

Lee Burgess:

Welcome back to the Bar Exam Toolbox podcast. Today we are excited to be speaking with Rebecca Petrilli from [Themis Bar Review](#), to talk about our top 10 tips for using your bar review program to better writing and MBE scores. Your Bar Exam Toolbox hosts are Alison Monahan and Lee Burgess, that's me. We're here to demystify the bar exam experience, so you can study effectively, stay sane, and hopefully pass and move on with your life. We're the co-creators of the [Law School Toolbox](#), the [Bar Exam Toolbox](#), and the career-related website [CareerDicta](#). Alison also runs [The Girl's Guide to Law School](#). If you enjoy the show, please leave a review or rating on your favorite listening app, and check out our sister podcast, the [Law School Toolbox podcast](#). And if you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out to us. You can reach us via the [contact form](#) on BarExamToolbox.com, and we'd love to hear from you. And with that, let's get started.

This episode is proudly brought to you by Themis Bar Review – the gold standard in bar exam preparation. Are you preparing for the July 2024 bar exam? We understand the importance and difficulty of this period for law students. That's where Themis steps in. Themis is dedicated to ensuring your success on the bar exam, offering comprehensive course materials, a flexible study schedule, and consistently high pass rates. And now, Themis has a special offer for Bar Exam Toolbox podcast listeners. If you sign up for their July 2024 bar review course, you can get a \$500 discount using the promo code BAREXAMTB500. That's BAREXAMTB500. This offer is valid until midnight, Central Standard Time on May 20th, 2024.

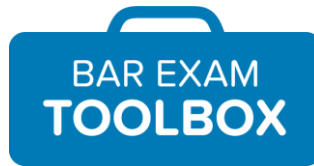
Welcome back. Today we are excited to be speaking with Rebecca Petrilli from Themis Bar Review, to talk about our top 10 tips for using your bar review program to better writing and MBE scores. So thank you so much for joining us today. We're always excited to have guests on the podcast.

Rebecca Petrilli:

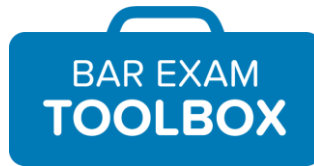
Thank you, Lee. I'm so glad to be here.

Lee Burgess:

So, when I was coming up with our ideas of what I wanted to talk about today, I love a good top 10 list, which anyone who listens to the podcast regularly knows, and I thought it would be fun to go through a list of really how to make the most of your bar review program, because so often I think students are focused on which program they should sign up for, and then they just sign up and go from there. And I think there are ways to maximize your experience and hopefully give yourself a higher likelihood of passing. And I think some of these tips will help. So, should we jump right in?



- Rebecca Petrilli: Yeah, that sounds great. I think you're right on the money with that.
- Lee Burgess: Oh, but before we do that, I should let you introduce yourself and say what you do. Why should you be here talking about a top 10 list? That's probably the best question to start with.
- Rebecca Petrilli: That's a great question. So, I am a Themis director, which means that I work with students in law school and manage student rep teams at those schools. I also work on our marketing team and I help students while they're studying for the bar to make sure that they're getting the most out of our course. So, I do think I'm especially qualified to talk about this. I also was a Themis rep when I was in law school. So I was a Themis rep for three years, I used it for the MPRE, I used it for the bar exam. So I've been working for Themis for a while, but I also have deep knowledge of it on the student side as well.
- Lee Burgess: Well, you do sound totally qualified, so we should just dive in and get to our list. Alright, so number one on my list is to work your [study schedule](#) and keep up with it, because getting a study schedule is just step one. You really have to work it and make sure that you're doing what's necessary. So, could you share with our listeners, if they're not familiar about how Themis works, how does the study schedule work? Is it dynamic at all? And how do you use it to stay on top of your tasks?
- Rebecca Petrilli: Absolutely. I think that is a great thing to start with. So, to zoom out a little bit, no matter [what bar prep company you choose](#), you're going to have this really big, maybe a little overwhelming the first time you look at it schedule of tasks, and it's really important to familiarize yourself with those tasks, the different types of tasks in your study list, what that means – some of these terms and types of questions are going to be unfamiliar to you – and really make sure that you have a knowledge of what you will be doing in kind of the holistic sense before you actually dive into studying. And then once you do dive into the study process, you don't want to just follow the study schedule exactly as it's written without any kind of critical thinking about your study process. You want to do regular self-assessment and make sure that you are utilizing study tactics that work with your unique learning style, that are not making you expend so much time and energy on one thing that you're not able to properly learn the other things that you need to be learning. So, it's a continual journey of figuring out what works best for you. What works best for you when you start studying may not be the same as what's working best for you as you get towards the end of your bar study. So, staying on top of your schedule is much more than just checking the boxes.



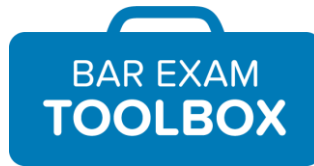
Lee Burgess: Unfortunately. Wouldn't it be nice if we could just check the boxes and be sure that we were where we needed to be? It's just not that easy.

Rebecca Petrilli: Yeah, that would be great. So, Themis's course is designed to give you a dynamic study schedule. We have what we call an "adaptive calendar", and that is going to allocate all of your assignments across the course depending on your chosen start date. Our course opens for full access in March, so you can choose a start date anytime between the open date in March and basically whenever you want. The recommended study start date is sometime mid-May – this year it's May 20th – for a 10-week full-time study schedule. Regardless of when you pick a start date, you're going to have your tasks allocated evenly-ish across the duration of your course, and every night at midnight in your time zone, it's going to update and shift it around a little bit to make sure that you are, one, staying on track to get to 100% course completion; and two, you're not going to come back to a super overloaded schedule if you took a day off, or you're not going to have nothing to do if you were really in the zone and working ahead that day. We also have lots of progress tracker metrics and data analytics within the course that are going to help you stay on track and stay involved in that self-assessment that I talked about.

Lee Burgess: Alright. Tip number two is a mistake I think that is commonly made by bar takers. No matter what program you're working, that's whether you work with me, that's whether you work with a commercial bar provider, is you must turn in your writing assignments for feedback, because feedback is incredibly important. And do you see that this is a mistake that some of the Themis students make as well?

Rebecca Petrilli: Absolutely. So, in your Themis course, you're going to have eight graded essays assigned to you throughout the duration of your study time. And then you can do as many additional graded essays as you want, but at a minimum, you want to make sure that you do those eight. And you want to do them in – I think this is the biggest mistake that people make – it's less not turning in your writing for feedback, and more trying to lump all of the writing for feedback into two or three blocks in your study time, so then you're turning in two or three graded essays at once, getting all this feedback, and then trying to implement a lot of feedback into the next couple of weeks of your study process, rather than saying, "Okay, I'm going to try my best to turn this in as close to the assigned date as possible, so that I can take the feedback I'm getting and really incorporate it into my study process over the next couple of weeks."

Lee Burgess: I do think this idea of turning in work early to maximize the power of feedback is a really important one. I think that so often bar studiers think, "Oh, I have to



wait until I've mastered the material" or, "I have to wait until I'm ready to take a three-hour mock exam to be able to do that practice." But the issue is, let's say it's a 10-week prep cycle and you wait four weeks to get feedback – well, that means you've spent four weeks not getting feedback and not refining your work and practicing – hopefully you're still practicing – but practicing habits that you may need to then undo. So, that early feedback I think is very powerful to inform the rest of your study. Also, it's the only way you can tell if the activities that you're doing are actually working. So, if you are sitting and doing lectures, maybe you're working on your own study materials, you're doing flashcards – if you do some practice and you have just been studying an area of the law and you cannot answer a question, that is also important knowledge to have, because that means you need to evaluate the way you're spending your time or the way that you're using your tool, and pivot. The longer you wait to give yourself that feedback, as yucky as it might feel, it's going to really inform how you spend your time. So, it's a place of vulnerability. I get that, but you really have to do it early and often to maximize the impact.

Rebecca Petrilli: I think that is such an excellent point, and to build on that a little bit, in your Themis course, you'll have a dedicated essay grader. So the same person is going to grade your essays, meaning you're going to get really comprehensive feedback that builds upon the feedback that you got on past essays. So, the earlier you start getting that feedback, the sooner you're going to be able to recognize strengths, weaknesses, patterns in your writing, consistent areas where you're missing the mark, other areas where you're doing really well. And the sooner you have that information, the easier it is to really get a strong handle on it by the time you sit for the bar.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, that's a very good point. Alright, let's move on to tip number three, which is to learn from performance metrics and use feedback wisely to improve performance. So we've been talking about this a little bit, but I think one of the benefits that some of these large providers have, both for essays and multiple-choice especially, are deep performance metrics if you want to get in there and really get into the data. And I like data, so it can be fun to get in there. But how should students utilize what their course is telling them, to look for flags that things might not be going well?

Rebecca Petrilli: That is so important, and I think a lot of students do miss this component of their course. Because there's so much going on when you're studying for the bar, it's hard to be like, "Yeah, I need to go in and look at the intricacies of my MBE performance." But it's one of the best things that you can do for yourself. The same thing is true of essays, but I think we already covered the essay process and that feedback and information. But when it comes to your MBEs, in



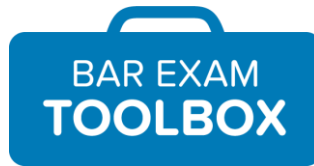
the Themis course, you will have access to really granular MBE metrics, and that's going to look like a page that gives you your overall percent average, the time you spent per question on average, how many questions you've completed, and then it's going to give you the percent average for every single subject. And then you're going to be able to go into each of your individual question sets and look at your performance there. And in the subject and set breakdowns, you're going to see those things divided by subtopic, you're going to see how long you spent on each individual question, whether you got it right or wrong. You can click straight into the answer explanation and review it from there. And you're going to really be able to see, "Okay, maybe I'm averaging a 50% in Contracts, but I'm scoring really well in X part of Contracts, and I'm scoring a 36% average in Y section of Contracts." And you're going to know at that point, "Okay, I don't need to relearn all of Contracts; I just need to really focus on this component of it." And I think taking that kind of mindset and seeing where you need to refine, versus feeling overwhelmed about the idea that you're not performing as well as you want to be in a given subject or a given question type – that can really take a lot of the pressure off and make it easier to progress.

Lee Burgess:

I also think it's important to do enough questions so those metrics are really meaningful, because often when I talk to students who have failed, I'll hear, "Well, I did 400 multiple-choice questions" or, "I did 500 multiple-choice questions." And I'm like, "That's great. You need to be doing thousands, not hundreds." Because even if you just do 400, you're really not even getting the benefit of the back end of these tools that are going to give you all of this information. You need to do the practice to get better at the MBE – there's no question about that. But metrics don't mean anything if you haven't done enough questions. You have to do the questions to be able to get the data back.

Rebecca Petrilli:

That is very true. And with that data that you'll get from doing enough questions, you're going to not only get exposure to a lot of questions; you're going to see all of the different question types, you're going to see different patterns and how the MBE is constructed. And that is all going to inform you on test day and give you a leg up to guess, if you will, on questions where you're struggling with the law a little bit, because you have a 25% chance to get any single MBE question right. If you understand the logistics behind the construction of these questions because you've seen 2,000-2,500 questions in your study process, you're going to be a lot better of a guesser. So, I think it really serves you from every angle. You're learning the black-letter law while you're doing these MBE questions, especially if you're reviewing the answer explanations while you do it. You're getting more comfortable with the idea of taking these questions within the specified timeframes that you need to work



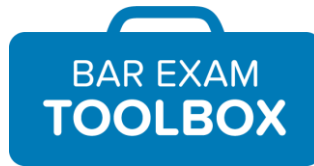
within. And then you're also, like I said, going to make yourself a slightly better guesser. So it's a win all around, even though it is a challenge when you're actually doing it.

Lee Burgess: It is, it's a lot of questions. I remember the morning I sat for the MBE, which was more years ago than I'd like to admit now, my dad did call me and said, "Just remember, the answer is all on the page." And I was like, "I don't know that makes me feel better, Dad, but I appreciate the feedback."

Rebecca Petrilli: I actually really like that. I wish I had thought of that while I was studying, because you're right, you have everything there. And I struggled with the MBE. The MBE was not my friend, I did much better on the essays. But I think that mindset of, the information is in front of you; you just need to know how to work with it – that's really key. That's a great tip.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, wisdom from Lee's lawyer dad, what can you say? Alright, tip number four, which shows that not all bar providers are created equal, in my opinion, is that I do believe it's important to use a multiple-choice program for the MBE that does include the real licensed MBE questions, along with other questions, because those of us who have licensed the MBE questions, myself included, know that there are not thousands of them. And if you need to do thousands of them, the other questions have to go from somewhere. But I do think it's important that students interact with these real licensed questions, and you need to ask your bar provider if they have real licensed questions. So, does Themis use real licensed questions?

Rebecca Petrilli: We absolutely do. And actually, this gives me a great opportunity to talk about the [UWorld MBE QBank](#). So, [UWorld](#) is our parent company, and UWorld is really well known in the medical space and in some other spaces for preparation questions – QBanks – that really give you everything that you need for whatever exam you're taking. And our UWorld MBE QBank gives students, first of all, access to over 1,375 licensed questions. And on top of that, it allows you to build custom question sets. There are over 2,000 questions in the UWorld MBE QBank. When you combine what's in the Themis course and what's in the UWorld MBE QBank, you have access to over 4,000 questions, including all of those licensed questions, like I mentioned. And you're able to build custom quiz sets that are based on subtopic. Obviously, you pick the topic; however many different subtopics you want to work on, you get to pick the number of questions that you're working on. And this is a great way – going back to those MBE analytics, once you figure out what your strengths and weaknesses are, you can hone in even further on those and use the licensed questions while you're at it.



Lee Burgess: Yeah. If you don't know if your bar review provider licenses the questions, you should ask, because the answer to that question is probably "No", to be honest.

Rebecca Petrilli: Yes, very true. And it is my understanding that Themis has the most licensed questions of any commercial bar prep vendor.

Lee Burgess: Awesome. Okay, tip number five. We're halfway there. Make sure you are taking time to memorize the law. And this is another one that I hear students talk about when they are unsuccessful with the bar, is they can often get caught up in doing passive activities, like listening to lectures, thinking that they'll just wake up one morning and that the knowledge will be in their brains, which unfortunately does not seem to happen as often as we think. I am practicing my French, and I'll tell you, I every day hope that the same thing will happen to my French, and it doesn't either. So, it's not just specific to the bar exam. So, what does Themis do to support students to make sure they are taking time to practice memorizing the law?

Rebecca Petrilli: Well, before I talk about that, I want to mention... You said studying French, and one of the only ways to really learn a foreign language is to immerse yourself in it as much as possible. And I think that is true here. When you are learning the black-letter law, even though you went to law school, a lot of this is conceptually not what we would normally be grappling with. It is a very different type of subject material, and immersing yourself in it as much as possible is huge. And that's why most people are studying full-time for the bar exam, trying to give themselves as much exposure to this material as possible. Now, Themis supports you while you are studying in a number of ways. We have, first of all, short lecture videos. They give you subtopics of the subject that you're working on so that you are able to get more bite-sized pieces of information and you're not expected to focus on a two and a half, three-hour lecture without knowing where to take a break. We also have fill-in-the-blank lecture handouts that you can follow along with the lectures, and that was one of the best things for me when I was studying for the bar, because it's so easy to zone out when you're listening to a lecture. But if you are listening to somebody speak and you're engaged with what they're saying because you have to fill in these blanks, you are so much more likely to stay focused and remember what you are learning. We also have a handful of black-letter law assessment questions at the end of each video chapter. So, you're testing your retention of the material, your comprehension of the material, and you're able to know pretty quickly, "Yes, I feel pretty good about that" or, "I only got half of these black-letter law questions right. Maybe I should review the lecture handout" or, "I missed them all. Maybe I should re-watch that lecture video entirely." So, those are a couple of the things that you do. We also have our course set up in a

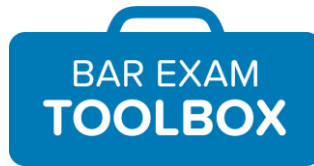


way that's taking you through lectures, and then practice questions and essays and things that are getting you engaged with the material, rather than having... You're not going to just watch all the lectures and then start practicing. So, you should be doing practice questions, practice essays early on in your course to make sure that you are engaging with the material from the very beginning. The more engagement you have with the material as you're moving through, the quicker the memorization is going to come. And I think it's also really important to do intentional memorization practice using techniques that worked for you in law school. Studying for the bar is not the time to reinvent the wheel. If making flashcards has never worked for you before, now is probably not the time to try to learn that skill and make it effective for you. Rely on the tactics that you used when you were studying for exams and look back on what classes you got the best grades in. How did you study for those? Use those tactics here. A mistake that I see people make a lot is trying to get through the lectures as quickly as possible, and then it's four weeks before the bar exam and they haven't done any substantive memorization practice and they're trying to cram it all into just a few weeks. You want to do everything you can to avoid that. And I will give the caveat that it will not stick for a while. You will be doing memorization practice, you will be trying to engage with this material, and you're going to feel so frustrated because you're scoring 40% on your MBEs, or whatever it may be. But the practice is the process. And everything that you do leading up to the bar exam is just practice for you to take that test.

Lee Burgess:

I think that's all really great. I also think that students should keep in mind that what you're really doing is putting memorization deposits in the bank. We've talked a lot with the founder of [Spaced Repetition](#) as a different type of idea of how to memorize material. And whether or not spaced repetition works for you, it's interesting. You should listen to some of our podcast listeners if you want to learn more about it. But the idea that it's about the consistency every day of reviewing and drilling, and that is how we really learn in the most efficient way, I think is something that can be lost. It's not about spending two hours in front of your outline and saying, "This is when I'm going to memorize Contracts." It really is, what are you going to memorize today, and you're going to build on that tomorrow, and you're going to review it again. It's really this step-by-step kind of building over time. It's not one day that creates bar exam magic; it's the compilation of all the days together. And I think when you get frustrated about memorization, or you are hitting that 40% and you wish it wasn't 40%, if you can keep in mind that it's deposits in the bank, you are systematically working through all this material to get to where you need to be – it can be a little easier to weather some of that frustration, because it's not just one day of work. It's every day building on each other.



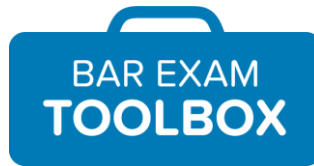


Rebecca Petrilli:

That is so true. And I think on top of that, it's important to give your brain time to rest and allow yourself that space to process the material you worked on that day, so that you can come back into your studying the following day. You'll be tired when you're studying for the bar – I think that's just part of the experience – but whatever you can do to allow your brain to wind down at the end of the night, do something that feels good – if that's exercising or reading a book or whatever it is that's going to help you calm down after a stressful day of studying, so that you can then get decent sleep and move into your next day of studying with a fresh mind – that's going to help the memorization process so, so, so much.

Lee Burgess:

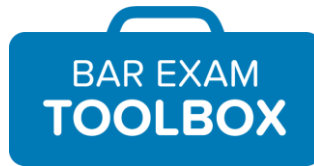
Which is almost like you knew one of our other tips that I'll just dive into right now, which is take breaks, because that is so important. We are just of one mind on this one, breaks are incredibly important. You have micro breaks that need to happen within your study day, because most people cannot focus for more than 90 minutes, and then it often gets shorter after that. Anyone who struggles with attention deficit issues is likely not even able to do that 90 minutes. Ninety minutes for those of us in the modern world, for any of us, is a pretty big challenge, if you turn off all your devices and just do one thing. So, taking micro breaks is important, but also, like you said, being a whole person, taking care of yourself, sleeping, taking time to spend with friends and family, walking your dog, go on a hike. I studied for the bar in very foggy San Francisco during the summer, and so my best friend would drive me to the sunshine on the weekend. That was our thing, because it was just so depressing. It was a very foggy, cold summer and you only have to drive like 30 minutes away. I now live in the sunshine, outside of San Francisco, but we would drive and just go hiking because I desperately needed vitamin D, and then I could go back and study later. But that break was incredibly important. So, really being honest with yourself about what you need and not isolating yourself from the people in your life that you love, and planning around important things so you can still be a whole person and participate in life, I think it's really important. So, we'll stick that in there. We'll call that tip number six, is take plenty of breaks. Alright, so after taking breaks, you also want to make sure though that you are taking plenty of time to study, and be honest about how much time you're studying and even track your time if necessary. So, Rebecca, my business partner Alison and I were recently doing a [podcast on habits](#) and we were talking about how many minutes in a day you have. We've been reading this case study where they were talking about the 1,000-minute rule, this idea that you have around a thousand minutes a day to do with what you wish. Every day time is like diamonds, not like sand, right? And this idea of, do you know how your thousand minutes are spent? And I think that question can be very pertinent when you're studying for the bar, because folks think, "Oh well, I'm studying all



the time." I hear that: "I studied as much as I possibly could." And I'm like, "Well, that's cool. Were you really studying? Was your phone off? Were you sitting? Were you taking micro breaks? Did you track how many hours you were actually studying? Or were you just commiserating with everyone in the library? What was actually happening?" It can be tricky sometimes to be incredibly honest with yourself about what's actually happening to make sure you have enough time to study. So, that's the day-to-day, and then there is the overall 10 weeks or longer, right? As you mentioned, full-time study is typically around 10 weeks, but if you are studying part-time, you may need more time. If you are a foreign-trained attorney that isn't familiar with this law, if you get extended time, there are lots of different things you want to consider. Running out of time and not having enough time to study seems like it shouldn't be a thing, but it really is a thing for a lot of people.

Rebecca Petrilli:

Yeah, it absolutely is. And I love your point about being very intentional with your time, because I will also talk to students who are like, "I'm studying for 10 hours a day." Well, if you were studying for 10 hours a day and putting in actual focused work, first of all, your body would probably not be able to sustain 10 hours of focused work in a day. And you would be seeing maybe not hugely different results, but you would be seeing different results than what you're seeing. I get that frustration a lot: "I'm spending all this time and my MBE scores are not improving." It's not just about the time. The time is so, so, so important, but it's also about, are you using your time efficiently? Yes, you have to study enough, but you also need to be studying in a way that is beneficial to you. I mentioned this earlier, lean into your learning style. Don't spend three hours reading a 100-page outline. For most students, that's not an effective study method. It's going to be much more effective for you to engage in – for me, for example – handwriting. I learn things so, so, so well if I'm writing them down by hand. So, I would look at the MBE answer explanations and take notes on the nuance of the law that I was learning through that – things that I didn't know. Or even if I got the question right and I was like, "I don't really know why I got that question right." I'm figuring out why to make sure I'm learning the law. So that's one example of using your time effectively. I think tracking your time is a great idea. I think also setting yourself up with a really regimented study routine is a very good way of setting yourself up for success. I had a friend that I studied with. We met up every day at the same coffee shop. It took us a little while to find our study spot, and then once we found it, we were there every single day to the point where they started giving us free coffee. They were like, "You're in here every day", which was great; we obviously loved that. And having somebody to hold me accountable to showing up between 9:00 and 9:30 every morning, and knowing that once the study day was done, that I could have my evenings to myself, really gave me a lot of incentive to use those hours much

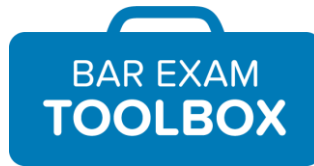


more effectively. And so finding what that looks like for you as the student is going to be a huge part of this. And tracking your time, not just in terms of hours, but in terms of, "What did I just spend this last 15 or 20 minutes working on?" I recommend for people on Sunday evenings or Monday mornings, that's when you should do that self-assessment and review the previous week and say, "Okay, here's what I did." Even if you're not tracking your time in 15-minute increments: "What did I do? How did it affect me? Do I feel like it's working? Are there things I need to change?" And then you can go into the next week with a better idea of how you want to spend your time.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, I think that's all incredibly important. We did an interesting podcast – maybe it was the same one, I can't remember. But we were talking about Adam Grant's new book, [Hidden Potential](#). It's actually sitting on my desk. I don't know if you've read it yet.

Rebecca Petrilli: No, but I heard you talk about it in the podcast with Michele.

Lee Burgess: Yes. It's like my new thing, because he is talking about learning styles in it. So we'll link to that podcast if you want to hear me talk about it more from notes and not just what I remember off the top of my head. But one of the things he talks about in there is the importance of really testing yourself and [making yourself uncomfortable](#) and doing the hard study tests. And I think when we talk about giving yourself plenty of time to study, tracking your time and being honest about how you're using your time, this idea of, are you doing activities that are getting you closer to your goal and are you putting out effort? Because I think that 10 hours of passive study can be so comforting. If you're super comfortable, then that typically means that it's not going well – if you were just like, "Yeah, I know everything", you're not studying the stuff that you're the most challenged by. This stuff is not easy. We all have subjects that we know better than others. If you are just happening to rock the subject you did your Law Review article on – that's not a great barometer of what's actually happening. So, I think checking in with yourself and saying, "Am I doing the heavy lifting? Am I challenging myself? Am I doing things to allow myself to make mistakes? Am I [learning through those mistakes](#)?" You have to check in with yourself about that, because the hours can just disappear without the heavy lifting actually happening. It's crazy to think about if you're thinking about studying for the bar and you might be saying like, "Lee, that is just not even possible. If you're studying for 10 hours, you're going to be exhausted and you're going to have been so productive." And the answer is, unfortunately not always. It depends on what you do in those 10 hours. We've all seen it. We've all seen it over the years.



Rebecca Petrilli: Definitely.

Lee Burgess: Alright, now tip number eight. We are winding it down of our top 10 list. Tip number eight is to ask for help and use all the available resources available for you. So, sometimes your school might have resources, sometimes you might have to find outside resources, like what my team typically does. But also it sounds like Themis has resources that maybe students always don't utilize. So, can you share with us a little bit about the resources that Themis builds in, so students can ask for help if they need it?

Rebecca Petrilli: Yeah, that's actually one of the best features of our course, in my opinion. We have what we call a "message center", and you can direct questions to study strategies, graded essay, customer service, etc. We have a two-business day turnaround time on those, so you're getting really consistent and quick feedback on whatever your issues may be. And you'll also have a link where you can set up a call with an attorney director like me throughout the entirety of the course. So, you can check in and say, "I'm struggling with X, Y, and Z" or, "I would love to do kind of an overview of what I've been doing so far and try to find ways to optimize that", etcetera. So, we are really accessible and available for you during this study time. Even though this is a self-guided course to a degree, you're never going to be left hanging. We want to make sure that you're using the platform to your full potential to get what you need out of it.

Lee Burgess: And I would assume the same advice would apply that we were talking about with getting feedback, is don't wait too long to ask for help, because the help is going to be more meaningful the earlier you engage it.

Rebecca Petrilli: Absolutely, yeah. If you are struggling with how to prioritize your time in the beginning, you are going to be so much better off if you ask for help within the first couple of weeks of your study period, versus waiting until week six or seven and realizing that you've only gotten through 20% of the course. And then you're going to really be not having fun for the rest of your study time. So, everything you can do to get that feedback early is going to make the entire process go more smoothly.

Lee Burgess: Yes. Alright, well, that leads us well into tip number nine, which is if everything is not going smoothly, you have to make a plan for how to triage if you get behind. And this isn't always that you have made mistakes. This can be you get COVID and you end up not being able to study for a week and a half, or something happens in your family and your attention is pulled away. I've had students have their appendix out. You name it. I've been doing this long enough, I've heard all of the things that can happen to derail your studying. So it is not



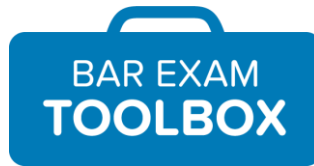
just that it's necessarily going badly, but whatever is taking you off track, you have to make a plan to triage. So, how can Themis's students utilize the tool? Let's say you're into that last month, you're into that last few weeks, you are heavily behind on your study schedule. What would you do?

Rebecca Petrilli:

So, I would take a few steps here. First, I would reach out to your attorney director and set up a call. That would be the first thing I suggest, because you want to have somebody who has experience doing this, having already sat for a bar exam. All of our attorney directors are attorneys, so they've sat for a bar exam, they know what it's like. And they're going to be able to give you actionable advice and they're going to hopefully help you feel a little bit better about it, give you some words of affirmation, etcetera, to make it seem a little bit less scary. And then you're going to want to make sure that you get through all of your substantive lecture videos. I know I said earlier, don't just watch all the videos, but if that's where you are and you only have a few weeks left to study, watch the videos and do as much practice as possible. You want to do MBE and essay and MPT practice. And again, your goal is going to be, expose yourself to as much of the material as possible. Remember that the bar is a test of minimum competence, not maximum competence. So, you don't need to know every single nuance of every single piece of black-letter law to be successful, but you need to know enough. And at that point you're going to cut out any additional distractions in your life, to the extent that you're able to do so. And you're going to dedicate eight plus hours a day to focused study, so that you can get through the material in time. I also think it's really important to assess whether or not sitting for the exam for that administration is the right choice for you, given your circumstances. Because if you are not going to be able to dedicate the time to studying between whenever you realize you're behind and the actual bar exam, it might be best to defer. So I think that's a conversation you need to have with yourself, with your partner, financial support, etcetera, etcetera. And just make sure that you're doing what's best for you so that you can end up being successful on the bar.

Lee Burgess:

Yeah, I think that's an important question to ask yourself, especially if you are able to ask for the opportunity to defer by your jurisdiction. So, calling the bar, physically picking up the phone and calling and getting all that information will help you be able to make those choices. I think the other thing I would add to that is, be aware of what is most likely to show up on that test. So, if I am sitting for the UBE and I don't like Civil Procedure – which is true – I typically need to make sure that I have done a lot of Civil Procedure practice, because it is one of the most heavily tested questions out there. The likelihood that Civ Pro is going to show up on that test is incredibly high. Same thing in California – if you don't want to study Professional Responsibility, tough. It's probably going to show up

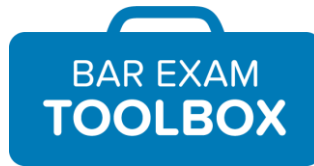


on your test. You need to be able to be comfortable with that. So, the other piece of that, I think, is be honest about what you're most likely to see and make sure that you're not saying, "Well, just flunk the Civ Pro, because who knows?" But you're likely to see that. It's a terrible mathematical decision to make. I'm not a gambling person myself, but that's not a great gamble. If I'm going to gamble on something, I still wouldn't be likely to win. So if anything, I'm going to spend more time on Civ Pro, which I do not like, and then let something else go that I am less likely to see on the test. And so, I think there is some strategy around that with your own personal strengths and weaknesses and what is most likely to show up on the test that'll help you handle triage as well.

Rebecca Petrilli: That's a great point. And the Themis course, if you're in a UBE jurisdiction and in quite a few of our other jurisdictions, there are what we call "frequency charts" that give you that information. So, I'm so sorry if you're not one of the lucky jurisdictions that has those. For some of them, we don't know. But for the ones where we can provide those, they're in the course for you, and those can be an excellent tool.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. Alright, believe it or not, we've made it to our tip number 10. I wanted to give a shoutout to our part-time studiers. There are quite a few who are part-time studying for a variety of reasons. We also have other studiers who get extended time or accommodations. And so, they may get time and a half or even double time. So, I recommend that if you are in the pool of needing to study part-time because you have other commitments, or you typically need extended time for whatever reason, you definitely want to start early – as early as practically possible. There are lots of versions of this. But how can Themis as your bar provider help you with that, if you are in one of these groups of folks that's going to want to start studying maybe in March? We were mentioning that we're recording this in March, that this would be a time where you could start studying right now. Even though it feels like July is very far away, let me tell you it is not. It is coming for you, unfortunately.

Rebecca Petrilli: Yeah, so I think there are a few things here. First, the course opens for full access on March 20th, and you can have full study access, so you're not limited to using only certain parts of the course or having only a certain number of questions. Everything is there for you. I think if you are starting early, you need to strike a balance of starting too early and forgetting things by the time you get to the bar exam, and making sure that you're giving yourself enough time to study under whatever constraints you are working within. So, for students who are [working while they're studying](#) and who want to stick as close to the full-time study schedule as possible, we recommend that they start a few weeks early and plan to put in about 35 hours per week. So, a couple of hours in the



evening, on the weekdays, and then pretty much full-time on the weekends. You can obviously extend that a little bit further out if you want to study a little bit less during the week. It can be really tough sometimes to come home from a day of work and study for the bar. Keep that in mind. What is your physical and mental ability going to be when you start studying? That will help determine how early you need to start. But the course, like I said earlier in this podcast, it's going to adapt with you whenever you choose to start. If you are starting in mid-March and you're only studying an hour a day – that's not going to negatively impact you when you go to start studying more frequently, as you get closer to the bar exam. We also have a PDF of what we call the "recommended study schedule" that's available for you in the course. You can download it at any time. And every time you download a new copy of it, it's going to check off all the tasks that you've already completed. So for people who are not following the directed study schedule exactly as it's written, this can be a really great tool to help you make sure that you're still getting through enough of the information each week, or you can use it to say, "Okay, if I'm starting three weeks early, I need to be here by this point to stay on track to get to 100%." And then that progress tracker that I talked about earlier is also going to help you. So, you as the student just need to figure out, "How long realistically do I need to study and what are the things that are going to be stopping me from doing that? And how do I manage that?" Because the course will pretty much do the rest of it for you, as long as you stay engaged.

Lee Burgess:

That's great to know. I really think that for most people studying 35 hours a week outside of working a full-time job, or like 20 to 30 hours a week, it's going to feel practically impossible. So, I think you should try it out. If that's what you think you can do, take a week early and say, "I'm going to try and do one of those weeks and see what that really feels like", and see if that's sustainable for 12 or 13 weeks. And if it's not, then just start three months early, start three and a half months early, especially because you can work on the performance test early and really get that under your belt. You don't need to memorize any law for that. And we already talked about you have to do thousands of MBE questions, and that takes time. You can always start those early – deposits in the bank. Well, I think this has been a really fun top 10 list. Of course, there are many other recommendations that we could make, but I think this is a solid list of things to keep in mind as you think about your bar prep and utilizing your bar review tool. Rebecca, to put you on the spot, one of the things I usually ask my guests is, if they could talk to their bar taker self, what best practices or lessons learned would you like to impart on your bar taker self?

Rebecca Petrilli:

Yeah. That's actually not putting me on the spot at all, because I was thinking about that when we were talking about needing more outside time and balance.



I wish I would have gone outside more. It was a beautiful summer here in Cleveland, and I was indoors so much that on the 4th of July my family had a boat docked downtown, and went to the pool with my family that day. And I got in the pool and my cousin was like, "I've never seen you this pale." I really had no sun all summer long. And looking back, I think my life would've felt a lot better had I gone outside and stepped away from the screen. I did a decent job of having balance and keeping my evenings to myself, but I did not engage with the outside world in a way that I wish I would have. I also would have told myself to study more efficiently earlier on in the process. It took me a while to figure that out. And knowing what I know now, the first three weeks of bar prep could have been so much more effective than they were, because I had to get into that routine.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. See, you needed a friend to drag you outside to go hiking in the sunshine.

Rebecca Petrilli: I really did.

Lee Burgess: Amazing. Well, thank you so much for your time, Rebecca, and sharing your wisdom and details about Themis Bar Prep. If students want to learn more about Themis and UWorld and their offerings, how should they do that?

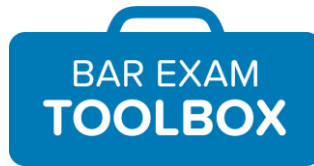
Rebecca Petrilli: So, we are at Themis Bar on pretty much every social media platform, if you want to find us there. You can always reach out to us via email at [info@themisbar.com](mailto:info@themisbar.com). And we have a lot more information on our website about our free resources and our bar prep course. But if you're really interested in learning about how the Themis course can work for you, I recommend very much trying to reach out to your local director at your law school. And if you don't know who that is, if you don't know how to contact them, send us an email, we'll get you in contact with whoever that is. But they can really help you understand how to make the course work for you.

Lee Burgess: Awesome. Well, thank you so much for your time today. We really appreciate it. And good luck with everyone's bar study!

Rebecca Petrilli: Thank you, Lee. It was so great to be here.

Lee Burgess: And with that, we're out of time. Once again, we would like to acknowledge Themis Bar Review and thank them for sponsoring this episode. Remember, Themis has a special offer for Bar Exam Toolbox listeners. If you sign up for their July 2024 bar review course, you can get a \$500 discount using the promo code BAREXAMTB500. This offer is valid until midnight, Central Standard Time on May 20th, 2024. Once again, the code is BAREXAMTB500. If you enjoyed this





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