ask them at the orientation for the exam.

Focus can begin immediately and is especially important during the exam. Keep your focus on your patient's welfare. You have been providing services for all your patients in clinic. You know how to do it and do it well. When your mind wanders to fear of the exam, bring it back to the care you are providing for your patient. Focus takes practice. Focusing on your fears of the exam is actually selfish and has no place in professional care. Focusing on your patient is at the heart of your profession. When you feel that fear, use it as a trigger to change your focus to your patient's well-being.

With good preparation and a focus on your patient's best interest, you should experience success on your exams and proceed to join your colleagues as part of the dental hygiene profession.

Wishing you success!

## My Day as the "Fly on the Wall"

*by Denise Graves, 2007 Student Observer  
from Portland Community College*

I remember waking and being surprised that I was nervous and excited to attend the WREB orientation and exam. Being an observer left me with nothing to lose and a huge amount to gain. When I arrived at the orientation, there were lots of people waiting – all very quiet and looking very nervous. I asked a few of them what they were most nervous about going into the exam. Every person I asked said that having their patient qualify was their biggest worry. Concerns over having a backup and potential equipment malfunctions were also some things people mentioned. In the end, all they could do was be as prepared as possible.

The WREB orientation was geared perfectly for the up-coming dental hygienist. It made me laugh when they announced that the orientation was in a DVD presentation format so that all candidates got the same exact information – as individual as we would all like to be, the dental hygienist reputation precedes us! After the DVD, there is the opportunity to ask questions and the answers are helpful and also carefully worded.

The day of the exam, there was a level of intensity that I hadn't ever experienced before. Again, everyone was very quiet and focused on setting up their unit the way they wanted it and making sure their paperwork was in order. The Chief Examiner told me how essential it is to know your candidate packet and that usually the toughest part of the exam is choosing the right patient. There is a lot of time given to get your patient submitted with their two submissions, so be sure to take your time during this portion of the exam. Particularly if you are sharing a patient with another candidate, be sure to explore the quadrant you are submitting to be sure there was no confusion between you and the candidate you are sharing with. One examiner mentioned how easy it is to make sure your FMX is



*continued on page 4*

# Frequently-Asked Questions

by Kelly Reich, Dental Hygiene Director of Exam Administration and Development

Preparing for any of the WREB clinical examinations can be stressful, but it is possible to alleviate some stress by understanding the criteria and flow of the examination. Often, candidates call the WREB office or the schools inquiring about certain aspects of the examination, only to find out that their answers were in the guides or school information.

The following are questions frequently asked by candidates. Try to answer these questions after reading the guides and school information. Hopefully by completing this exercise, you will better understand the exam process.

*Hint*-Keep your newsletters and refer back to them prior to taking your examination. Good Luck!

1. My probe readings at Check-In are 5 and 6 mm. What if the pocket depths are greater than 7mm after scaling? Will I fail the examination?
2. Can the school provide or help me find a patient for the examination?
3. If a tooth in the treatment quadrant has decay or part of the tooth is missing, is the tooth disqualified?
4. Does the school provide side shields for the candidates? Are safety glasses required for my patient?
5. Will the anesthesia examiners let me know when I am scheduled to take the clinical local anesthesia examination? How will I know when to apply topical?
6. How do I know if my handpiece and equipment will work in the school's dental unit?
7. Is a backup patient necessary? Can we share a patient?
8. Due to unforeseen circumstances, my patient will not be able to get to the dental hygiene exam on time. Is it possible for me to take the exam on another day?
9. Do the restorative examiners use our instruments when grading?
10. If I passed the clinical local anesthesia exam earlier in the year, do I need to provide documentation at my dental hygiene exam to administer local anesthesia?
11. Can at least one of the qualifying surfaces of molar calculus be on a premolar?
12. My patient was rejected for not having enough qualifying calculus. What should I do?
13. I am ready to send my patient back for Check-Out. Do I need the Chief to check my paperwork again?
14. Does WREB want all four preps after I finish taking my restorative examination?

## Answers

1. Examiners assign the submitted quadrant for periodontal probing, understanding that the probe measurements at Check-Out may be greater than 7mm once the calculus is removed. The depth of the measurement is not evaluated at Check-Out, only the candidate's accuracy in measuring the pocket.
2. The schools do not provide referral lists or patients for any candidate. Part of your examination process is finding a patient that meets the oral criteria. Also, WREB does not endorse Procurement Agencies and discourages candidates from using these services to find a patient.
3. Only the decayed surface(s) of the tooth will be disqualified and will not count as qualifying surfaces. If a tooth is missing the lingual cusp, the other surfaces of the tooth may be used for qualifying sur-

faces. Hint: do not submit a quadrant that has decayed and/or fractured teeth.

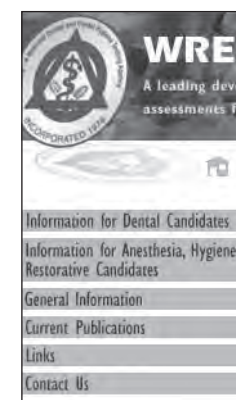
4. You must provide protective eyewear for your patient and yourself. This would include side shields if you choose to use them.
5. The local anesthesia examiners will notify you of your clinic time for the examination. If you fail the clinical section and wish to retake the examination at the same site, the examiners will accommodate you into the schedule as soon as possible. Make sure you have a money order ready and another patient for the retake. Please keep in mind that the flow of the examination is somewhat dependent upon the time it takes for you and others to complete your clinical exam. To help speed up the process, have your paperwork and tray set up, topical ready to be applied and know what is expected of you when the examiners approach.
6. Read ALL the school information prior to the exam. Everything you need to know regarding school equipment, rental policies, and which supplies are provided by the school is found in the school information. DO NOT wait until you are at the exam to find out if your handpieces will work in the school's dental unit.
7. A back-up plan is always good, no matter what you are doing. When you are taking a high stakes exam, have another patient available in case your first or alternate submission does not work. Do not rely on your classmates to share their patient. Sharing a patient is acceptable but sometimes your classmate may need additional teeth or a different quadrant for their submission. Please make sure that you both understand the problems that may arise when a patient is being shared.
8. In fairness to all candidates, WREB cannot make on-site exceptions for candidates and/or patients. Unfortunately, exam times or days cannot be changed to accommodate problems that may arise.
9. The restorative examiners do not use any of your instruments for grading.
10. You will need to provide documentation (WREB success card) showing proof that you successfully passed the local anesthesia exam. If you do not provide documentation, you will not be allowed to administer anesthesia and your exam treatment may be compromised.
11. In the treatment quadrant, qualifying calculus must be located on at least THREE surfaces of the permanent molars.
12. If you receive an Instructions to Candidate form (from the Chief) that states that your patient did not qualify due to insufficient calculus, do not panic. Remember, always exceed the oral criteria and submit more rather than less. Re-check your submitted quadrant; it may be that calculus is insufficient on the molars. It may be that you need to submit additional molar teeth; not premolars or anterior teeth.
13. The Chief will check your paperwork ONLY at Check-In. When you are ready for Check-Out, submit your patient.
14. WREB requires that you take all four preps out of your dentofrom and place them in the small envelope that is included in your candidate packet. Either the Chief Examiner or the assistant will need to observe you taking your teeth out of the dentofrom. This step is completed after the examiners have evaluated the restorations.



WREB hopes this article will give you some useful tips on having an efficient and enjoyable browsing experience.

## Navigation

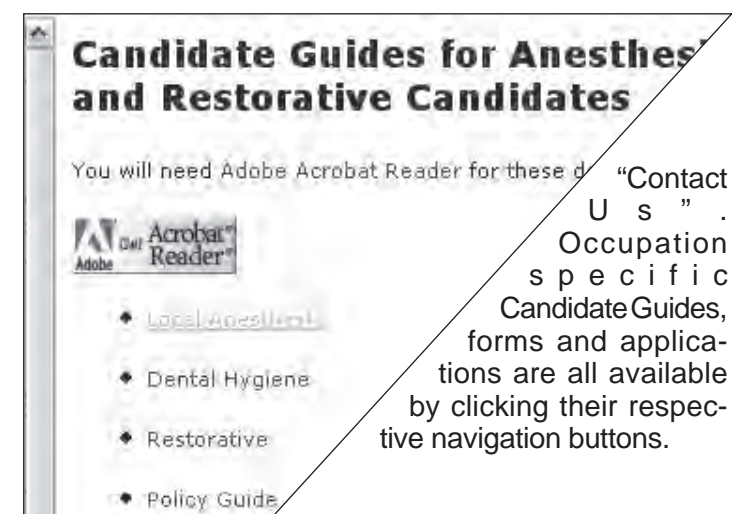
The WREBsite follows a fairly standard layout scheme to make user interaction as simple and efficient as possible. You will notice that the WREBsite is split into two frames for your browsing pleasure. The left frame is used for navigation and allows you to quickly access desired content while the right frame is where the selected content is displayed. If at any time you get lost or simply wish to return to the main page, click on the little green icon of a house located above the navigation.



## Content

The WREBsite is chock-full of useful information available 24 hours a day! Content is highly organized with options specifically for Dental,

Anesthesia, Dental Hygiene, and Restorative exams. Also available is general information such as our history, member boards and of course the ubiquitous "Links" and



## Application Tips

There are a few consistent mistakes made by applicants when applying for the WREB examination.

- 1) The online application functions best with PCs running Internet Explorer or Mozilla Firefox. You want to ensure that you are using the latest version of each. Macs or non-standard browsers such as Opera or Safari may result in the WREBsite operating incorrectly.
- 2) Adobe Acrobat Reader (free for download at www.adobe.com) is a **MUST** to view or print any of our forms and documents.
- 3) Breathe, slow down, and read all information carefully. Refund policies and the application process are clearly stated before the online applica-

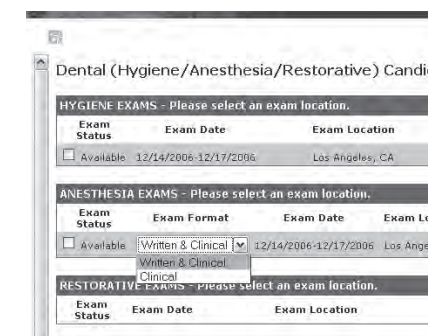
## Getting the most out of the WREBsite

tion begins and should not be a surprise to anybody.

- 4) Do not input spaces, dashes, or hyphens in your credit card numbers. I know it looks funny, but this is the **#1** cause for payment rejections.
- 5) If you forget or are unable to download the Online Application Forms after the application process, DON'T WORRY! They are available at any time under the "Exam Forms" link. Please keep in mind that the Online Application Forms are occupation specific.

## General Tips

- 1) Check the main page frequently. There are "NEWS" and "INFO" sections that are updated frequently.
- 2) Please be sure to double check which exams you are applying for before you hit the send button. We have many candidates who think they are applying for a June exam who clicked on the September exam at the same location. It is expensive for you and time-consuming for us to fix this mistake. Just take the time to proofread your application carefully before submitting.
- 3) The "NEWS" section will be the first place to announce when WREB begins accepting applications for the 2008 exam season.
- 4) Duplicate score card request forms are available under each of the occupation specific links. It is much faster to print the form from the WREBsite than having WREB mail you one!



If you have any questions, please feel free to contact your respective occupation department:

Anesthesia/Hygiene/Restorative Department  
hygieneinfo@wreb.org

Dental Department  
dentalinfo@wreb.org

Happy Browsing!

## The Dental Hygiene Staff Is Here to Serve You!

Our Dental Hygiene Department's first priority is the satisfaction of the candidates. We know board exams are stress to the *nth* degree. We want to assure you that we will continue to do our best to make your exam experience—from application to results—as painless as possible.

If you want to put a face to a name, below is a picture of our dental hygiene staff. From left, Robyn Krych and Nance Wabshaw.



### My Day *continued from page 1*

perfect before you submit your patient. With the oodles of other things that can cause point deductions, there is no reason for errors on your x-rays, and this is the time to do any retakes necessary.

The intensity level on the other side of the curtain is definitely different. The examiners side of the WREB is much more relaxed in mood, but still very stringent in knowing and following every rule to the slightest detail. I was impressed to hear that prior to the start of the exam, all examiners attend a calibration session where they feel for "WREB Calculus" and review all of the many protocols that go along with the exam.

I noticed a few things on the examiner side of the curtain that I found interesting as a future candidate. They all do everything the same way, particularly the E/I exam. I hadn't ever seen one given while the patient was sitting in an upright position. However, during their calibration session, it was decided that they would all do it that way. As frustrated as I have been learning some of the technical descriptive language for the many things that may be found in the oral cavity, I was happy to see that there are point deductions possible if you do not use technical language in your "chart notes". They also do not want notations of variants of normal.

The two things I walked away with that meant the most to me is that the 2nd year hygiene students need all the support and encouragement we as 1st year students can give them. This was as powerful a situation as I've ever been in and fortunately, candidates are surrounded by people who are there to help. I also left feeling great about the fact that the examiners, while you'll never see them, do everything possible to make sure your patient will qualify.

This was a great experience and I would encourage any first year interested in seeing what they're up for to take advantage of the opportunity.

## Let Someone Else Choose Your Patient?

Not only is finding a patient the most important part of your exam, it can also be the most frustrating.

WREB has heard over and over from candidates who were unsuccessful; comments like, "But my instructor checked my patient and said he was perfect!" or, "I paid big bucks for this patient and they guaranteed she would qualify" or, "My father is a dentist and he said this was a great patient."

As unfortunate as these remarks are, they indicate a lapse in judgment or perhaps just a lapse in self-confidence on the candidate's part. You have the Candidate Guide which clearly states the criteria for patient acceptance. Often, those you consult do not have that information or have only a cursory understanding of it. Regardless of outside reassurances, you will be the one to suffer the consequences if your patient does not qualify.

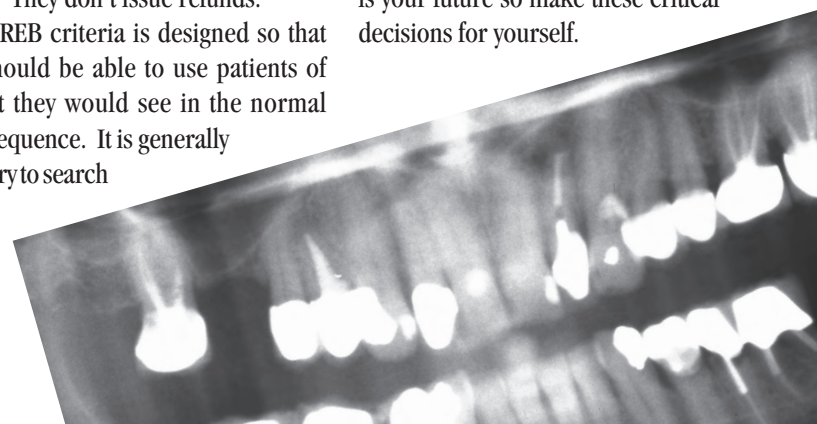
An emerging new issue is the presence of patient procurement agencies. These for-

profit organizations claim to have patients pre-screened and acceptable for board exams. They hawk their wares at exam sites for those who are frantically searching for a patient. They may imply that they have a relationship with WREB or special knowledge of WREB requirements. They do not. WREB does not endorse these companies, nor does it want them on the premises during any of our board exams. They will charge you a premium price for a patient who may not be acceptable. They don't issue refunds.

The WREB criteria is designed so that students should be able to use patients of record that they would see in the normal treatment sequence. It is generally not necessary to search

outside your own patient pool. If you are taking an

exam in another city, it may be necessary to obtain an outside patient. If so, Board candidates have been finding patients through friends, through school clinics, through homeless shelters, once in awhile, a workman at a school! The key is that the candidate screens the patient after thoroughly studying the WREB Candidate Guide. You are the best person to choose the best patient. Do not give over your clinical judgment to someone else who has no stake in passing the exam. It is your future so make these critical decisions for yourself.



## Dental Hygiene, Anesthesia, & Restorative 2008 Schedule

These are the dates we have at press time. Continue to watch our web site ([www.wreb.org](http://www.wreb.org)) for possible revisions.

| Exam Location                                      | Exam Date       | Deadline    | Exam Type & Fee                                    |
|--|-----------------|-------------|--|
| Portland Comm. College • Portland, Oregon          | March 1-2       | January 16  | anesthesia \$230                                   |
| Univ. of New Mexico • Albuquerque, New Mexico      | March 7-9       | January 22  | anesthesia \$230                                   |
| Weber State Univ. • Ogden, Utah                    | March 13-14     | January 28  | anesthesia \$235                                   |
| Phoenix College • Phoenix, Arizona                 | March 13-16     | January 28  | anesthesia \$225 & hygiene \$810                   |
| Salt Lake Comm. Coll. • Salt Lake City, Utah       | March 15        | January 30  | anesthesia \$250                                   |
| Rio Salado Comm. Coll. • Phoenix, Arizona          | March 15-16     | January 30  | anesthesia \$220                                   |
| Eastern WA Univ. • Spokane, Washington             | March 28-30     | February 12 | anesthesia \$235                                   |
| Lake WA Tech. Coll. • Kirkland, Washington         | April 3-6       | February 18 | anesthesia \$250 & restorative \$410               |
| University of Missouri • Kansas City, Missouri     | April 10-13     | February 25 | hygiene \$790                                      |
| Lane Community College • Eugene, Oregon            | April 12-13     | February 27 | anesthesia \$220                                   |
| Salt Lake Comm. Coll. • Salt Lake City, Utah       | April 17-19     | March 3     | anesthesia \$210 & hygiene \$825                   |
| Baylor College • Dallas, Texas                     | April 18-21     | March 4     | hygiene \$850                                      |
| University of Iowa • Iowa City, Iowa               | April 25-27     | March 11    | hygiene \$925                                      |
| Midwestern State University • Wichita Falls, Texas | April 25-28     | March 11    | Hygiene \$855                                      |
| Utah College of Dental Hygiene • Orem, Utah        | May 1-4         | March 17    | anesthesia \$235 & hygiene \$795                   |
| University of Texas • San Antonio, Texas           | May 2-5         | March 18    | hygiene \$850                                      |
| Rio Salado Comm. Coll. • Phoenix, Arizona          | May 2-5         | March 18    | anesthesia \$220 & hygiene \$790                   |
| Weber State Univ. • Ogden, Utah                    | May 7-10        | March 24    | anesthesia \$235 & hygiene \$795                   |
| University of Alaska • Anchorage, Alaska           | May 9-11        | March 25    | anesthesia \$220 & hygiene \$910                   |
| University of Texas • Houston, Texas               | May 15-18       | March 31    | hygiene \$850                                      |
| Phoenix College • Phoenix, Arizona                 | May 16-19       | April 1     | anesthesia \$225 & hygiene \$810                   |
| University of Oklahoma • Oklahoma City, Oklahoma   | May 30-June 2   | April 15    | hygiene \$825                                      |
| Lake WA Tech. Coll. • Kirkland, Washington         | June 5-9        | April 21    | anesthesia \$250, hygiene \$845, restorative \$410 |
| College of Southern Nevada • Las Vegas, Nevada     | June 6-8        | April 22    | anesthesia \$230 & hygiene \$845                   |
| MSU • Great Falls, Montana                         | June 7-8        | April 23    | anesthesia \$225 & hygiene \$805                   |
| Eastern WA Univ. • Spokane, Washington             | June 7-10       | April 23    | anesthesia \$235 & hygiene \$835                   |
| Univ. of New Mexico • Albuquerque, New Mexico      | June 13-15      | April 29    | anesthesia \$230 & hygiene \$845                   |
| Idaho State University • Pocatello, Idaho          | June 18-21      | May 5       | anesthesia \$235, hygiene \$800, restorative \$405 |
| OHSU • Portland, Oregon                            | June 21-25      | May 7       | anesthesia \$250 & hygiene \$875                   |
| Apollo College • Boise, Idaho                      | August 21-24    | July 7      | anesthesia \$235 & hygiene \$805                   |
| Lake WA Tech. Coll. • Kirkland, Washington         | September 3-7   | July 21     | anesthesia \$250, hygiene \$845, restorative \$410 |
| Univ. of New Mexico • Albuquerque, New Mexico      | September 13-15 | July 30     | anesthesia \$230 & hygiene \$845                   |
| Univ. of Southern CA • Los Angeles, California     | December 12-15  | October 28  | anesthesia \$260 & hygiene \$910                   |
| Phoenix College • Phoenix, Arizona                 | December 18-20  | November 3  | anesthesia \$225                                   |