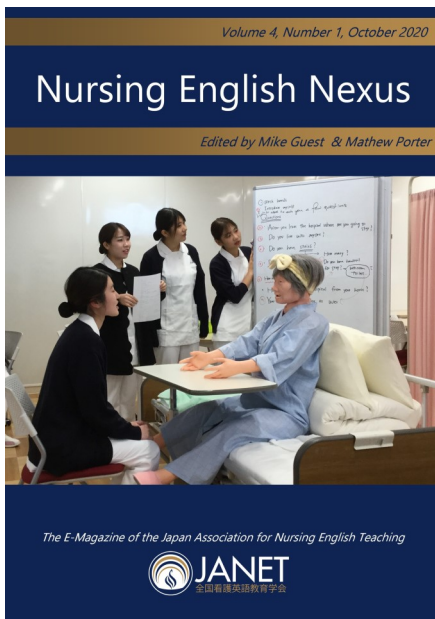


# My Nursing English Story: Initial Impressions of Teaching Online

Donald Patterson

Seirei Christopher University



## Article citation

Patterson, D. (2020). My Nursing English Story: Initial Impressions of Teaching Online. *Nursing English Nexus*, 4(1), 12-13.

## Nursing English Nexus

<http://www.janetorg.com/nexus>

ISSN 2433-2305

Nursing English Nexus is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. Authors retain the right to share their article as is for personal use, internal institutional use and other scholarly purposes. English Nursing Nexus and the articles within may be used by third parties for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Please contact the author directly for permission to re-print elsewhere.



## My Nursing English Story: Initial Impressions of Teaching Online

Donald Patterson (patterson@seirei.ac.jp)

Seirei Christopher University

Over the past few months I have found it interesting to learn how differently each university in Japan has managed the first semester taught during the COVID-19 pandemic. I know of colleagues who have not set foot on campus in months and those who have not missed a day. I have heard of approaches including asynchronous on-demand lessons, synchronous lessons taught online via teleconferencing software such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams, cautious in-person lessons, and hybrid approaches. I know of schools that have taken a unified approach and those that have let the professors decide where and how to teach. In this short article, I would like to share my experience.

My university postponed the start of the 2020 school year for two weeks, pushing the end of the semester into August. It was decided that most courses, including English, would be delivered synchronously in their regularly scheduled times via Zoom. I had used Zoom before for meetings, but never for teaching. Together with other teachers at my school, I spent those first two weeks of April familiarizing myself with Zoom's functions and reimagining how I would teach.

I continued to go to campus and taught in an empty classroom using the classroom computer with my own laptop also logged into Zoom to allow me to see the class from the students' perspective. I taught while standing up, which seemed to give my delivery more energy. I also found that lessons went better when I asked students to turn their cameras on. It was easier speaking to an audience I could see, and students also seemed more engaged. Zoom keeps participant records, which I used for attendance.

I created PowerPoints with the main lesson points, new vocabulary and expressions, embedded audio and video, and various language activities. I

used the "breakout room" function to create pairs and smaller groups for discussion, paired readings, and role plays. There have been several Zoom functions that I would like to keep using for in-person classes. For example, the chat function allows you to ask students quick comprehension questions and get responses from everyone. There is also a survey function that enables you to poll students and share the results instantly, which is fun. The virtual whiteboard and screen annotate functions were also useful for encouraging greater participation.

In addition to Zoom, I used Google Classroom to post course updates, homework assignments, quizzes and tests created with Google Forms, and Quizlet (<https://quizlet.com>) to share vocabulary lists and activities.

Here is a sample lesson plan for my nursing English course. This 80-minute lesson was taught via Zoom using a textbook. The theme was "assessing patients' symptoms" (with thanks to my colleagues, Professor Aya Tsuchie and Professor Nami Takase, for their input).

- Greeting: Teacher welcomes the students and asks them how they are. Students respond via chat. This is also a chance to check that the audio is functioning for everyone.
- Today's plan: Teacher introduces the lesson's goals and activities via PowerPoint.
- Warm-Up Conversation: Students are provided discussion questions and put into breakout rooms (2-4 people) for a short conversation (approx. 5 mins).
- Vocabulary: Students are asked to write the names of symptoms (cough, fever, runny nose, etc.) they know in English on a virtual whiteboard.

- **Vocabulary:** Students match English symptom names with images and Japanese terms. Teacher checks comprehension with the chat function before showing the answers.
- **Key Expressions:** Teacher introduces key expressions; students complete a grammar activity in the textbook. Listen and repeat to practice pronunciation.
- **Listening:** Students complete a medical interview form about a patient's symptoms while listening to audio of a nurse and patient dialogue.
- **Writing:** Students write about a time when they were sick and what symptoms they had.
- **Speaking:** Students role play a medical interview with a partner in a breakout room using the symptoms they wrote about. Teacher may visit a few breakout sessions to monitor the students' progress.
- **Writing:** Students write a report of their partner's symptoms and post to Google Classroom.
- **Quiz:** Students take a quiz via a Google Form posted to Google Classroom.
- **Homework:** Students are assigned homework from the textbook; discussion questions to answer on Google Classroom; and are provided with word cards to study new vocabulary on Quizlet.
- **Closing:** Teacher sums up the main points of the lesson and says goodbye. Teacher remains online for a few minutes in case there are any additional questions.

The students returned to campus in Week 11 for a few in-person lessons as there had been no new reported cases of COVID-19 in the area for several weeks. However, after an outbreak, classes went back online.

My students had begun preparing for their final project, which was meant to be an in-class

PowerPoint presentation on the topic of healthcare-related NGOs (as an aside, I'd like to thank Franklin [2019] for inspiring the topic). The students coped well with the sudden return to online classes and were all able to give their presentations via Zoom using the share screen function to display their PowerPoint slides.

Despite the initial learning curve and concerns about technical malfunctions during class, I enjoyed teaching on Zoom more than I thought I would. Basically, I was able to reproduce most things I would normally do in a face-to-face class, albeit virtually. It has also pushed me to learn more about teaching with technology, to be more concise with my lesson goals, and to nearly go paperless.

This is not to say that teaching online is perfect. There's no replacement for direct interaction with students. I miss getting to know the students as the semester progresses, being able to walk around a class to monitor students' progress, and doing activities that involve getting everyone up and moving and meeting new people. Nonetheless, these online tools have enabled me to continue teaching and my students to continue learning in safety during this challenging time, for which I am grateful.

### References

- Franklin, R. (2019). Poster Projects for Nursing Students. *Nursing English Nexus*, 3(1), 32-35.  
<https://www.janetorg.com/nexus-3-1>