

Nursing students' experiences of online teaching in nursing course

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ABSTRACT

Aims: In this study, it was aimed to evaluate the experiences of nursing students regarding the teaching in the nursing course conducted online during the pandemic period.

Methods: The sample of the descriptive and cross-sectional study consisted of 138 nursing students. The data were collected with a Google form prepared by the researchers, and the form consisted of five open-ended questions. Descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage were used to analyze the data. Quotations from the students' statements were made and presented.

Results: The students stated that the process made them happy and increased their motivation, that although they thought they would not succeed, they could succeed when they had sufficient equipment, and that they were excited and stressed. Students reported that they had difficulty in establishing seriousness with individuals, experienced excitement, stress, and tension while making presentations, and experienced technical problems. About half of the students stated that they had a positive and productive process. The most common suggestion of the students was to remove the requirement of video or material.

Conclusion: This study has shown that when students are properly mentored, the online teaching course provides many skills. Accordingly, it was suggested that online techniques could be integrated into the course, but the instructor should actively mentor the students.

Keywords: Teaching techniques, nursing, student, cross-sectional study

INTRODUCTION

The International Council of Nurses defines nursing as "the autonomous and collaborative care of individuals of all ages, families, groups, and communities, sick or healthy, and in all settings; it includes health promotion, disease prevention, and the care of the sick, disabled, and dying" (International Council of Nurses-ICN, 2002). The American Nurses Association, on the other hand, defines nursing as "integrating the art and science of care and focusing on the protection, promotion, and improvement of health and human functioning; prevention of illness and injury; facilitation of healing; and alleviation of suffering through a compassionate presence" (American Nurses Association, 2021). Within the scope of these definitions, nurses have modern roles such as caregiver, educator, researcher, manager, decision maker, advocate, communication and coordinator, and rehabilitator (Aydemir-Gedük, 2018).

The educational role of the nurse includes protecting and improving the health of the individual, family, or community; healing when ill; and providing health behaviors to a subject in need (Açıkgöz & Baykal, 2023). The education provided by nurses aims to increase satisfaction, improve quality of life, ensure continuity of care, reduce patient anxiety, reduce

disease frequency and complications, encourage compliance with the treatment plan, and maximize independence in activities of daily living (Bastable & Gonzalez, 2019). In order for nurses to be equipped with sufficient knowledge and skills within the scope of their educational roles, teaching in nursing courses is given in undergraduate education. Among the National Competencies of the Nursing Undergraduate Education Program, it is also included that nurses use the learning-teaching and management process in nursing practices (Council of Higher Education, 2022). Therefore, teaching in nursing emerges as an important field.

It is reported that teaching practice is a motivating and challenging method that requires learning facts, principles, and procedures for the effective development of decision-making skills that help nursing students take responsibility (Mgbekem et al., 2016). At the same time, it is stated that different teaching techniques taught to nursing students increase their critical thinking tendencies and motivation levels, and techniques such as watching movies, technical visits, and doing research are effective in increasing their motivation (Durgun-Ozan et al., 2022).

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In this study, it was aimed to evaluate the experiences of nursing students regarding the teaching in the nursing course conducted online during the pandemic process.

METHODS

Ethical Aspects of the Research

Before starting the study, written permissions were obtained from the Dean's Office of the Faculty of Health Sciences and the Aksaray University Human Researches Ethics Committee (Date: 21.06.2021, Decision No: 2021/05-19). The students participating in the study were informed about the research, and data were collected in line with the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki by explaining that individual information would remain confidential.

Research Design

This study was planned as a descriptive and cross-sectional study.

Population and Sample of the Study

The population of the study consisted of 143 students who took the "teaching in nursing" course in the spring semester of the 2020-2021 academic year at Aksaray University, Faculty of Health Sciences, Department of Nursing. The sample consisted of 138 students who attended the course, submitted their homework assignments within the scope of the course application, and agreed to participate in the study.

Procedure

Teaching in nursing is a 5 ECTS course with 2 hours of theory and 2 hours of practice. The aim of this course is to gain knowledge, skills, and attitudes towards assessing the learning needs of individuals/families/groups and societies related to health/illness/professionalism, planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the education and training process.

Course evaluation: 20% of the midterm exam, 20% of the application grade, and 60% of the final exam.

Course content: Nursing education, role of the nurse as an educator, basic concepts related to education and training, learning areas, learning theories, pedagogical and andragogical approach in education, adult education, using communication techniques in education, basic factors affecting learning, learning environment, educational technologies and effective presentation techniques, health education, in-service training, and ethics in education and training. These topics are given in a 14-week period.

Course implementation: A sample patient education presentation was shown to the students online. Within the scope of the implementation of this course, students were first asked to identify a person in need among family members and prepare training for health promotion, disease protection, or if they have an existing disease. They were asked to send these trainings to the researcher in charge of the course via email, and the instructor in charge of the course reviewed the trainings and gave individual feedback to each student.

Secondly, the prepared training was videotaped and given by the students to one of their family members. They emailed the videos of their trainings to the instructor in charge of the course. The course instructor watched these videos and gave feedback to the students again.

Thirdly, a school training scenario was created, and students were asked to plan trainings for kindergarten, primary school, or high school student groups. The students sent their training presentation contents to the instructor in charge of the course and were evaluated. In both trainings, students were asked to prepare materials appropriate to the subject content and to include the photographs of these materials in the presentation content.

Data Collection Form

The data were collected through a questionnaire developed by the students. The form consisted of five questions. The questions were;

- Explain the subject of the training you gave to the family member.
- Explain the characteristics of yourself that you were not previously aware of while providing this training but that you realized during or after the training.
- How many times did you shoot the training video you sent?
- Can you explain the problems you experienced during the training?
- Can you explain your suggestions for the online application assignment of the teaching in nursing course?

Statistical Analysis

The SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science for Windows 24.0) package program was used to evaluate the data. Descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage were used. $p < 0.05$ was accepted as the significance level. Students' statements were quoted and presented in " ".

RESULTS

As seen in [Table 1](#), the most common topics on which the students provided education were smoking and substance abuse (17.4%), diabetes mellitus (16.0%), and breast self-examination (12.3%).

[Table 2](#) shows the number of takes of the training video sent by the students. Students reported the second (19.3%), ninth or more (17.4%), third (15.6%), and fourth (15.6%) takes, respectively.

[Table 3](#) shows the students' thoughts on the preparation, implementation, and post-training process. The students stated that this process made them happy and increased their motivation (16.8%), that although they thought they could not succeed, they could succeed when they had sufficient equipment (15.3%), and that they were excited and stressed (13.5%).

"At the end of the training, touching the life of the individual in a positive way and being able to increase the level of health once again revealed the value of the nursing profession." (S11)

"Working with outstanding devotion to transfer the right information increased my self-confidence." (S19)

"I enjoyed the material preparation phase. I did not see it as just homework. Although I started with some prejudice, it was pleasant to continue. I did not think that education nursing was for me, but now I think I can do it." (S37)

"It was a good feeling to have attracted the attention of the person I educated with the information I provided during the training, and to achieve this, I felt quite equipped." (S46)

Table 1. Topics covered in the course

Subject topics	Number	Percentage
Smoking and substance abuse	24	17.4
Diabetes mellitus	22	16.0
Breast self-examination	17	12.3
Healthy living and nutrition	11	8.0
Hypertension	10	7.2
Heart, coronary, and cholesterol	6	4.3
Technology addiction	6	4.3
Obesity	5	3.7
Overcoming the stress	4	3.0
Constipation	3	2.2
Exam anxiety	3	2.2
Vitamin, iron deficiency	3	2.2
Puerperium and postpartum period, breastfeeding	3	2.2
Rational drug use	3	2.2
Menstrual, personal hygiene training	3	2.2
Gastritis training	3	2.2
Kidney health	2	1.4
Epilepsy	1	0.7
Incontinence	1	0.7
Stomach ulcer	1	0.7
Parkinson's disease	1	0.7
Ulcerative colitis	1	0.7
Traffic	1	0.7
Hepatitis B	1	0.7
Pain management in migraine	1	0.7
Lithium drug training in bipolar disorder	1	0.7
Coping with shopping frenzy	1	0.7
Total	138	100

Table 2. The number of shots of the sent training video

Number of video shots	Number	Percentage
First take	14	12.8
Second	21	19.3
Third	17	15.6
Fourth	17	15.6
Fifth	12	11.0
Sixth	3	2.8
Seventh	4	3.7
Eighth	2	1.8
9 th and more	19	17.4
Total	109	100

Table 4 shows the problems experienced by the students during the training. The students reported that they had the most difficulty in establishing seriousness with the individuals they trained (21.4%), experienced excitement, stress, and tension while making presentations (19.0%), and experienced technical problems (10.8%), respectively.

“Since it was a training given to family members, I had difficulty being in the role of a nurse. They had difficulty in perceiving my taking on this role realistically, mostly because they had never seen me as a nurse.” (S20)

Table 3. Students' thoughts on education

Thoughts	Number	Percentage
Attracting the attention of the other person and informing them made me pleased and increased my motivation.	20	16.8
I thought I could not succeed, but I saw that I could succeed when I had enough equipment.	18	15.3
I get excited and stressed.	16	13.5
I realized that I like to explain, that I have a talent in this field, and that I have high communication skills.	13	10.9
I realized that I had deficiencies in the subject I was giving training on, and I overcame these deficiencies while presenting.	9	7.5
I discovered my roles as an educator and researcher.	9	7.5
Being able to help someone increased my self-confidence.	8	6.8
I realized that I can work in a systematic or detailed way by taking the training I will give seriously.	7	5.8
I realized that I have problems in my diction and oratory.	6	5.0
I realized that I could not convey exactly what I wanted to tell and that I needed to improve myself.	5	4.3
I felt inadequate in preparing a presentation.	3	2.5
I realized that I use my gestures and mimics well and that my pronunciation is good.	3	2.5
I realized that I am a patient person.	1	0.8
I realized that I immersed myself in that role while making a presentation.	1	0.8
Total	119	100

Table 4. Problems experienced by students during education

Problems	Number	Percentage
I had difficulty in establishing seriousness with the individuals I trained.	26	21.4
I experienced excitement, stress, and tension while making a presentation.	23	19.0
I experienced technical problems (light, device memory, device freezing, power failure, etc.).	13	10.8
I experienced environmental problems (noise, ringing bells, etc.).	12	9.9
I had problems such as not having a third person for filming and not being able to stabilize the device.	11	9.2
I confused the content of the presentation; I had difficulty focusing.	10	8.2
I had problems with my diction (speaking fast, stuttering, stumbling over words).	9	7.4
I had no problems.	8	6.6
I had difficulties in preparing materials and finding materials.	5	4.2
I had problems with the person I trained (he did not want to take part in the video even though I gave him information beforehand).	4	3.3
Total	121	100

“While we were serious about the training, unfortunately, the distance we kept while giving training to our relatives caused a lot of laughter. This made the training fun, but it was difficult to catch the seriousness in the video.” (S103)

In **Table 5**, students' suggestions for the online application assignment are presented. 50.5% of the students stated that they had no suggestions and that they had a nice and productive process. The most common suggestion of the students was to remove the requirement of video or material (18.2%).

"This kind of assignment is very effective for us to realize our educational aspect, yes, but unfortunately, since I have never been in a situation such as preparing such an assignment and making a presentation before, there were some challenging aspects. For this reason, more detailed information can be shared in the lesson, especially about video shooting." (S6)

"Although it seemed tiring at first, when we started to deal with it, it both improved our manual skills and allowed us to see the points we should pay attention to in communication." (S29)

"Although the slide preparation part was easy in adult education, it was difficult for me in child education. I think we did the best possible application." (S58)

"I think my teacher made a super application; I enjoyed it, and we will close the semester in a very effective way." (S97)

Table 5. Students' suggestions for the online practice assignment of the teaching in nursing course

Suggestions	Number	Percentage
I have no suggestions; it was a very good and productive process.	47	50.5
Since not everyone's conditions are equal, the video or material requirement can be removed.	17	18.2
Instead of two presentation assignments, a single assignment can be given.	6	6.3
Students can be given the opportunity to come together on Zoom and make presentations in the classroom environment.	5	5.4
More assignments can be given.	3	3.2
Students can be given the opportunity to prepare more presentations and materials to showcase their creativity.	2	2.2
It was the most difficult lesson; it could be made a little easier.	2	2.2
I had difficulty in determining a topic. A topic can be determined and shared among everyone.	2	2.2
Groups can be formed and given training.	2	2.2
The time given for doing homework can be kept a little longer.	2	2.2
Other (More information can be given about preparing presentations and making videos. A working nurse could be interviewed. Various trainings can be organized. All the videos shot can be discarded.)	5	5.4
Total	93	100

DISCUSSION

In this study, which evaluated the experiences of nursing students regarding the online teaching in the nursing course conducted online during the pandemic, students stated that this process made them happy and increased their motivation, that they could succeed when they had sufficient equipment despite thinking that they could not succeed, and that they were excited and stressed. Some students reported that they had excellent communication skills, increased self-confidence, and discovered their roles as educators and researchers, while others reported inadequate communication skills. In a study, teaching practice was reported to be a motivating and challenging method for nursing students (Mgbekem et al., 2016). In another study, it was found that different teaching techniques taught to nursing students increased their critical thinking tendencies and motivation levels (Durgun-Ozan et al., 2022). Another study found that blending traditional

learning methods and e-learning methods, such as the application of interactive online resources, is important in developing students' clinical skills (Sheikhaboumasoudi et al., 2018).

Another finding obtained was that students reported that they had the most difficulty in establishing seriousness with the individuals they educated, experienced excitement, stress, and tension while making presentations, and experienced technical problems, respectively. Studies have shown that students experience stress during theoretical courses and clinical practice (Cho et al., 2023; Oducado & Estoque, 2021). It has been reported that nursing students are exposed to stress from different sources during their clinical education, such as the clinical environment, unfriendly clinical instructors, a sense of disconnection, multiple expectations from clinical staff and patients, and gaps between the theory courses and laboratory skills curriculum and students' clinical experiences (Dias et al., 2024). In the online education and training process, students may have had similar experiences and may not know how to overcome these problems alone. Because in a post-pandemic study, some of the important challenges of distance education were identified as economic inequalities, low family income, and further hindrance of interaction with online learning materials (Khatatbeh et al., 2024).

One of the important findings of this study is that about half of the students did not have any suggestions about online education and stated that they had a positive and productive education process. Undoubtedly, the methods used were also thought to have an effect on this result. In a study by Hampton et al. (2017), it was determined that online courses led to effective learning results, and the methods that students preferred most and found most effective were videos and narrated PowerPoint presentations. It has been reported that the use of technology in nursing education facilitates students' independence and provides flexibility (Gause et al., 2022). Online learning conducted during the pandemic period was found to provide a flexible learning environment, increase academic success, and facilitate student-centered learning (Bdair, 2021). Again, in a study using blended learning and teaching methods, it was determined that it had a positive effect on the self-management and self-control capacities of nursing students (Govindan et al., 2023). In this study, it was observed that approximately half of the students had positive perceptions. This perception is quite important. Because a study also showed that perceived learning satisfaction predicted learning engagement among nursing students in an online learning course (Chan et al., 2021). In other words, satisfaction increased engagement.

In this study, the most common suggestion made by the students was to remove the requirement of videos or materials in online teaching. Here, it was suggested that discussion boards should be used to increase motivation and learning, and that the instructor should have skills such as socialization and the use of narrative (Muirhead, 2007). It was also reported that students experienced problems in the transition from traditional methods to virtual teaching methods during the pandemic process and faced problems such as virtual differences with voice, interruption of sessions due to unexpected exit from the network, and continuous buffering; in addition, poor connection and technological ignorance also negatively affected this process (Gause et al., 2022). In

another study, it was reported that online courses conducted during the pandemic made students feel inadequate, disrupted academic honesty, distracted students from the online learning environment, and financially burdened the family (Bdair, 2021).

Recommendations for Educators

Adopt a mentorship approach: Instructors should act as active mentors, providing regular guidance, encouragement, and feedback throughout the course. This is crucial, especially in online settings where students may feel isolated or unmotivated.

Foster open communication: Encourage students to express their concerns and questions freely. Schedule regular virtual meetings, use discussion boards, and create a safe learning environment.

Use active learning methods: Incorporate interactive tools (e.g., breakout rooms, polls, case studies) and promote participation through small group work or collaborative projects.

Be flexible and empathetic: Acknowledge the challenges students face in online learning, such as technical issues or personal circumstances, and adapt accordingly (e.g., offering deadline flexibility or alternative assessments).

Recommendations for Faculty Managers

Provide technical support: Ensure that students and educators have access to stable internet, appropriate devices, and user-friendly platforms. Offer technical assistance when needed.

Support educator training: Invest in faculty development programs focused on online pedagogy, communication skills, and digital tools.

Encourage mentorship culture: Develop policies that recognize and reward mentorship efforts in online courses. Include mentorship as a criterion in performance evaluations.

Facilitate feedback channels: Establish mechanisms (e.g., surveys, focus groups) for students and educators to provide feedback on the online learning experience, enabling continuous improvement.

Recommendations for Educational Policies

Integrate blended learning: Encourage a hybrid model where online and face-to-face learning complement each other, leveraging the strengths of both approaches.

Mandate digital pedagogy training: Include online teaching competencies as part of the mandatory qualifications for educators in higher education.

Ensure equity in access: Develop policies to ensure equal access to technology, internet, and learning resources for all students, addressing digital divides.

Support well-being initiatives: Incorporate mental health support programs into educational policies, recognizing the stress students may experience in online learning environments.

Promote research on online education: Encourage studies that evaluate the effectiveness of online education in various fields, helping to refine strategies based on evidence.

CONCLUSION

This study, conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic period, showed that when students are mentored correctly, the teaching course, even online, provides many skills. Students reported that although they experienced stress and thought they could not do it, they were able to succeed when they took action, and this made them feel happy. However, they also reported communication problems, stress, and technical problems. They also stated that they had a successful and productive process despite all the problems they experienced. In this direction, it can be said that online techniques can be integrated into the course, but the instructor should actively mentor.

ETHICAL DECLARATIONS

Ethics Committee Approval

The study was carried out with the permission of the Aksaray University Human Researches Ethics Committee (Date: 21.06.2021, Decision No: 2021/05-19).

Informed Consent

Signed and informed consent forms were obtained from all students participating in the study.

Referee Evaluation Process

Externally peer-reviewed.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

Financial Disclosure

The authors declared that this study has received no financial support.

Author Contributions

All of the authors declare that they have all participated in the design, execution, and analysis of the paper, and that they have approved the final version.

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