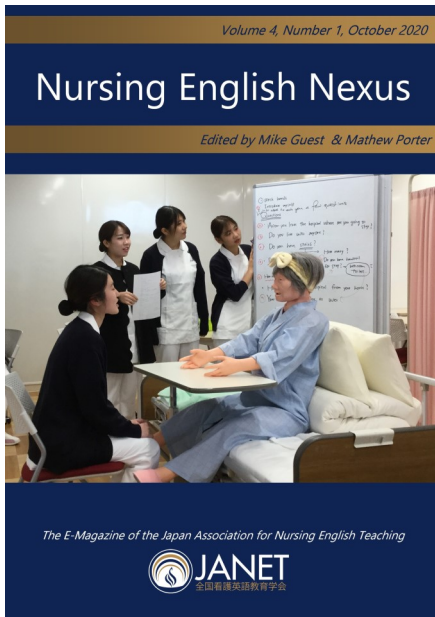


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My Experience as a First-time Nursing English Teacher during COVID-19

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This is my first time writing about my experience with English and Nursing, especially as a nursing English teacher during the COVID-19 pandemic. In fact, this is my very first time to write anything related to teaching Nursing English because this past semester was the most unique teaching experience of Nursing English in my life.

I am Japanese and graduated from a college in the USA with a nursing degree as an international student, so I am a nurse. Because of family circumstances, I came back to Japan in 2012 and became a teacher in nursing in a Japanese university. Seven years later, I moved to Nagano to teach nursing and also nursing English for the first time. I had never taught English nor nursing English previously, so this was a challenge but I was very excited because I love both English and nursing.

Because of this early year's COVID-19 outbreak, all classes had been changed to online classes. It was very challenging since we had to change, create, or redesign all class materials for online classes, especially for Zoom. It took so much time to prepare for the classes to teach and was particularly tough to prepare for five or six classes at the same time.

One of them was 'Nursing Medical English' which is an elective class, so only 15 students were assigned. The professor in charge of this class had published a book called "Medical Terminology Basic 101" in order to teach medical terminology according to categories such as prefixes, roots, and suffixes etc., so we used this textbook mainly to teach medical vocabulary in an easily structured way.

Since this was my first-time teaching Nursing English, I wanted this class to be fun, so I brought a relaxed and casual manner into the online class. I started the class taking roll by calling their first

names and asking, "How are you?" They mostly replied with comments like, "Here. I am excited today," "Here, I am tired...," and "Here, I am ok".

I also emphasized the importance of pronunciation as a base, so I started teaching pronunciation of the basic alphabet, practicing the actual sounds of English, and not reading it as if it were Japanese. I spoke mostly English during the class and asked the students to feel the meaning of words itself and not merely to memorize the Japanese translation of the words.

As the classes progressed, students gradually grew increasingly tired due to taking all their classes online every day, as all students had been sitting and studying different nursing subjects online from 9 to 5 endlessly, with lots of homework.

Since I also taught other general content classes such as basic nursing, nursing assessments, nursing practicum, and so on, I knew how tired they were, so I tried to incorporate the contents of those classes into the English classes because when connecting the materials, students could learn the vocabulary and contents more effectively, as well as decrease their work volume (this was actually how I managed when I was a busy nursing student in the USA.)

For example, after they studied a nursing assessment on each body system in regular content classes, I provided copies of those anatomical terms of each system in English. I hoped that learning those systems in Japanese would be efficiently connected to learning medical terminology in English thus making them easier to remember those difficult terms in both languages. It also gave them chances to learn the same content twice which could help them to memorize the more difficult nursing content easily.

We did not assign homework after class, in

order to give students more time to rest. We also only carried out three exams since we knew that the students had been studying all the nursing content so hard at home in uncertain circumstances, and knew how the students were tired every day, as their other classes were filled with many assignments and difficult exams. I was also feeling less energy left for teaching all my own classes with all the extra work made necessary under the restricted COVID-19 situation, so I definitely also felt my students' fatigue and boredom. Hence, my department professor and I did not give any further assignments in order to decrease the total volume of work from students' other classes.

In the end, we received satisfactory evaluation results, as we were evaluated with an average of more than 4.5/5 overall. Students reported that they enjoyed the class and felt our enthusiasm for the class. However, compared to other general classes I was involved with, I felt that an increased satisfaction in their progress and sense of accomplishment would be needed to improve this class for the future. The other classes that had very difficult exams, such as nursing assessment and basic nursing practicum, were evaluated as being 'very satisfying'.

That made me realize that although it is tough for students to learn nursing, providing opportunities to learn more and to take on difficult tasks could lead to a much better sense of satisfaction among students. It seemed that those content classes involving many teachers and nurses participating in teaching nursing were more satisfying for nursing students.

As a result, I learned that although nursing students are always busy with studying, and although it is much tougher to do so under the conditions of COVID-19, they are still eager to learn nursing to improve themselves as nursing students. That is the beauty of nursing. Hence, I certainly will try to improve my teaching of Nursing English to make it more effective and filled with passion and energy as this uncertain period goes on.