



# The Plate Method: Teaching Learning Strategy in A Pre-Licensure Nursing Program

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Received: 📅 April 04, 2022

Published: 📅 May 10, 2022

## Abstract

The pedagogical method of teaching was effective in the twentieth century; however, it has become less effective in teaching the new generation of students to meet learning objectives in the pre-licensure nursing program. Many students require variety of teaching methods to be successful. One such innovative teaching strategy is the Plate Method which involves looking at interactive ways of placing learning and outcomes on a “plate” depicted by a circle on white board in the classroom to enhance critical thinking and understanding in pre-licensure adult health nursing class.

**Keywords:** Plate Method; Teaching Strategy; Learning Outcomes; Learning Styles Background

## Introduction

Changes in higher, nursing education include an evolution of teaching strategies. Pedagogical method of teaching in higher education is no longer the only teaching strategy [1]. Faculty in higher education are integrating various teaching methodologies to promote active engagement during the learning process [1]. The nursing program requires a great deal of information for students to learn and retain. Therefore, PowerPoint lecture mode poses a challenge for students who have a variety of learning style. A survey of students’ learning styles conducted at the beginning of each semester over a two- year period indicated that 80% of the students surveyed preferred a mixed method of learning: Visual, kinesthetic, Auditory and Reading. The remaining 20% indicated a single method.

## The Plate Method

The Plate method created by this author, is a teaching strategy that incorporates the four preferred learning styles of students to enhance retention and promote critical thinking for pre-licensure nursing students. In the plate method, a disease is identified and placed in a circle that represents a plate on the white board. Students are then asked to identify what that disease means to them. Each

item they name is placed on a section of the “plate” and categorized in groups that form the pathophysiology, signs and symptoms, laboratory data, diagnostic data, nursing diagnosis, drug therapy, nursing implementation and evaluation etc. Lines are drawn from each group on the plate to illustrate appropriate connections to each other. This process engages students, promotes critical thinking and they are encouraged to go to the board and associate the disease state by connecting an item to the various groups. Throughout the presentation of the diagnosis, the instructor connects illustrations on the white board. Thus, all the areas related to a disease state are viewed in one “plate” for synthesis and application of their chapter readings.

Students indicated that the Plate Method teaching strategy enhanced their learning and retention and was preferred over PowerPoint lecture. The efficacy of the Plate Method was tested using quantitative data to compare test scores. Four-unit exams were administered during a ten-week Summer Semester of Adult Health II upper division nursing course. The first two-unit exams were administered after lecture and traditional PowerPoint presentations, while the last two-unit exams were preceded by the Plate Method of teaching. Twenty-eight students were enrolled in

the class. One student dropped the course before the third- and fourth-unit exams.

### Results of Unit Exam Average Scores

Exam 1-78.1%-Traditional PowerPoint Strategy, Exam 2-81.85% -Traditional PowerPoint Strategy

Exam 3-85.68%-Plate Method Strategy, Exam 4 - 82.57%-(84.13) Plate Method Strategy. Therefore, PowerPoint strategy exam scores average was 79.98% and 84.13% for the Plate Method strategy.

The results of the exams demonstrated that the exam average scores that had content taught with the Plate Method of teaching had a higher average score than the first two test scores that were taught by the traditional method of teaching. A survey was conducted of the 27 students remaining in the course concerning their preference for either the traditional lecture and PowerPoint presentations or the Plate Method of instruction. 25% of the students preferred PowerPoint only, 39% preferred the Plate Method of instruction only and 36% preferred a combination of

both PowerPoint and the Plate Method of instruction. Therefore, 75% of the students surveyed preferred a form of the Plate Method Teaching strategy.

### Conclusion

There was an increase in unit exam scores using the Plate Method strategy (84.13%) when compared to the unit exam scores of PowerPoint strategy (79.98%). Additionally, utilizing more than one teaching strategy like the Plate Method benefits students who have multiple learning styles. Comparing two-unit exams with PowerPoint Strategy and two-unit exams with The Plate Method of instruction in the same semester did not provide a sufficient sample. Therefore, it is recommended to replicate this same study in the Fall and Spring semesters with a larger sample.

### References

1. Shirani B, Nasr Isfahani A, Rouhollahi A, Khalili R (2016) Effective teaching methods in higher education: Requirements and barriers. *J Adv Med Educ Prof* 4(4): 170-178.



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DOI: [10.32474/LOJNHC.2022.03.000164](https://doi.org/10.32474/LOJNHC.2022.03.000164)



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