

What Do the Amazing Race and Nursing Ethics Have in Common?



Photo credit Joseph Zerbino

Nursing ethics is a vital topic for our profession. The list of dos and don'ts of professional behaviour in the Nursing Code of Ethics is mandatory knowledge the nursing student must acquire before entering into patient care, but to many first semester nursing students, it seems dull. Despite the seemingly endless list of rules attached to it, professional behaviour and its relationship to bioethical principles are among the more complex competencies the student must achieve through the course of their program. It is a challenge to devise instructional strategies that bring our students to a place where they can understand and apply ethical principles despite having limited patient care experience.

In a large classroom, discussion is limited and it becomes easy for many students to disengage. Traditionally, the consolidation of elements of the nursing ethics competency was covered in a case-based seminar on the final day of class, when attendance is usually poor, as students are focusing their attentions on the final exam. As teachers, we were looking for a pedagogical solution that would have the students collaborating, solving problems and working as a team, thus mimicking the reality of a nurse's workday in a hospital ward.

Well-designed games drive learning in a fun, collaborative and entertaining way. The use

of games has been shown to promote problem-based learning and enhance retention of knowledge. Overall, games help students become much more engaged in their learning. To get our students more

excited about nursing ethics content, we have tried using games with clickers, as well as apps like Kahoot and Socrative, but we felt our students needed more. Devising a fun but educationally-impactful game with a class of 80-90 students within a 2-hour time frame became our teaching challenge. To this end, *The Amazing Race* game, based on the television show of the same name, was chosen as the learning activity. We hoped that the game would encourage collaborative, situation-based critical thinking and problem solving while engaging our students' competitive natures. That a bit of physical activity was thrown in was an added bonus. For logistical reasons, we chose four activity stations, each manned by a teacher and administered in a double circuit.

Students entered the classroom to the tune of *The Amazing Race* theme song, and the game's logo was projected on the screen. The anticipation ramped up quickly as students had had no advance notice of the activity: they had no clue as to what was going on. Once everyone was settled, students were divided into clinical groups of 6 students each.

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They were instructed as to the rules of the game, and they were provided with a sheet to be stamped upon successful completion of the challenge at each station.

Rules of the Amazing Race Game Challenge

- Your entire team must be present at each station.
- You must complete each station and receive a stamp before moving on to the next station.
- No running or yelling in the hallways is permitted.
- When you arrive at your final destination, stand on the podium and take a selfie.

All challenges featured case studies dealing with nursing responsibilities and accountability, patient confidentiality, consent, and/or professional liability. For example, the first challenge was a video in which students had to identify “*what went wrong*” in a nursing scenario. As each team identified the correct response to the teacher, they received their first of four clues leading them to the next of three other challenge stations placed at different locations around the college campus. For example,

Here the “people” lie row by row, they wait for you to perfect what you know. They never complain, they never shout or yell, they listen to your secrets, they never show and tell.”

was the clue that led the students to the nursing lab, where mannequins lie in hospital beds. The clue

From these windows you will see Butterfly, Breast, Back, and Free, Float a boat or clock your time. This is a favorite place of mine.

led them to the Sports Complex swimming

pool where, in addition to solving the question provided, team members had to test their athleticism by throwing a ball into a basket.

Students arrived at the last station huffing and puffing. The last group arrived at the final station about 75 minutes after the race began, which left just enough time to catch their breath before debriefing. We provided some written case studies to complete for groups that arrived early. The final ethics challenge was the recitation of the nurse’s pledge to their patients. This pledge is our modern version of the Florence Nightingale pledge. All the students stood and recited the pledge together with their teachers. The first semester was over and the stage was set for their professional role in patient care in the next semester.

The Vanier Nursing Pledge

I solemnly promise before my colleagues in the Vanier nursing program to practice my profession faithfully. I will not participate in any non-professional behavior and will not take or knowingly administer any harmful drug. I will do all in my power to maintain and elevate the standards of my profession, and will hold in confidence all personal matters committed to my keeping and all family affairs coming to my knowledge in the practice of nursing. I commit myself to work within the interdisciplinary team in an atmosphere of respect and consideration, and devote myself to the welfare of those committed to my care.

Teacher Tips

- Inform campus Security as there will be some running despite the rules.
- Ensure that each student has a water bottle as some were very dehydrated at their final station.
- Be clear about the parameters of the college campus. The clue that read “*Here the ‘people’ lie row by row,*” led one group to the cemetery just outside the college grounds.
- The stations should be challenging enough so that all groups will not answer at the same time.
- If the activity takes place in the winter, students should arrive to class with coats and boots.

The Amazing Race game has proven to be an excellent method of consolidating the ethics content in our course. Students are most challenged by situations where there are no black and white, right or wrong answers, and because these are just the kinds of situations that arise most frequently in the nursing profession, these are the kinds of scenarios that we built into the Amazing Race activity. In our course evaluation, 81.6% of the students responded that they recommend the Ethics Amazing Race as a beneficial learning activity.

Student Feedback on Course Evaluation

- “*Definitely, it was a fun way to study and really got students thinking. It was an effective way to prepare for the final exam and doesn’t hurt that the winners got candy.*”
- “*We could apply and learn while having fun.*”
- “*It was a fun way to apply our critical thinking and knowledge.*”
- “*I wish there were more than four stations.*”



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