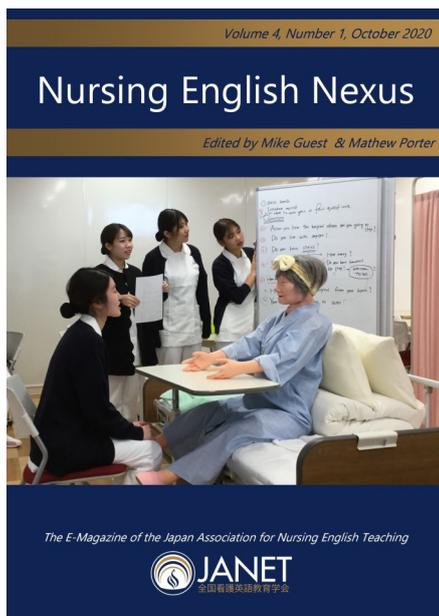


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My Struggles as a Nursing Student During the Coronavirus Pandemic

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The coronavirus pandemic has changed our daily life, work and learning environment dramatically. Nara Medical University (NMU) is no exception. NMU called for numerous changes not only to our course content but also to students' personal lives. Because NMU is a medical university, it set up stricter regulations for all students in order to minimise any risks of infection. This report introduces some of the unprecedented learning experiences that I have undergone during the coronavirus pandemic as a second-year nursing student at NMU.

In April, one day before the entrance ceremony for the new academic year, nursing students at NMU received an email from the university. The email required all students to take back all of the materials that were stowed in their personal lockers. This implied that something unusual would happen for our course. Many of us brought suitcases on that day, and although most of us were still unsure about what was happening, we were all excited about meeting our classmates again. However, the head of the NMU nursing department announced that we were not able to take classes on campus. Instead of that, they encouraged us to do self-study at home.

Since then, nursing students have been doing self-study following the materials that explained the details of our homework assignments: which subject has what kind of essays, required word counts and so on. That learning style accelerated a feeling of desolation and swamped us with deadlines. In addition, this prompted anxiety about our future careers due to our perceived insufficient understanding of what we were learning.

In May, our online classes finally started. However, as it seemed totally unprecedented for our lecturers to teach online lectures, many

technical problems occurred during our lectures, which disrupted the classes. Nonetheless, taking lectures while being able to listen to and see the lecturers gave us reassurance and motivation. But the situation deprived us of the opportunity to experience technical and practical training by physically using nursing equipment and materials, which is mandatory in preparing for working as nurses.

Finally, in the beginning of June, the day came when students could have lectures on campus. However, we were only allowed to come to the university one week out of every three. The rest of the time we continued taking online classes. Additionally, the practical training, which was supposed to involve being assigned to look after actual patients at the hospital, was cancelled and replaced with practice using mannequins in the nursing school.

The spread of coronavirus has greatly affected our learning experience as nursing students at NMU. Nursing students are supposed to become more familiar with nursing and medical terminology and procedures through lectures not only by listening but also by seeing, touching, and interacting. This includes learning not only the technical aspects of nursing care, but also such things as bedside manner. Although nursing students have tried to fully utilise the few occasions that allowed us to be on campus to study, many challenges and anxieties for our future still remain.