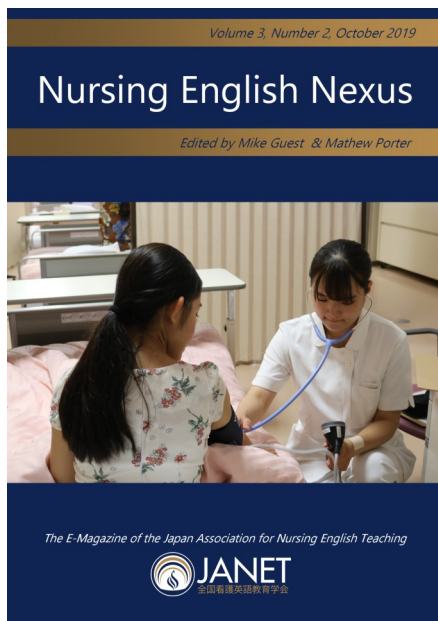


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Fostering Active Learning in a Nursing English Course Through Public Health Poster Presentations

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Whatever nursing specialty or nursing-related career path our students end up pursuing, their day-to-day work is highly likely to involve some element of public health. Accordingly, we have included a public health presentation activity in our second-year nursing English course for some years. In previous years, this involved small groups of students choosing and researching a public health topic and giving a 10-minute English presentation about their chosen topic, with a question and answer session at the end of their presentation.

However, during the 2018/2019 academic year, we decided to do things differently. Some students in previous years reported that they found researching and giving a presentation in front of the entire class to be very stressful. Accordingly, we tweaked the format for the course by asking our students to give poster-style presentations in small groups, hoping that this would make the task a little less daunting. In fact, what we found was that not only did students seem to find the activity less intimidating, but they also seemed to find this format more rewarding as well.

Before discussing some of the many positives that came out of this activity, I will explain how it was set up. This activity was an assessed part of the second-year nursing English course at our institution. The presentation was worth 10% of students' final grades, and the review paper (asking students to reflect on what they learned from their own presentation and what they learned from other students' presentations) was also worth 10% of their final grade. Accordingly, the fact that the activity comprised 20% of their overall grade for the course meant that students were eager to invest their time and effort into the activity.

The activity itself was spread across three lessons. In the first lesson, we introduced the activity and organised the students into pairs or groups of three (for classes with odd numbers of students). The pairing/grouping was done randomly rather than left to students to decide. We also distributed a handout which explained the goals for the activity and what was expected of the presentations (see Appendix A). At the bottom of that handout was a list of public health topics that students were expected to give presentations about. The course coordinators selected these topics based upon their perceived relevance to local and/or global public health concerns and initiatives and also their potential relevance to our students. (Students were also advised that they could—subject to teacher approval—choose their own topic, although no student pairs/groups did so.)

Given that we wanted no more than one presentation for each topic, pairs/groups were asked to choose three topics. The teachers then decided which pair/group would present on which topic based upon those selections. And although many student pairs/groups did not get to present on their first choice, most, if not all, pairs/groups were assigned a topic based upon one of their three choices.

In this first lesson, teachers also reminded the students that these public health topics are general topics. Accordingly, for their presentations, students would need to focus on some particular aspect of their chosen public health topic, as they would not have enough time to cover the general topic in its entirety. We also distributed some sample public health pamphlets (collected from various healthcare providers and institutions in New Zealand) to give our students an idea of what we were looking for.

Students spent most of the second lesson preparing for their poster presentations. Teachers reminded students that they had to prepare: (1) an A3-sized poster highlighting the key messages related to their chosen topic; (2) an A4-sized pamphlet related to their topic (similar to public health pamphlets found in hospitals, clinics, and other community facilities); and (3) notes for their presentation. We advised students that the posters and pamphlets were intended to help audience members to understand the key messages of the presentation topics, and that the posters and pamphlets also formed part of the presentation assessment. (Teachers also collected the pamphlets after the presentations to check for plagiarism.) And although some groups made printed copies of their posters and/or pamphlets, students were told that hand-drawn posters and pamphlets were also acceptable.

The third lesson was the poster presentation day. Students were arranged into 'pods' consisting of three pairs/groups. Each pair/group gave a roughly three-minute presentation, which was followed by a two-minute Q & A session. After all of the pairs/groups had given their presentations, we rearranged the pods, and the process was repeated so that students gave their presentations to new groups of students. This process was done one more time, so each pair/group ended up giving their presentation three times. (This also helped the teachers to evaluate the presentations effectively.) At the end of the lesson, students were reminded that they had to submit their review paper at the beginning of the next lesson.

The presentations were evaluated based upon the poster and pamphlet (design, English grammar and vocabulary, and content), and also the presentation itself (content and English grammar and vocabulary). Students were also advised that their pair/group could be awarded bonus presentation marks for asking questions during the Q & A sessions. The review paper was also marked based upon content, English

grammar, and vocabulary.

Most of the feedback from our students about this activity was very positive. Many students commented that the format was less stressful than regular full-class presentations, and that they felt more comfortable asking questions in small groups rather than in front of the whole class. In their review papers, a lot of students also noted that, as young adults, they felt a direct connection to many of the topics (such as sex education, alcohol abuse, road/driving safety, and so on). Overall, despite some minor housekeeping issues on the presentation day (mainly related to timing discrepancies between the different presentation groups), this activity was hugely successful. The positive feedback from students and teachers, combined with the very high quality of the presentations and the review papers, suggest that this activity will continue to be an integral part of our course in the coming years.

Appendix A: Handout for students' public health poster presentations

GROUP PROJECT INFORMATION (FIRST SEMESTER)

- ❖ The group presentations will be on **Tuesday, 9 July**.
- ❖ You will have some time in class to prepare for your group presentation on Tuesday, 25 June and also on Tuesday, 2 July. However, you will also need to do some preparation for the group presentation *outside* of class.
- ❖ The format for the group presentation is as follows:
 - It is a **pair** presentation;
 - The presentation should be about a **public health topic** (you need to choose a topic from the list of public health topics below);
 - For the presentation, you need to prepare:
 - (1) an **A3-sized poster** about your public health topic;
 - (2) a **small booklet** (folded A4-sized or B5-sized) providing information about your public health topic; and
 - (3) **presentation notes** for your 2-3-minute in-class presentation about your public health topic.
- ❖ When you are preparing your poster, booklet, and notes, you should think about these questions: (1) *What is the important information that people need to know about the topic?* (2) *What are some of the problems associated with the topic, and how can people deal with these problems?* (3) *How can people find out more about this topic?*
- ❖ You should choose a topic from the list of general public health topics below. (Students are also able to choose a public health topic that is not included in the list below, but you need to discuss it with your teacher.)

LIST OF GENERAL PUBLIC HEALTH TOPICS

1. **Sex education** 2. **Food safety / hygiene** 3. **Smoking** 4. **Alcohol abuse**
5. **Drug abuse** 6. **HIV** 7. **Air pollution** 8. **Safety around water**
9. **Safety around the home** 10. **Infectious diseases** 11. **Domestic violence**
12. **Vaccines** 13. **Dementia (認知症)** 14. **Childbirth and maternity**
15. **Road safety / driving safety**