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January, 2020, Issue 6

Editor’s note

Alina Botis, RN, MN- Nursing Instructor

The practice of teaching refers to both the methods teachers use to share their knowledge and the students’ openness and receptivity to gain new knowledge. Like we all know, teaching involves a collaborative rapport between teachers and their students. Effective teaching depends on a few qualities that a teacher needs to possess and display. Among these, Hicks and Butkus (2011) mentioned: effective communication, professionalism (interpreted as the receptivity to feedback and willingness to make appropriate changes for improvement), and role modeling as a commitment to lifelong learning. To these, I would add open mindedness and flexibility, especially that teachers can learn a lot from their students as well. Furthermore, for effective teaching to happen, the environment created by the teacher has to be one of “confronting intriguing, beautiful, or important problems and authentic tasks that will challenge them to grapple with ideas, rethink their assumptions, and examine their mental models of reality” (Samples & Copeland, 2013, p. 176).Now you may wonder how you can become an effective teacher.

As educators, it is our duty to keep updated with the latest trends in teaching methods including the different aspects of teaching, learning, and assessment of students in the university context as well as clinical practice. This new issue of the CTL Newsletter is a great opportunity for the reader to find more about teaching in a concept based curriculum, how to support nursing students as they develop competence required for professional certification, how to properly facilitate debriefing in a simulation experience, the importance of effective communication, and lastly, how to motivate yourself to write about your experiences even when you think you have nothing to write about. Enjoy!

Teaching and Learning in a Concept-Based Curriculum: A Synopsis

Education

Dr. Frances Kalu- Teaching and Learning Specialist

Education in various spheres typically occurs in silos, with students learning in discrete parts without the opportunity to apply learning across different contexts. As our knowledge base grows exponentially, the amount of knowledge students need to acquire grows. In recent times, there have been calls for a reform of healthcare education. Notably, the National League for Nurses (2005) called for a complete shift away from an emphasis on content delivery in nursing education. In 2011, the Institute for Medicine identified content saturation as one of the banes of the healthcare education curriculum with numerous isolated content that was repeated throughout the curriculum. Probable causes for content saturation in the nursing curriculum include an increased amount of information due to technological advances, the advent of new models of healthcare, the idea that all content must be covered within the curriculum, and a gap between the need in practice and academia (Giddens & Brady, 2007).

In the 1950’s, curriculum theorist Hilda Taba called for a redesign of the traditional curriculum to one centred on concepts to foster inductive reasoning and develop critical thinking skills amongst students. Although the idea of conceptual learning was not adopted immediately, advances in brain-based pedagogy in recent years provided clearer insights on how learning works, bringing the link back to conceptual learning. A key aspect of learning is that students organize knowledge by making connections and integrating new knowledge with their prior knowledge (Ambrose, Bridges, DiPietro, Lovett & Norman, 2010). A concept, is defined as an organizing principle or a means of classifying information and it forms the basis on which new knowledge is built. Gaining an in-depth understanding of concepts within nursing education,

will help students identify recurring similarities, differences and patterns between interrelated concepts. This knowledge can be readily applied in diverse clinical situations (Giddens, 2017). To teach conceptually, Giddens, Caputi & Rodgers (2020) note that the following principles should be maintained: teach the concept to ensure in-depth understanding, use designated exemplars that best represent each concept preferably linked to a clinical or situational context, build on pre-existing knowledge, and use student-centred learning strategies to help students construct and co-construct knowledge. Examples of student-centered strategies that support conceptual learning include: simulation, traditional case studies, unfolding case studies, virtual communities, gaming, jig saw, debates, guided questions, concept assessment, risk factor assessment, pair and share discussions, compare and contrast, vignettes, audio-visuals, storytelling, role play, concept analysis, concept maps, case writing and classroom response systems.



Supporting Students with HESI

Education

Cassandra Iammarino, RN, MN- Nursing Instructor

Undergraduate nursing students must pass the Prometric exam in order to practice as licensed Registered Nurses in Qatar. The pressure for students to be successful in licensing examinations affects both students and universities. For students, it is a high-stakes evaluation whose failure can result in

jeopardized employment, financial losses, and considerable stress (Frith, Sewell, & Clark, 2006; Pence, 2016; Pence & Wood, 2018; Quinn, Smolinski, & Peters, 2018). For faculty and schools of nursing, licensing examination pass rates are considered an indicator of the success and quality of a nursing program (Cox-Davenport & Phelan, 2015; Pence & Wood, 2018; Quinn et al., 2018; Simon-Campbell & Phelan, 2016). Evidently, preparing students to succeed on licensing examinations is increasingly important in undergraduate nursing education (Quinn et al., 2018).

While there is increasing pressure to successfully pass licensing examinations, the literature identifies that undergraduate nursing students experience numerous barriers to success including a lack of content knowledge, inadequate preparation, poor test taking skills, and test anxiety (Frith et al., 2006). The lack of student preparation and test taking skills as well as a lack of perception of readiness have a negative effect on exam performance (Frith et al., 2006; Quinn et al., 2018). Furthermore, test anxiety has been identified as a significant barrier to exam performance (Frith et al., 2006; Quinn et al., 2018). In Qatar, the exam is also administered in English to a student population of mostly non-native English speakers. Corrigan-Magaldi and Colalillo (2014) recommend educators to introduce strategies that encourage application of knowledge, improve test-taking strategies, and decrease test anxiety.

**Computer Adaptive Quizzing (CAQ)**

While there are many strategies identified in the literature, computer adaptive quizzing is recommended as an effective method to prepare undergraduate nursing students for their licensing examination. CAQ is an online platform that uses an adaptive testing model to allow students to learn, practice, and master course content (Malkemes & Phelan, 2017). As students answer questions, their ability level is determined and continuously updated electronically based on their responses and the difficulty of questions. Students demonstrate greater knowledge of concepts and increase their mastery level when they consistently answer questions correctly (Cox-Davenport & Phelan, 2015; House, Sweet, & Vickers, 2016).

Adaptive quizzing adjusts to each student’s individual learning needs and allows students to work at their own pace as they develop competence (House et al., 2016).

The use of adaptive quizzing as an active learning strategy to prepare for licensing examinations is supported in the literature (Malkemes & Phelan, 2017; Simon-Campbell & Phelan, 2016). CAQ utilizes repeated testing which has been shown to improve long term retention of material (Cox-Davenport & Phelan, 2015; House et al., 2016; Malkemes & Phelan, 2017; Pence & Wood, 2018; Simon-Campbell & Phelan, 2016). It also allows simulation of the computer testing format and provides immediate feedback to students and educators (Cox-Davenport & Phelan, 2015; House et al., 2016; Pence, 2016; Pence & Wood, 2018; Quinn et al., 2018). Students are then able to remediate weak content areas and repeat testing until they achieve competency (Pence & Wood, 2018). Cox-Davenport and Phelan (2015) found that the use of CAQ improved students’ ability to answer difficult questions and led to a greater grasp of content. In fact, those students who used the program more often achieved a higher level of mastery. Pence and Wood (2018) found that CAQ was an effective formative strategy to improve success on licensing exams. Simon-Campbell and Phelan (2016) suggest that CAQ can be especially beneficial for English language learners. It is thought that the low stakes authentic environment allows these learners to engage in more independent and self-paced learning which can increase confidence and support learning. While beneficial to students, CAQ is also a helpful teaching tool as it allows faculty to monitor students’ knowledge of course content, critical thinking, and test taking abilities (Malkemes & Phelan, 2017; Simon-Campbell & Phelan, 2016).

**HESI Case Studies**

To support students as they develop competence required for certification, the HESI Case Studies were purchased by UCQ and provided to level one and two students, while HESI CAQ was delivered to students in all levels of the Bachelor of Nursing Regular Track Program. The programs are made available for self-study to all students in the undergraduate program and are widely embedded in year three and four courses as marked assignments. The potential of CAQ to support student and institutional success at UCQ is evident. Not only is there evidence to suggest it may enhance mastery of course content and test taking abilities, it may also be a means to support non-native English speakers to prepare for their Prometric licensing exam without pressure. CAQ is an emerging technology with the potential to support our students’ success in their courses and licensing examinations. As educators, we must embed HESI into our courses and consistently use it within our classrooms to improve students competence and confidence in course content learning and licensing exam success.

Nganga Sinnasamy, RN, BN- Clinical Simulation Assistant

Simulation Debrief: A Refresher



Simulation is a teaching strategy used to help students conceptualize theory that may seem complex especially to the novice student. Following the simulation experience, the learners engage in a facilitated debriefing session to allow for further reflection and to close any gaps in their learning. A systematic review of high fidelity simulation literature identified feedback (including debriefing) as the most important feature of simulation-based medical education (Fanning and Gabe, 2007). The attempt to bridge the gap between experiencing an event and making sense of it led to the evolution of the concept of the “post experience analysis” or debriefing. As such, debriefing represents facilitated or guided reflection in the cycle of experiential learning. This article aims to highlight the significant role of debriefing in the field of simulation-based learning.

**The Simulation Process**

Planning and preparingthesimulation component is critical to ensure leaners meet their learning goals and objectives (McDermott, 2016). Educators prepare students adequately before simulation by providing pre reading on the topic background that will be used in the simulation. It is important that educators organize a formal pre simulation preparatory meeting with the group to communicate expectations, confidentiality, and consent for video recording, establish a safe environment, ensure a safe place to make mistake and explain that what happens during simulation stays in the simulation (Oermann, Shellenbarger, and Gaberson 2017). Setting the stage for simulation can provide best environment for student experiential learning and post event debriefing.

The actual simulation starts with a short briefing session. During briefing, the instructor provides the scenarios, clarifies the students’ roles such as staff nurse, charge nurse, and medicine nurse as well as educators’ role as the facilitator. This part also allows for questions and clarification of any uncertainties before the actual simulation experience begins. During simulation, the facilitator will observe the event closely and video recording may be used to capture the actions to facilitate effective debriefing (Oermann, Shellenbarger, & Gaberson, 2018).

**Theoretical Framework**

**Kolb’s experiential learning theory**. In this theory, Kolb identifies four components of learning occurring in a cyclical manner. They are: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation (Fanning & Gaba, 2007; Zigmont et al., 2011). These components can be visualized in stages of a simulation experience. The concrete experience is the learner engaging in the simulated learning environment; reflective observation occurs during the debriefing where the learner participates in self-evaluation and identifies learning needs based on their action or inaction during the simulation; abstract conceptualization is the period where the teachers facilitate the learners to make connections between their new knowledge and future experiences; and lastly, active experimentation involves applying the new knowledge in actual practice to promote long-term retention of knowledge (Zigmont, et al., 2011; Chmil, Turk, Adamson, & Larew, 2015).

**Debriefing**

Debriefing is defined as the act of reviewing a real or simulated event in which participants explain, analyze, and synthesize information and emotional states to improve learners’ performance. Debriefing should be planned and included in all simulations. The goals of debriefinginclude some components of “Abstract Conceptualization” and “Active Experimental” in “Kolb’s cycle of learning”; they are: reflection, clarification, discussion, and development.

There are three debriefing tools that have been used frequently as they are effective to assess student’s critical thinking and decision making in simulated clinical practice. These debriefing tools are: the Reaction, Understanding, Summary, and Takeaway (RUST); Advocacy-Inquiry (A-I); and Promote Excellence and Reflective Learning in Simulation (PEARLS) models.

**Reaction, Understanding, Summary, and Takeaway*.*** The first debriefing model has clear directions and information to guide teachers on how to facilitate debriefing. The initial phase of debriefing starts immediately after the simulation. In the “reaction” phase, educators set the stage for discussion to allow venting of frustration and redeeming of actions. Educators encourage student-driven learnings and their learning objectives are brought to light during this phase. The middle phase is the “understanding” phase when learners are open to deeper level of understanding of the simulated event. Educators lead discussions about new perspectives, concepts, and understandings. In the final phase “summary”, student summarize the learning they have acquired. Educators reinforce students’ learning goals and probe students what they have learnt as the “takeaway” messages that can be beneficial for their future clinical practice.

**Advocacy-Inquiry.** This debriefing model provides a balanced advocacy and inquiry questions during debriefing. In this framework, teachers set the stage to encourage social interaction with their learners. Educators attempt to understand student’s perspective. For example, teachers move from using “I understand” to “help me to understand”. Debriefing with good judgment prevents teachers from being judgmental towards their students and promotes a non-judgmental style of debriefing. It is important for facilitator to speak clearly the observation, maintain confidentiality, and provide emotional support when required. A-I also helps to avoid feeling of shame, blame, and increased in students’ self-confidence. By utilizing A-I technique, educators facilitate learners’ building of new frames of mind, followed by better actions, and improved results.

**Promote Excellence and Reflective Learning in Simulation.** The other debriefing tool is the Promote Excellence and Reflective Learning in Simulation. It is an integrated conceptual framework for blended approach to debriefing (Eppich and Cheng, 2015). PEARLS debriefing script can be useful for both novice and experienced simulation educators. The PEARLS script supports simulation debriefing in three key areas. These are 1. Setting the scene for debrief. 2. Organizing the debriefing from initial stage to summary of lesson learned, and 3. Formulate questions that empower teachers to share their honest point of view about the simulation outcome. One example of debriefing is in The Monters Inc debriefing simulation video. This video provides an excellent learning tool to enhance novice educators debriefing skills. The video is accessible by clicking on this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z9C0yVgTcbs>. Using the fictional dialogues between the debriefer Ms. Flint and the monster Phlegm Vile will allow teachers to go through the debriefing process.

Based on my experience in simulation, I realize it is crucial to provide effective feedback for students. It takes a lot of practice to learn debriefing skills as a novice teacher learns to debrief in practice. To close this gap I have created a debriefing teaching guide (see Table in Reference section, p.14). This tool can be utilize as a cue card or a quick tool as a reminder for new educators.

**Evaluation*.*** “Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try Again. Fail again. Fail better.” (Samuel Beckett as cited in Melrose, Park, & Perry, 2015). Teachers can utilize variety of ways to evaluate students’ performance during debriefing. Evaluation should reflect on students’ achievement to meet their learning objectives and demonstrate skills and knowledge (Oermann, et al., 2018). Teachers should select reliable and valid tools to assess students such as using the skills checklist, rating scales, and other performance that matches students’ learning outcomes.

Debriefing is perhaps the most important area of simulation that provides opportunity for guided reflection. Debriefing is critical for students learning because debriefing facilitates student increased in self-reflection, self-awareness, and to translate the knowledge into practice (INACSL Standard Committee, 2016). Debriefing helps students to make sense of the simulation experience, reinforce learning, and to apply information into clinical practice. Educators need to ensure that they can conduct debriefing effectively looking at how critical debriefing is for students learning. The dynamic of debriefing questions should serve as prompt for students to focus and to reflect on their learning objectives (Dreifuerst, 2009).

**Conclusion**

As the future of nursing continues to evolve, it is essential to look for new interactive ways to educate nurses away from the bedside. It is evident that the benefits associated with simulation scenarios and debriefing make them among the best clinical teaching approaches available within the discipline of nursing. Nurses are the center of what can create good health outcomes in people and empowering nurses with the best clinical teaching approaches is essential for advancing healthcare education into the future.

Relationship between Effective Communication and Group Learning

Roshi Moeini- Research and Graduate Studies



Most educational institutions promote group work over individual work because the contribution of diverse information through collaboration can result in more well-versed decisions and can improve group performance (Deeter-Schmeltz & Ramsey, 2003). Group learning depends on how sound group members communicate within the subject of discussion to satisfy the necessary circumstances for successful group problem solving and decision making. This article discusses group communication, which includes patterns of communication and its effectiveness in a group’s achievement of its goals. It also touches on why effective communication in a group positively affects group learning.

**Effective Group Communication**

A group is always formed for a reason, either to complete a project in a classroom, or to accomplish a goal. For instance, students make a group to do a research project together and do a presentation about a specific subject. Effective communication is a crucial component of any group and it is more than exchanging and sharing ideas and information; it’s about understanding the impression behind the information and ideas that members of the group are trying to share.

Xia (2002) highlighted that the effectiveness of face-to-face group communication depends on many factors such as body language, tone of voice, and physical environment, which can be used to get the message across. For example, in a classroom, learning in a group depends on the voice of the teacher, how the teacher engages students in the class, how students interact with each other, and the climate of the classroom. Johnson and Johnson (2017) identified that positive social interdependence enhances adequate communication, which is defined as individuals assisting and encouraging one another in the group through exchange of needed resources, effective interaction, and trust required to reach group goals. If socio-emotional factors in a group are not managed accurately, the tension arises within a group, and they would not be able to achieve the goals they desire to.

Johnson and Johnson (2017) analyzed group communication patterns in three ways: communication among members, communication network, and nature of the communication.

**Communication among members.** When group members interact, they determine their roles in relation to each other. They usually define themselves through repeated interactions during which activity patterns, boundaries of responsibility, group policy and procedure rise. During the group practice, tasks become systemized, role conflicts decrease, interaction becomes impersonalized, and coordination among group members improves (London & Sessa, 2017). Therefore, communicating in a powerful, concise, and accurate manner takes a substantial effort from group members.

**Communication network.** Communication network is the flow of information among the group members.An efficient communication network is when information flows in the path accepted by the group members (Johnson and Johnson, 2017). According to Johnson and Johnson (2017), the five types of communication networks include:

* Y communication pattern - information flows upward and downward through the hierarchy.
* Wheels communication pattern - information flows to and from a single person.
* Circle communication pattern - group member communicate only with adjoining members of the group.
* Chain communication pattern -communication travels up and down through the hierarchy.
* Open communication pattern - communications flow upward, downward and alongside among group members.

Typically, group moral is higher in a decentralized communication network - Circle and Open - and it is more efficient in a group that is complicated and requires analysis of information. The centralized communication network - Chain, Y, and Wheel - is more productive in terms of pace and lack of errors, and it is more efficient in uncomplicated groups

**Nature of communication.** As explained by Johnson and Johnson (2017), the pattern of communication is either one way, one way with feedback, or a two-way communication. Wisestep (2018) explains that the two-way communication is the most effective one in terms of group efficiency because it is a dynamic procedure that includes implementation and satisfaction. The two-way communication is a dynamic process as the details of the messages are sent to the other member of the group immediately from the sender of the message. As soon as the message is received, the listener may quickly give a feedback to the sender. Implementation and satisfaction are also part of the two-way communication. Group members are able to implement feedback in order to command and instruct on various issues and problems. As the messages are properly and thoroughly understood in the two-way communication, group members can openly discuss their problems and give suggestions to each other; this leads to high satisfaction among group members. On the other hand, one-way communication is usually the less effective pattern of interaction. When one-way communication is used in a group, comprehension of the message is often so poor that group members turn to the informal communication network to clarify what has been communicated. In the one-way communication, the source is not available to answer questions, and other members rely on the gatekeepers who translate and interpret information to groupmates to simplify the message (Johnson & Johnson, 2017). Poor communication in a group can create conflict in relationships and bring stress among the group, which affects group learning.

**Effective Communication within Group Positively Associates with Group Learning**

Edmondson (1999) conceptualized the group learning as an ongoing process of action and reaction among group members, which is identified by asking for feedback and questions, as well as investigating and thinking about the unexpected outcomes of communication (as cited in Vora & Marko ́czy, 2012). Group communication is the exchange of ideas through discussion and debate, which promotes a higher level of learning in a group (Ryve, Nilsson, and Pettersson, 2012). When group members are involved in interaction processes, they are habitually responding to their environment; therefore, members adjust their actions and interactions with one another, which enhances group learning (London & Sessa, 2008).

Effective communication within a group has positive and negative effects on group learning. Teng and Luo (2015) noted that effective communication in a group improves group learning because working in a group allows group members to classify common goals, contribute to the group discussions, and eventually finish project reports. The same authors state that information processing at a group level involves knowledge, ideas, and mental structures that are shared among the group members, and sharing of information improves both individual and group learning. Furthermore, groups that regularly interact with each other have probably more opportunity to ask questions, discuss different activities they are going to do in the group, and seek and receive feedback. This kind of groups are also able to better learn about other group member’s expertise, and advance shared point of views about the task. Consequently, groups that engage in effective communication such as information elaboration and integration have better performance and directly affect group member’s learnings (Vora & Marko ́czy, 2012).

However, groups that do not communicate effectively or communicate to a minimal level will not be able to perform well. A group may have the right members and the right tools and resources to do its work but not be able to function well if it fails in the ability to communicate and negotiate disagreements effectively. Xia (2002) explained that in a group discussion, group members should be able to successfully negotiate the disagreement between their opinions and the other group members' opinions. Through negotiation and dialogue, members of a group are able to reconstruct their thoughts and beliefs that are different from others in the group.

As noted above, literature supports that there is a strong connection between the level of engagement, group participation, and learning effectiveness. Based on this evidence, many educational institutions promote group work over individual work. Group work involves social exchange which, according to current pedagogy, is the key for building knowledge and achievement (Xia, 2002).

**Conclusion**

Effective communication gets to the core of each other’s messages and intentions and it is an essential aspect of group performance and achievement of the assigned tasks. By creating a positive environment for communication, group members can share their knowledge, ideas, issues, and problems openly and freely, which improves social interdependence and can lead to group learning. Therefore, it is important that students are equipped with the knowledge of how to communicate effectively in a group and the importance of group work in knowledge transfer in order to enhance their learning during group activities.

The Day I Flunked My Dissertation: The Act of Dedicated Writing Sessions

Dr. M. Gregory (Greg) Tweedie

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The day I realized I was going to fail my doctorate program was a very cold January night for Doha, and the impending sandstorm darkened what sliver of a moon there was. But cold and dark, gusty wind or not, I *had* to get out and walk - and walk *hard*. I don’t remember how many loops I made around the Aspire Park path, but I recall being stiff and sore the next day with an oozing blister for good measure. But that night, I didn’t care. I had to get *it* out of my system.

*It* was an overwhelming feeling of failure and defeat. My doctoral dissertation was dead in the water. Like running a marathon but falling off before the stadium entrance, I felt it would have been better to have never started. My data collection plan had encountered multiple obstacles, and I had to change my topic - twice. My supervisor fell ill and had to pass me off to another. My funding was nearing its end, and my situation wouldn’t warrant an extension. I’d lost a whole chapter in a computer crash (painful lesson learned about backup copies!). The university changed its reference software support, so citations I had painstakingly entered didn’t transfer over to the new system and had to be redone. The thesis committee members felt my argument was weak and wouldn’t hold water. And, worst of all, as I shouted into the gusty wind coming off the Arabian desert that dark evening, *I no longer knew what to write*! The computer screen had become my enemy, and I found myself doing anything to avoid putting words to the page. Sometime after midnight, I called it quits on my long walk. There was no resolution, and failure seemed just as inevitable, but at least I felt a sense of relief from spent emotions.



As so often happens though, the act of giving voice to a problem opens a window to its solution. A few days later, quite by accident (?), I came across a little book called *Writing Your Dissertation in 15 Minutes A Day*[[1]](#footnote-1)(Baker, 1998). Like most self-help books, the title sounded too good to be true. But the lessons from this unpretentious little book have irrevocably shaped the trajectory of my professional career.

Here’s the thing: all of us know we *should* write. Most of us are *expected* to write. Many of us require our *students* to write. But on any given day, or any given week, or any given month, very few of us *actually* write.

The basic premise of *15 Minutes* is simple. Sit in a chair. Hands on keyboard. Timer set. Then write *something*. Oh - and no getting up until that timer beeps, indicating the 15 minutes is up. My first few goes at this were agonizing: I squirmed, rocked back on my chair, ran my fingers through my hair, chewed my fingernails (eew!), checked the timer, and then checked it again. But failure in a program I had put 5 long years into was not an option, and I was desperate. So I decided to double the author’s recommendation, and instead set the timer for 30 minutes. And so I stayed, sit-in-chair, until the timer put me out of my misery.

Nursing Conferences

My first objection then was probably yours now: *But what if I’ve got nothing to write*? Well, the author of *15 Minutes* tells us, you begin by typing, “*Today, I have nothing to write. I’m stuck. Absolutely blank. Zero. I am utterly stuck*. *And just plain mad about it*.” Then a tiny spark of a thought might occur to you, so you put that on the screen: “*Well, I suppose I could write a few lines about the study on X, and why author Y doesn’t agree with it*.” So you do. “*Although Staples’ (2015) work on internationally educated nurses is often cited in the literature, there have been concerns expressed by several researchers surrounding its limited scope*.” You read that sentence back to yourself - *Hey, not bad*! So you continue: “*Johnson (2018), for example, argues that while valuable, Staples’ study is limited to non-native speaking nurses in a native English speaking context, and therefore fails to take into account the wide range of non-native to non-native nurse-patient interactions using English*.” 7 minutes have now gone by, but you don’t know it - you’re on a roll, and you’ve forgotten about the timer. You go on to express White’s (2016) concern with Staples’ study, and then throw in MacDonald’s (2017) comments for good measure. You’ve finished a paragraph, and beginning another when the beeping timer startles you. Shocked at how fast the time went, you conclude the session by typing, “*Well, maybe I* did *have something to write after all*…” Yes. You did.

Two more objections to the sit-in-chair approach advocated by *15 minutes*.

* *I can’t write in a short time frame; I prefer a 4-hour block*. Me too. So do most people. But for many of us, the much dreamt about, uninterrupted, 4-hour block of writing productivity bliss never comes. There’s our teaching load, assignment grading, emails from students, faculty meetings, kids’ soccer practice and music lessons, grocery shopping, cooking and cleaning, exercise and self-care. Seriously - do you *have* a 4-hour block? If so, consider yourself doubly blessed, and have at it. Most of us have to make do with short bursts of writing, squeezed in among the chaos of daily life, and don’t have the luxury of a long, uninterrupted writing period.
* *I need to read all of the literature before I start writing*. Making sure you have a grasp on the literature for your topic is important. Critical, actually. But in the internet age, reading *all* of the literature in a given field is, I assert, impossible. In the time it takes to read an article, a new one will be written and published online! Let’s be honest: for many of us, finding that one more article is, more often than we care to admit, just another way to avoid doing what we really don’t want to get down to: *writing*. Finding that one last piece of information from that one last article, which references another article, which references another … these lit review rabbit holes can make us feel we’re accomplishing something “academic-y”, but may just be an elaborate avoidance strategy. And psychologists tell us that the more we avoid something, the bigger it becomes in our mind, and so we avoid it even more.

There’s a happy ending to the “Dark Night of the Dissertation” described at the beginning of this article: the deceptively simple approach advocated in *15 Minutes* saved my thesis, and therefore my degree. I should say though that the book’s title *was* actually too good to be true - it took me 30 minutes a day to complete my thesis. Sitting-in-a seat for 30 minutes got easier and easier, and that half hour, while small, was infinitely better than not writing at all, and *obsessing about* not writing at all - both of which were what I had been doing up until that point. 250 words a day, for 6 days a week, for 50 weeks … do the math. Then when the crunch came in the final 3 months, I stepped it up to two 60-minute blocks daily for 3 months, finished that thing off, and got on with my life.

To this day, I still dream of uninterrupted 4-hour writing blocks. But since I stared doctoral failure in the face that cold, windy Doha night, I’ve learned to work instead in daily 30-minute writing periods.

This little habit, unglamorous as it may be, has served me well in establishing a consistent record of peer-reviewed publications, grants and research proposals. And - truthfully - it’s how I wrote this article

Nursing Conferences

**World Summit on Nursing and Women Health**

* When & Where: February 24-25, 2020. Dubai, U.A.E.
* Theme: Advancing Nursing for Trusted Care
* Website: <https://larixconferences.com/nursing/>

**8th International Nurse Education Conference**

* When & Where: April 26-29, 2020. Barcelona, Spain
* Theme: Transforming Nursing and Midwifery Education: Leadership Innovation and Diversity for Global Healthcare Impact
* Website: <https://www.elsevier.com/events/conferences/international-nurse-education-conference>

**STTI 5th Biennial European Conference**

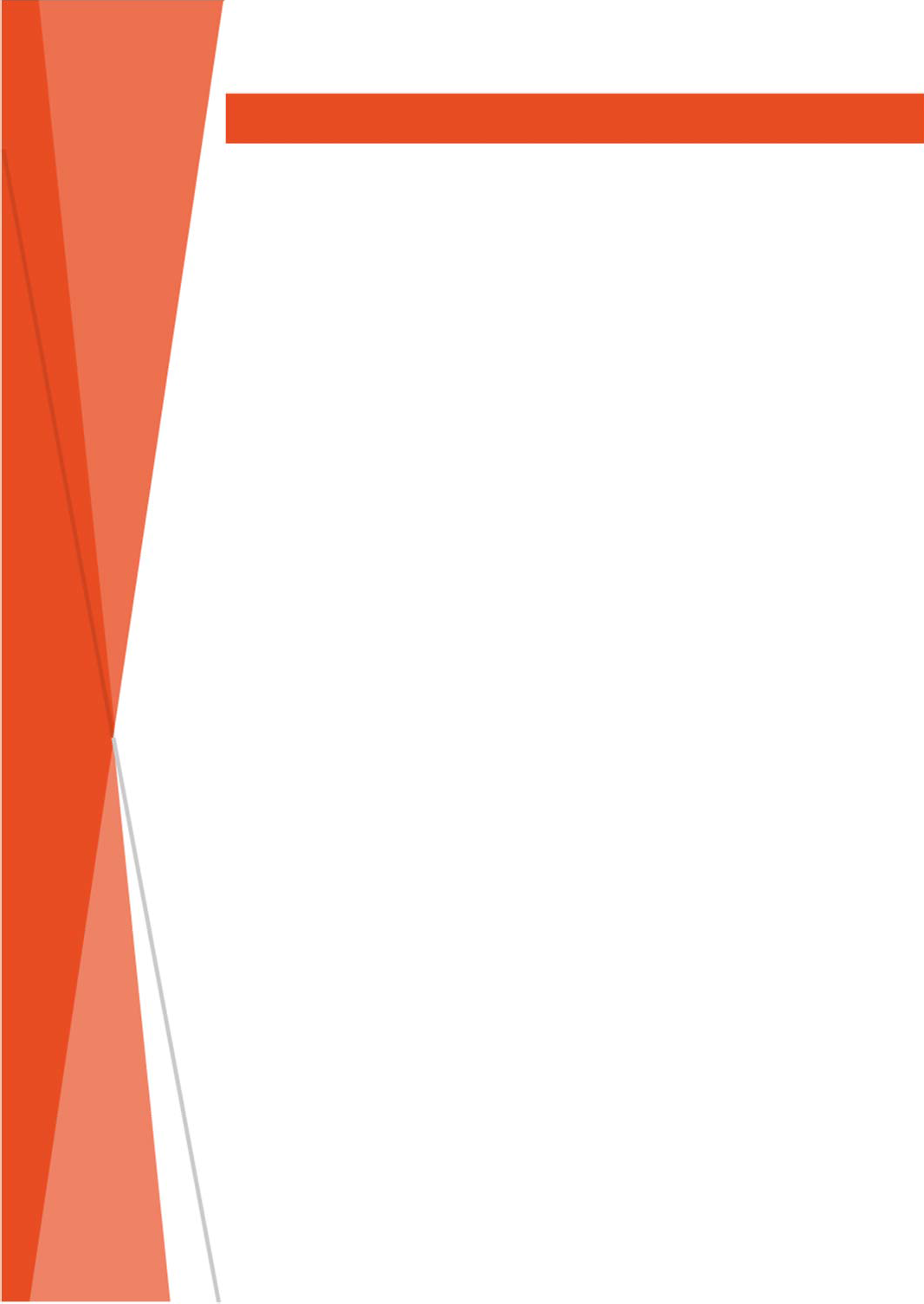
* When & Where: May 27-30, 2020. Coimbra, Portugal
* Theme: Nursing’s Innovation, Influence and Impact on Global Health: Looking Back and Moving Forward
* Website: <https://sigma.esenfc.pt>.

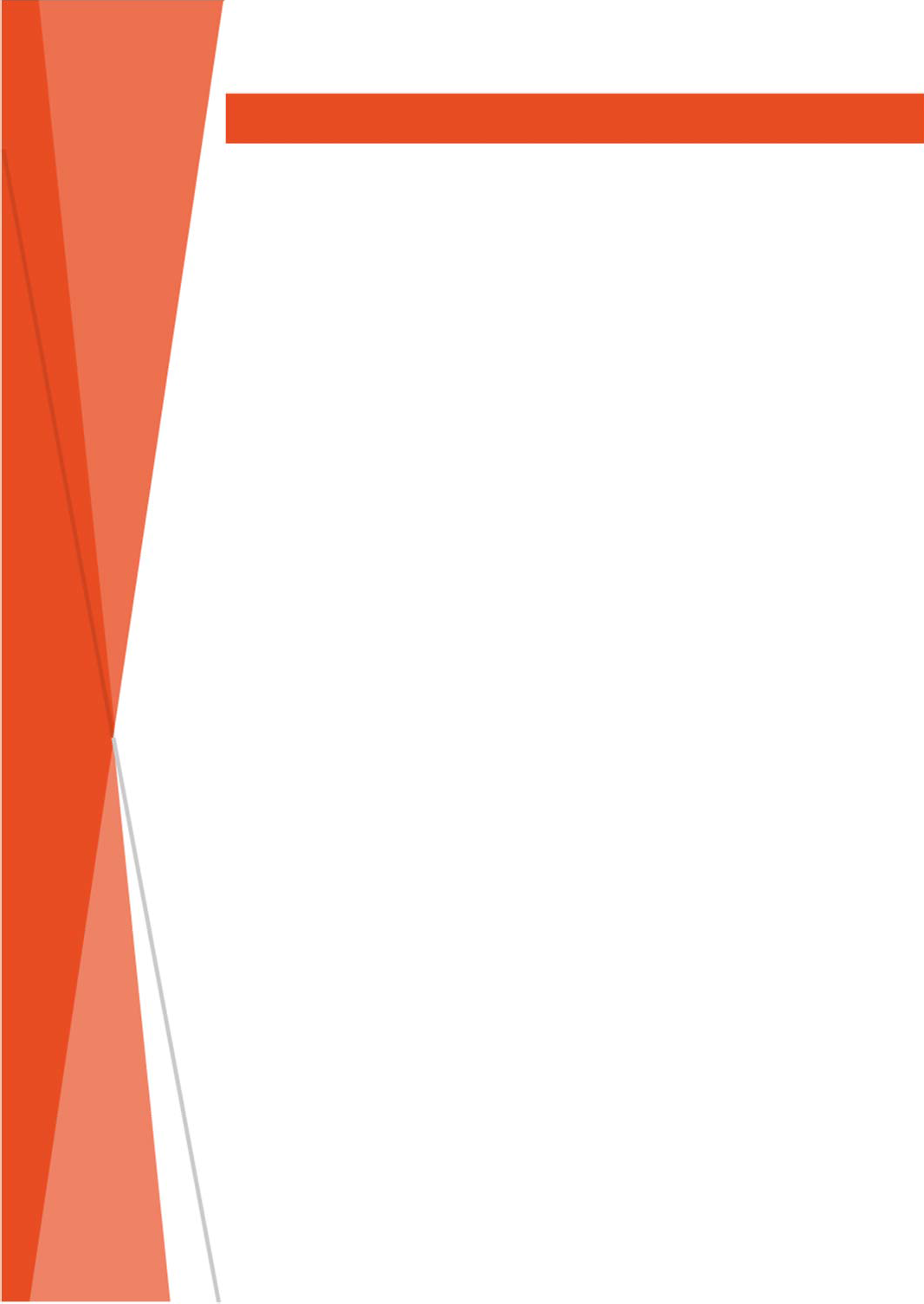
**The 13th Biennial Conference of the Global Network of WHO Collaborating Centers for Nursing and Midwifery**

* When & Where: June **16-18, 2020. Chiang Mai, Thailand**
* Theme: Advocacy and Policy: Strengthening the Voices and Capacities of Health Professionals
* Website: <http://healthadvocacy2020.com/programme_full>

**31st International Nursing Research Congress**

* When & Where: July **23-27, 2020. Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates**
* Theme: Transforming Global Nursing Research and Scholarship Through Connections and Collaborations
* Website: <https://www.sigmanursing.org/connect-engage/meetings-events/congress-2020>





CTL COMING EVENTS

**Be on the lookout for CTL emails on the events below!**

**Check the SharePoint site for current dates, location and times -** [**https://intranet.ucalgary.edu.qa/sites/ucq/default.aspx**](https://intranet.ucalgary.edu.qa/sites/ucq/default.aspx)

**University Teaching and Learning Certificate**

A comprehensive program on teaching and learning in the health sciences classroom and clinical setting, facilitated by faculty from Nursing, Foundations and the Centre for Teaching and Learning. Accredited by QHCP, the program provides foundational knowledge of evidence-based pedagogical practices through learning sessions on lesson planning, curriculum development and alignment, teaching and learning strategies, assessment, teaching in clinical settings, as well as teaching second language learners.

**CTL Event: Teaching and Learning in Nursing Education Book Club Series- session #2**

We are pleased to continue our book club centered on the book – *Creative Teaching Strategies for the Nurse Educator*. The acclaimed book by Dr. Judith Herman (RN) contains over 130 practical, relevant, and easy-to-implement teaching strategies that nursing instructors can use to engage students actively in the classroom. In the book, she offers techniques gathered over many years from her own teaching experiences that are adaptable to personal teaching content, meet the needs of a variety of learning styles, and demonstrate innovation in nursing education.

Please consider becoming part of the book club as a new Community of Practice\* that will explore how to adapt and implement these strategies here at UCQ, as well as reflect on implementation within our classrooms. For questions, please email Alina Botis- [valeriaalina.botis@ucalgary.edu.qa](mailto:valeriaalina.botis@ucalgary.edu.qa)

**Grants Drop-In Consultation Sessions**

This session provides an opportunity for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) Grant applicants to ask questions and consult on their proposals for the University of Calgary Teaching and Learning Grants Program. For an appointment to discuss your grant proposal or ideas, email Dr. Frances Kalu – [fukalu@ucalgary.ca](mailto:fukalu@ucalgary.ca)

**UCQ Teaching Squares**

Teaching Squares provide a safe confidential space to build community and improve your teaching skills through non-evaluative teaching observations and self-reflection. Each teaching square would include three participating faculty and a member of the Centre for Teaching and Learning. We will engage in an initial meeting, identification of objectives for observations, square shares, reflection and implementation. Interested? Kindly send an email to Frances – [fukalu@ucalgary.edu.qa](mailto:fukalu@ucalgary.edu.qa).

**Teaching Awards Drop-In Consultation Sessions**

Are you interested in or applying for the 2021 University of Calgary Teaching Awards? This session provides an opportunity for you to learn more about the awards program, developing your nomination package, teaching philosophy statement and teaching dossier. For an appointment to discuss your Teaching Awards application, email Dr. Frances Kalu – [fukalu@ucalgary.ca](mailto:fukalu@ucalgary.ca)

**Lunch n’ Learns**

Faculty members and staff present on various topics not limited to simulation, supervising graduate students, research, experiential learning amongst others. We are open to ideas of new topics and the CTL will work with you to develop and deliver the sessions.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Debriefing Questions** | | |
| **Phases** | **Do’s** | **Do not’s** |
| **Reaction** | How was that for you?  Ask genuinely - show positive posture and facial expression | Show undesirable reactions or provide negative comments |
| **Analysis** | It is helpful to know what you are trying to accomplish here in this situation.  What are you trying to accomplish here?  Now that we have these fundamentals, what other things you can improve?  Is there anything you would like to work on?  From what I know doing this (point out the error) can cause problem.  Have you ever heard of this problem?  I was wondering what was going through you mind at that moment? | Ask why did you do that?  Ask how bad it needs to be before you tell someone?  Ask what have you done?  Ask why didn’t you double check? |
| **Summary /Application** | What did you do well?  What will you do differently next time? | Ask did you learn anything at all today?  Ask are you proud of what you did today? |



**Call for submissions**

**The purpose of *CTL Newsletter* is to share research, ideas, and insights into teaching and to build a community of educators.**

**The CTL extends a special thank you to the authors of this edition.**

If you are interested in writing for the next edition, we are looking for contributors who have:

* + successfully tried a new teaching idea in class
  + observed a class that used a great teaching strategy
  + tested a new assessment strategy that was successful
  + attended a workshop at UCQ or elsewhere that others might find useful
  + read an article about teaching that others should know about
  + conducted research on their teaching that they would like to share.

**Submission guidelines**

* + All articles must be related to teaching, the scholarship of teaching and learning, or education and they must be relevant to the UCQ context.
  + If citations are used, they must be formatted according to APA style.
  + All articles submitted are subject to editorial review.
  + The deadline for submission for the next edition will be announced.

**If you would like more information, want to discuss your ideas, or are interested in becoming part of the editorial board for the newsletter, please contact Dr. Frances Kalu,** [**fukalu@ucalgary.edu.qa**](mailto:fukalu@ucalgary.edu.qa) **or Alina Botis,** [**valeriaalina.botis@ucalgary.edu.qa**](mailto:valeriaalina.botis@ucalgary.edu.qa) **or Angela Waigand,** [**auwaigan@ucalgary.edu.qa**](mailto:auwaigan@ucalgary.edu.qa)

**6th CTL Newsletter Editors: Alina Botis and Dr. Frances Kalu**

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