One of the pivotal bits of information that I learned as a beginning resident in anesthesiology in 1963 was the Guedel Chart (originally published in 1937), outlining the assessment of anesthetic depth. Some of my teachers who saw to it that I was trained in the fundamentals of ether administration allowed me to see in graphic outline the utility of this masterpiece of the measure of anesthetic depth. This chart is still imprinted on my brain and became not only useful in the operating room, but was used as a reference whenever I was called to treat an unconscious patient in the emergency room or other areas. By quickly mentally placing the patient on the Guedel Chart, I was afforded a brisk method of assessing the degree of respiratory and cardiovascular intervention necessary. This fundamental acquaintance with the Guedel Chart has been of inestimable value to my understanding of our specialty.

Figure 1. The Guedel Chart.
Newer drugs and anesthetic agents forced us to seek other means of assessing anesthetic depth because, unlike ether, they often traversed the Guedel Stages with lightning-like rapidity. Philip Woodbridge presented an alternate way of looking at anesthetic depth, one which reflected the newer agents in 1957.

It is to be remembered that Arthur Guedel was not the first to offer the Stages of Anesthesia, though he no doubt refined it. John Snow of England, the first full-time anesthesiologist, offered such a system in 1847. Now we are in the era of the processed EEG and its many implications. Thus, we march ever forward to finer and finer techniques of mensuration in a dynamic and sophisticated area of medical specialization.

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