

# Student Perceptions of Using Facebook to Present a Case Study

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## Background

- Informatics has been identified as a necessary component of undergraduate nursing education to prepare nursing students to practice in the technological healthcare environment (AACN, 2008).
- Social media, especially Facebook, is pervasive in twenty-first century society.
- Millennial students prefer technology-rich teaching strategies.
- Social media is documented as a teaching strategy in higher education.
- There is very limited research exploring the use of social media in nursing education (Ross & Myers, 2017).
- The limited nursing education literature suggests that students enjoy using social media in the educational environment (Morley, 2014; Stephens & Gunther, 2016).
- There is no existing nursing education literature that explores student perceptions or outcomes with the use of Facebook as a platform to present patient case study data.

## Purpose

The purpose of this descriptive, qualitative study was to understand baccalaureate nursing students' perceptions of the use of Facebook as a platform to present patient case study data.

## Sample & Setting

### Sample

- N= 19 BSN nursing students
- Gender: 89% female
- Race: 95% Caucasian
- Age: Mean 21.7 years, Mode 20 years (n=11)

### Setting

- A private, Catholic University in the Mid-Atlantic portion of the United States.



## Procedure

- Patient case study information for a Teaching Plan assignment was disseminated to students through the creation of a Facebook page for a simulated patient; a 20-year-old college student with diabetes.
- To address online privacy concerns, the course instructor discussed HIPAA and appropriate versus inappropriate professional social media use.
- Students became Facebook friends with the simulated patient and followed her Facebook posts until the next class meeting.
- The simulated patient Facebook page was updated by a graduate Research Assistant with status updates, photos, and private messages that related to the simulated patient's cognitive, affective, and psychomotor learning needs.
- Students were encouraged to interact with the simulated patient using Facebook features including "liking", commenting, and private messaging.
- At the next class session, the course instructor facilitated a discussion about the information collected from the simulated patient Facebook page.
- Students completed a Teaching Plan based on the information collected from the simulated patient Facebook page.
- One week after the completion of the Facebook case study activity and teaching plan, subjects were recruited by the Research Assistant for participation in the study.
- Institutional Review Board approval was obtained from the site of data collection prior to subject recruitment.
- Participants provided written informed consent and completed an anonymous online survey.
- The survey contained demographic data, nine Likert-style questions, and five open-ended questions.

Time	Facebook Post Type	Content
Day 1 PM	Status update	Stress
Day 1 PM	Status update	Skipping meals; going out for cookies and ice cream
Day 2 early AM	Photo post	Desk with computer, textbooks, sugary soda, energy drink, and candy; all-nighter
Day 2 AM	"Sister" posted on wall	Standardized patient's missing glucometer
Day 2 AM/PM	Private messages	Embarrassment about public post related to glucometer
Day 2 PM	Status update	Not feeling well; use of caffeine and candy to study for exam
Day 3 AM	Status update	Going to Student Health Center

## Results

### Qualitative

Conventional content analysis of the open-ended survey questions yielded five categories:

#### 1) Realism

"It seemed more realistic to see an actual patient and problems than just reading a paragraph."

#### 2) Relatability

"[It is] relatable to our daily lives. Made us interact with something educational on Facebook."

#### 3) Engagement

"[I] felt like it make me pay attention and think while I was outside of class."

#### 4) Uniqueness

"[It] was a creative way to incorporate teaching materials outside the classroom."

#### 5) Desire for Expansion

"I think this should be incorporated and more should be done with it. It would be fun for assignments to be attached to it and it be ongoing throughout the semester."

### Descriptive Statistics

Statement	% Agree/Strongly Agree
The FB case study was an effective way to apply the principles of teaching & learning	95% (n=18)
The FB case study enabled me to create an individualized care plan	95% (n=18)
The FB case study helped me learn the teaching & learning content	95% (n=18)
The FB case study provided more realism than a written case study	94% (n=17)
The FB case study was an overall positive experience	94% (n=17)
The FB case study encouraged me to engage in the course material outside of class	89% (n=16)
The FB case study increased my competence in applying teaching & learning principles	84% (n=15)
The FB case study increased my confidence in applying teaching & learning principles	83% (n=15)
The FB case study will help me apply teaching & learning content in clinical	78% (n=14)

## Discussion

### Limitations

- The use of a small, homogeneous convenience sample limits generalizability.

### Implications for Nursing Education

- Nursing education strategies must evolve to meet changing learners' needs.
- The incorporation of social media into undergraduate nursing education shows promise to actively engage students outside the classroom.
- The results from this study suggest that students enjoy and react positively to the use of Facebook as an active teaching strategy.
- Students found the activity engaging which is a critical component of learning, understanding, and application of content.
- Engaging in learning activities that more closely mimic reality promotes application of content.
- The positive perceptions to the use of Facebook as a teaching strategy by the participants in this study are consistent with existing nursing education literature (Morley, 2014; Stephens & Gunther, 2016).

### Implications for Nursing Education Research

- More empirical evidence is needed to support the use of social media as an evidence-based teaching strategy.
- Exploring the perceptions of using social media as a teaching strategy among various types of pre-licensure nursing programs is needed to describe this phenomenon more thoroughly.

## References

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