



NORTHWESTERN MEDICALREVIEW

History of Northwestern Medical Review

Dr. Jahan Eftekar founded Northwestern Learning Center in 1986. The company offered a variety of test-preparation courses in addition to osteopathic and allopathic medical board exams. These included several other licensing and college-admission examinations, including but not limited to Nursing-RN, GRE, MCAT, LSAT, GMAT, DAT, SAT, ACT, and mid-management examination for the civil service tests of the State of Michigan. In 1999, in response to changing market trends, the company restructured and streamlined all of its resources by focusing only on Medical Board exam preparation courses for the COMLEX/NBOME (osteopathic) and USMLE/NBME (allopathic) boards. To reflect this new evolution, the name of the company was also changed, from Northwestern Learning Center to the more descriptive name of Northwestern Medical Review.

Origin of Our Name

Dr. Eftekar originally used the name Northwest Learning Center, but shortly thereafter revised it to Northwestern Learning Center. It was his vision to have his educational center facilitate the passage of students from one level of their education to a higher and more prosperous level. The name "Northwest" was used with reference to the Northwest Passage, the mythical waterway that was believed to connect the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, uniting the east and west of North America together to allow for trade and greater prosperity. The second reason for this choice was the fact that Northwestern Learning Center was incorporated in Michigan. When colonies of pilgrims settled on the northeast coast of America, for many years Michigan was considered the extreme northwestern edge of the known new world. Accordingly, the slogan that was coined for Northwestern Learning Center was "Your Passage to Excellence". Additionally, the Statue of Liberty, with her torch and book, symbolized the concept that education and attainment of higher academic levels enlighten individuals and lead them to a more purposeful and meaningful life. In the year 2000, with the new name of Northwestern Medical Review (NMR), the slogan was changed to "Your Prescription for Excellence".

* The official newsletter of the company since its inception has always been named "Northwestern Passage."

<p>1986 - 1999 <i>Your passage to Excellence!</i></p>	
<p>2000 - 2015 <i>Your prescription for Excellence!</i></p>	
<p>Present</p>	





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Development of the TALLP Strategies and Teaching Methodology

1986-1992

One of the many factors that sets Northwestern Medical Review apart from similar organizations is our unique teaching methodology. From 1986 to 1992, Dr. Eftekar offered one- and two-day review sessions for the MCAT, Medical Board, and Nursing Board examinations. He developed the acronym **TALLP**, which stands for **Test-taking Applications of Logic, Language, and Psychology**, in order to facilitate for his students a deeper understanding of both the structure of the exams and the actual test items that students would encounter on their exams. Students were trained on how to approach test questions through the eyes of the test-makers, and how to become aware of the personal psychological biases that interfere with choosing correct answers and eliminating incorrect ones. Students were trained to pay attention to the different language components of each test item – leading statements, quantifiers, qualifiers, structure of foils – in order to rule out confounding information and focus on the pertinent statements in each item. After recognizing the psychological and linguistic aspects of test items, students were trained on how to compare and contrast certain foils within each test item by using the basic principles of logic, and relating those principles to key phrases and statements within the question stems. In addition to these training components, students in Dr. Eftekar’s courses were also provided with tips on how to deal with fatigue, potential reading comprehension errors, hypoglycemia during long testing sessions, and other deleterious aspects of test-taking that can adversely affect the performance of students who study for long periods of time.

Evolution of the TALLP Teaching Methodology

1993 - Present

Starting in 1992, the TALLP methodology was gradually integrated into our live subject review sessions for the medical board preparation courses. This integration of simulated test items throughout the subject review sessions was enthusiastically received by students, as this approach was making content areas more exam-relevant.

At the time, the Step/Level 1 medical board exams were only offered twice during the year and in two back-to-back days in early June and August. As such, almost all American second-year medical students were taking their live lecture review classes within a very narrow time period from May 10 to May 31. Our format at the time was to offer very intensive 15-day, 8-hour per day sessions known as “Review Camps” during the last half of the month of May, or in early August. There was a high volume of materials to cover on a daily basis, and students in the courses had the added challenge of having to take their actual exams immediately after the end of our courses. It became obvious that maintaining attention span and maximizing retention of concepts throughout the Review Camp was critical in order for our students to get as much utility out of our courses as possible. Our approach had to not only educate students as much as possible, but also maintain a high level of energy and be structured to teach through multiple learning styles in order to engage students and eliminate the potential for boredom.





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Addressing the Needs of Visual and Multisensory Modality Learners: The NMR philosophy has always been based on the assumption that students who fail their board exams often learn more effectively through visual and word associations, and multi-sensory instructional methodologies. To address these challenges, NMR began to employ an aggressive Socratic method of teaching, formulating important concepts and notions into a question-pause-answer format instead of simply using outlines. Furthermore, the content areas were increasingly augmented with unique and often humorous mnemonics interspersed throughout lectures in order to keep students' attention.

By 1991 there had been many advances in computerized multimedia instructional technology, particularly the development of the first generation of Microsoft PowerPoint. At this time, NMR began converting its courses into the PowerPoint format. At the same time, we also began striving to involve students in their learning process by modifying our textbooks into a workbook format. This provided NMR live courses with another unique contrast to other available courses - developing PowerPoint instructional materials *first*, and then developing our review books to accompany them. As Microsoft gradually streamlined and improved its PowerPoint software, NMR introduced its new generation of animated mnemonics and cartoons that, in addition to high quality graphics, also employed sound clips to engage aural learners.

By 1996, all these aspects had become part of NMR's teaching methodology, which has led to the acronym TALLP becoming more of a historical appellation. TALLP now has a much broader meaning for us and for our students, because it now stands for a program that is constantly evolving medical board exam preparation in order to have the most comprehensive teaching methodology available anywhere.

