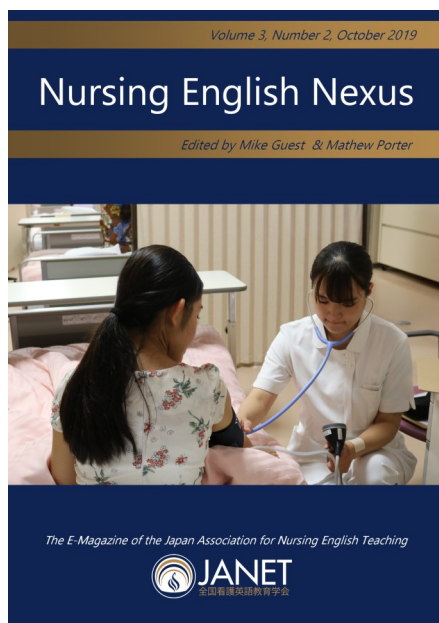


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Jane Harland

Fukuoka University



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Using Quizlet to Study Vocabulary in English for Nursing Classes

Jane Harland (janeharland.fukudai@gmail.com), Fukuoka University

Explicit vocabulary learning is vital in English for Nursing classes due to the number of specialist terms involved. Unfortunately, most textbooks fail to recycle vocabulary adequately, so it is difficult for students to master new terms. Some publishers provide supplementary materials online; for example, an introductory Nursing English textbook (Sato and Harland, 2011) has online audio (Igaku-Shoin, 2014a) and listening worksheets (Igaku-Shoin, 2014b). However, additional vocabulary activities for each chapter would also be beneficial to students.

Quizlet is a popular online study tool that allows teachers and students to create digital flashcards. It is user-friendly, requires little computer knowledge, and users can access it via the website or Quizlet app. Quizlet provides a workable solution to the problem of how to recycle nursing English vocabulary from a course textbook, allowing teachers to create materials that are suitable for students of all levels. I have used Quizlet for several years in my English for Research classes at Kyushu University's Faculty of Dental Science, and plan to use Quizlet in a new English for Reading Research Papers course in Fukuoka University's MS Nursing course.

Quizlet helps users study more efficiently, as terms that students get wrong will appear for review more often, so learners can focus on the terms that need the most work. Quizlet uses "unknown," "learned," and "known" to indicate levels of mastery. These distinctions are important, since students often "learn" vocabulary items rather than "master" them, i.e., they can recognize the terms, but not necessarily associate the term with the definition and vice versa.

To create study sets, instructors can import content from Word, Excel, or Google doc files into Quizlet. It is possible to use or customize existing study sets, but teachers should check whether the

content and level are appropriate for their classes. I make my own sets and use only English, but some instructors might prefer to use English and Japanese. Quizlet is not limited to word and definition matches alone, a text-to-speech audio function also enables students to listen to entries. If teachers upgrade to Quizlet Teacher (currently costing 4100 yen per year) they can add custom visuals and audio, which would help improve vocabulary retention and ensure the correct pronunciation of specialist terms. The final step is to set up virtual classes, add study sets, and then invite students to join their class via a URL.

Quizlet includes five study modes wherein students can learn or review material at their own pace. These modes are:

- Cards—use flashcards to study
- Learn—match the terms with their definitions
- Write—write in the terms
- Spell—type what you hear
- Test—create customizable tests.

Each mode has options, so the user can create a tailor-made learning experience, e.g., audio on/off, answer with term/definition, and the test mode includes several question types: matching, multiple-choice, true/false and written. There are also three play modes: Match, where users match corresponding items against the clock, and Gravity, a multi-level game where users have to type answers correctly to prevent asteroids from hitting their planet.

The final play mode, Quizlet Live, is a team-based classroom game where teams race to correctly match 12 terms and definitions from a chosen study set. Students use their smartphones and join a game by entering a 6-digit code or scanning a QR code. Quizlet randomly assigns students to groups, so they will need to move

around to find their teammates. Once the game starts, the teacher's screen displays team progress. All group members have the same questions, but only one student has the correct answer, so students need to pool information.

Quizlet Live aims for accuracy rather than speed. Therefore, students must think carefully before answering, as a wrong answer sends a team back to the beginning. After a game, both terms answered correctly and those frequently missed appear on the screen. Such instant feedback is a useful learning tool for students and highlights which terms the instructor should revisit. Quizlet Live is a fun vocabulary review activity to use at the end of class, and students of all levels can contribute to their teams.

How do I use Quizlet with my classes? I set a goal of at least five Quizlet activities a week, but let students choose how they study, as some modes are harder than others. To increase motivation levels, I enter scores in the Match and Gravity modes and give bonus points to students who beat my scores. Quizlet also encourages learners to keep playing. For example, when someone beats a student's score, the student will receive a motivational mail reminding them to "win back their spot."

How do my students use Quizlet? My students use computers or tablets in class, but most choose to use the Quizlet app on smartphones outside of class, as users can download study sets and study offline. Match is the most popular study mode, and the more active students played Match over 50 times to beat their classmates and top the leader board!

Most students average five activities a week during the course. However, initially, a few students did not actively participate, so I showed my class an example of my admin screen (Figure 1) which displays how many times a student has studied each activity. Once students realised that I could see exactly what they were doing, or not doing, this solved the problem of non-

participation. The free version of Quizlet displays student activity, however, teachers who require students' scores should use Quizlet Teacher.

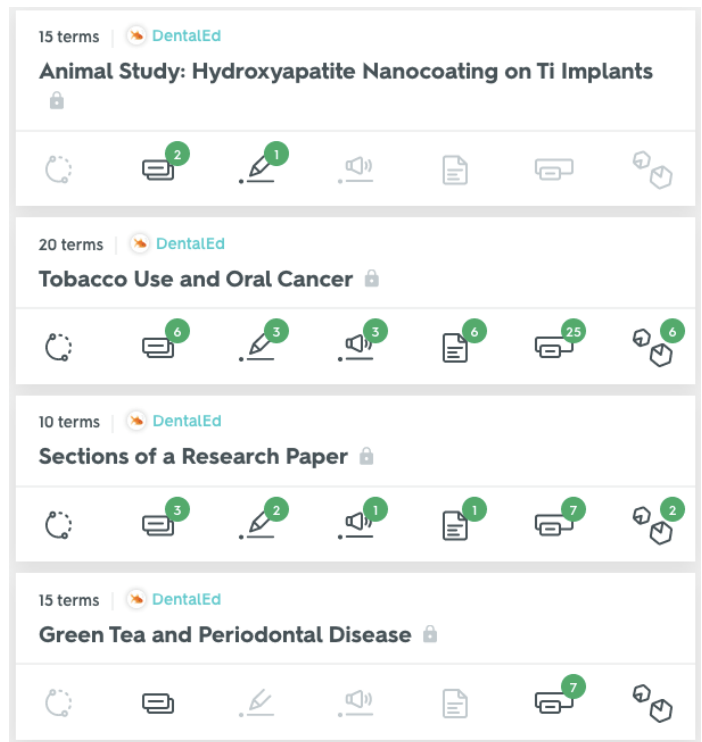


Figure 1. A student's activity shown on the admin screen. The numbers indicate how many times the student has studied an activity.

Materials designers can use Quizlet in a variety of ways: embed it into a class blog, or a learner management system, such as Moodle, use QR codes on class handouts to direct students to a Quizlet link, or generate printable flashcards and word lists. Test mode saves considerable time when creating paper tests, though the questions generated require checking, as answers sometimes appear in later questions.

I have used Quizlet myself for research and personal development, e.g., to master terms related to chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) during my PhD research, and when studying kanji compounds for my First Aid Instructor's course with the Fukuoka Fire Prevention Bureau.

In conclusion, Quizlet is a great learning tool for classes, such as nursing English, which require the study of specialist terms. Digital flashcards enable students to study anywhere and at any time, and in their preferred mode. The initial time

investment to create study sets pays off as the materials provide a valuable resource for future years. Furthermore, using Quizlet in my classes has led to better learner vocabulary retention, increased motivation, improved class dynamics, and has helped weaker students succeed.

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