

Consider  
ThisFreestyle Presentations in  
Nursing Education

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In a learner-based curriculum, faculty encourages students to exercise independent learning, with the teacher being a modest mentor.<sup>1</sup> Independent learning is defined as being able to engage in self-study and having the opportunity to design the most suitable pace of study for oneself without the assistance and involvement of teachers or other students.<sup>2</sup> This learning approach emphasizes the transactional and contextual process of learning and logical thinking, which is especially important in nursing education.<sup>3</sup> Montgomery<sup>4</sup> described an independent approach for students by allowing them to select their clinical assignments.

Also wanting to engage students in active learning through innovative approaches, I challenged my students with a 5-minute freestyle presentation (FP). The objectives are to enhance students' creativity, team spirit, independent learning, and active learning. Students are encouraged to construct knowledge in their own way to foster long-term memory retention of nursing concepts and practices. The FP allows students to design their own format for making class presentations, with the only requirements being that it cannot exceed 5 minutes and must relate to a given scenario.

The FP strategy can be implemented in any traditional or problem-based learning (PBL) class, especially during the latter half of the semester when students were more familiar with the nursing knowledge. To best fit an FP into class content, the lecturer can provide students with a particular scenario related to PBL or content from some other broad-based courses. Students are asked to form groups of 4 to 5 students and, with the scenario as a starting point, spend 30 to 60 minutes in class analyzing the major concepts, supporting evidence, suitable treatments, patient's condition, family's burden, and pertinent ideas. Then, in preparation for presenting their assessment to the larger class a week later, they are asked to think innovatively and create a new format, other than a PowerPoint presentation or conventional speech, that will engage their classmates' interest. Some possible formats are

sing-a-song, presenting a poem, creating a role play, or even imitating a TV game show or an advertisement.

**Freestyle Presentation Examples**

My 18 first-year nursing students were divided into 4 groups. I gave them a case study related to an adult man with diabetes mellitus (DM). The formats chosen by the 4 groups included a minilecture, role play, music video, and a listening test. Student groups demonstrated imaginative competence as they acted in the roles of drugs, the patient's organs, and an examination instructor. Examples of 2 of the 4 groups' extracted coursework and reflective notes follow.

The first group imitated the format of a listening test by acting in the roles of instructor and voice-over (VO) and saying the same introductory and ending narratives as in the listening test of the public examination that the classmates were familiar with:

**Instructor:** Please take out the scenario of the case of Mr Chan. We are going to have the listening test.

**VO:** Situation: you are the PBL facilitator at a university. You are now assessing the students' discussion. They are discussing the case of Mr Chan who has type 2 DM. You have 3 seconds to familiarize yourself with the questions.

**Student A:** As we know, there are 4 common treatments for type 2 DM, including diet control, exercise, insulin therapy, and oral medication. I think that diet control is the most appropriate.

**Student B:** Mr Chan has poor DM control, and he should, therefore, have chronic hyperglycemia. Many studies point out that a combination of biguanides and insulin is most effective in lowering blood glucose levels.

**Student C:** Let me come to a small conclusion. The 4 treatments that we mentioned (insulin therapy, OADs, diet, and exercise) all help with glycemic control.

**Instructor:** You now have 2 minutes to tidy up your answers.

The above truncated example of student discussion during a 5-minute FP raised issues related to the best way to manage blood sugar from weight loss, to drugs, to exercise.

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Another group used role play to demonstrate the drug-drug interactions of the medications in Mr Chan's therapeutic regimen:

**Protaphane:** *I am protaphane that helps glucose molecules to enter the cells of the body.*

**Metformin:** *I am metformin. I belong to an antidiabetic class of drugs called biguanide.*

**Perindopril:** *I am perindopril. I belong to an angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitor.*

**Metformin:** *Perindopril will increase my effect.*

**Nifedipine:** *But I will reduce the effect of protaphane.*

**Mr Chan:** *There are so many drugs. They are annoying! I am not taking them all!*

In this extracted role play, the synergistic effect and the inhibitive effect of the drugs were demonstrated. The impact of the complexity of a therapeutic regimen was also mentioned by giving the medications to the patient.

## Evaluation

After demonstrating the FPs, the class was told to write reflective notes on the format of demonstration and the new content they explored within 1 week. There were benefits to giving the students more room to control and pace their lessons. Without encouragement to think about different ways of presenting content, most students stated that they most likely

would have used slides or given 1-way lectures. The groups mentioned that the varied vehicles for content delivery made their learning more interesting, entertaining, and fun. They discovered that they could enhance their creativity by observing everyday life and making use of various media to present their findings, as well as entertain each other by their performance. All 4 groups agreed that student-driven and independent learning is crucial because nurses have to be active learners and apply their problem-solving skills in clinical settings.<sup>5</sup>

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## Resources Related to Toxic Chemical Exposures

As nursing faculty, students, or practicing nurses, we serve as patient advocates in relation to risks to pregnant women, children, and families or persons in the workplace. Knowing what truly matters and what does not matter can sometimes prove daunting. *All That Matters* (<http://www.prhe.ucsf.edu/prhe/allthatmatters.html>) is a series of nontechnical, patient-centered brochures that can be used to provide patients with strategies to protect themselves and their families from toxic chemical exposures. The University of California at San Francisco (UCSF) developed these resources through the FASTEP (From Advancing Science to Ensuring Prevention) Alliance of clinical and scientific experts in reproductive, occupational, environmental, and pediatric medicine, public health, and toxicology. Included are tips for pregnant women, a Spanish version of these tips, work-related suggestions, and suggestions to avoid pesticide exposures at home and at work.

*Toxic Matters* and *Cuestiones de Salud* (a low-literacy Spanish version of *Toxic Matters*) provide tips on how pregnant women, or women who are planning a pregnancy, can avoid chemical exposures. This resource has been incorporated into UCSF's electronic medical records and is provided as part of prenatal care. *Work Matters* focuses on prevention of toxic exposures in the workplace along with strategies for pregnant women to use to ensure a safe and healthy work environment. *Food Matters* provides food selection guidelines, and *Pesticides Matter* includes tips on avoiding pesticide exposures at work and at home.

These resources are based on reliable evidence and are nontechnical and patient-centered. Having a Spanish-language version of at least one of the resources is also useful.

Source: *EnviRN News*. "All That Matters"—great patient resource now available. September 6, 2012. Available at <http://envirn.org/>. Accessed October 1, 2012.

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