

Breakout Session 1: April 9, 2026 3:15-4:15 pm

A. Test-enhanced learning: A new twist on testing in nursing education

Speaker: Judith W. Herrman, PhD, RN, CNE, ANEF, FAAN

Description: Standard approaches to testing and quizzing have focused on evaluation or summative assessment. However, mounting evidence redefines testing as a powerful formative teaching tool. Test-enhanced learning (TEL) leverages evidence based, brain-based strategies—such as retrieval practice, spaced retrieval, and calibration—to proactively support student-centered, personalized learning plans and improve educational outcomes. Deep learning and metacognitive awareness are strengthened as memories are repetitively recalled, retrieved over time, and transferred to clinical contexts and situations, thereby enhancing clinical reasoning. This session will define major facets of test-enhanced learning, examine the benefits of test-enhanced learning, and suggest applications of test-enhanced learning in nursing education. Test-enhanced learning will be framed from the perspective of best practices in nursing education, building on neuroscience principles and methods to increase learning and clinical judgment skills.

Objectives:

1. Define brain-based components and practices associated with test-enhanced learning, while framing test-enhanced learning within selected best practices in brain-based teaching and fostering clinical judgment.
2. Examine the benefits of test-enhanced learning for nursing students and nursing education.
3. Identify strategies to implement test-enhanced learning in classroom, clinical, laboratory, and simulation settings.

B. Coaching Calm: Building Resiliency, Psychological Safety, and Confidence in Nursing Education

Speaker: Maria Flores-Harris DNP, RN, CNE

Description: Nursing education occurs in high-pressure learning environments where academic rigor, performance expectations, and professional socialization intersect. When anxiety dominates these environments, it negatively affects student learning, confidence, and retention and increases emotional labor, stress, and burnout among nurse educators. This session reframes learner anxiety as a shared, systems-level challenge within nursing education that can be addressed through intentional, resilience-centered teaching practices. Designed for nurse educators across classroom, simulation, and clinical settings, this session presents practical, evidence-informed strategies to foster psychological safety, reduce learner anxiety, and strengthen confidence in clinical reasoning and professional communication. Drawing on the literature related to psychological safety, learning science, and clinical judgment development, participants will explore how clarity of expectations, supportive feedback, structured communication, and team-based learning promote well-being for both students and faculty.

Objectives:

1. Identify common sources of anxiety across nursing education settings and explain their impact on student learning, engagement, and educator well-being.
2. Describe strategies to create psychologically safe learning environments that support resilience, confidence, curiosity, and participation.
3. Apply communication, feedback, and teamwork strategies that promote learner growth, reduce fear of failure, and support effective collaboration among students, faculty, and healthcare teams while minimizing emotional strain on educators.

C. Creating a Culture that Retains Faculty in Nursing Education

Speaker: Lauren Hayward, MSN, MS, RN, CNE

Description: This workshop discusses the challenges associated with retention of faculty in nursing academia and highlights strategies for creating a positive culture that cultivates well-being and professional growth among all members within the learning environment.

Objectives:

1. Identify the challenges regarding retention of faculty in nursing academia.
2. Emphasize the importance of recruiting individuals who align with the mission and values of the nursing program and institution.
3. Incorporate strategies to develop a sense of preparedness, belonging, and value amongst faculty.

D. Engaging the Modern Nursing Student: Interactive, Technology-Enhanced Learning

Speaker: Cortney Maffett, MSN-Ed, DNP, APRN, FNP-BC

Description: This session explores innovative, evidence-based strategies for engaging the modern nursing student through technology and game-based learning. Participants will learn how blended learning, digital games, and digital escape rooms can enhance knowledge retention, critical thinking, collaboration, and clinical reasoning. Practical guidance on designing, implementing, and debriefing these interactive learning activities will be provided. Attendees will leave with actionable ideas to modernize their teaching, increase student engagement, and improve learning outcomes in nursing education.

Objectives:

1. Explain the benefits and limitations of traditional teaching versus blended and technology-enhanced learning in nursing education.
2. Describe the principles and evidence supporting blended learning, digital games, and digital escape rooms in nursing education.
3. Demonstrate practical strategies for designing and implementing technology-enhanced, game-based learning activities.

E. Teaching in Technicolor: Strategies for the Multigenerational Classroom

Speaker: Sabrina Cook, DNP, RN, CHSE-A

Description: Associate Degree Nursing programs are vibrant, multigenerational learning environments. Students and faculty may range from Baby Boomers, Gen X career changers and Millennial parents to Gen Z digital natives and, soon, Generation Alpha. This session highlights how generational identity shapes learning preferences, communication styles, and professional expectations. Participants will explore evidence-based teaching strategies to engage learners across age groups while fostering collaboration and clinical judgment. Practical approaches will be shared for adapting teaching methods, leveraging technology, and creating inclusive environments where every student can thrive.

Objectives:

1. Differentiate the learning styles and expectations of Boomers, Gen X, Millennials, Gen Z, and emerging Gen Alpha learners.
2. Recognize the impact of multigenerational dynamics on engagement and collaboration in education.
3. Foster inclusive classrooms and clinical settings that support success across generations.

Breakout Session 2: April 10, 2026 10:30-11:30 am

A. Caring for the Caregivers: Promoting Faculty and Student Well-Being in Nursing Education

Speakers: Sharon Norris, DNP, APRN, PMHNP-BC, IBCLC, CNE, Hannah Altergott, DNP, RN, CNE, & Donald R. Crawford IV, DNP, FNP-BC, APRN

Description: Nursing education demands an environment built on compassion, resilience, and adaptability. However, burnout, compassion fatigue, and incivility can undermine student engagement, teaching effectiveness, and overall well-being of both educators and students. This session examines the interconnection between faculty wellness, civility, and student mental health. We will identify barriers to well-being and explore evidence-based strategies to foster an effective and sustainable learning environment that fosters psychological safety, mindful leadership, mutual respect, and a culture of care. Participants will gain practical tools and actions to support student and faculty wellness in their programs.

Objectives:

1. Examine the impact of faculty mental health and incivility on the learning environment.
2. Apply evidence-based strategies to foster a supportive academic environment.
3. Develop personal or program-level actions to enhance well-being and psychological safety.

B. Storytelling, an invisible but invaluable tool in nursing education

Speaker: Nancy Sullivan, DNP, RN, CHSE

Description: Storytelling is a powerful pedagogical tool in nursing education, bridging theoretical knowledge with real-world clinical practice. Through contextualizing complex knowledge, it offers techniques to foster empathy, critical thinking, and ethical reasoning among nursing students enhancing their ability to understand diverse perspectives. By humanizing patient care through stories, educators can simulate complex healthcare scenarios enhancing communication, teamwork and professional identity. Techniques include classroom presentations, simulations and reflective practice. Future directions may explore digital storytelling platforms to expand accessibility and impact. Research indicates that storytelling promotes active learning, with studies showing improved retention rates and emotional intelligence compared to traditional lecture-based methods. For instance, narrative-based simulations have been linked to better decision-making in high-stakes environments, such as emergency care. Challenges include ensuring cultural sensitivity and avoiding bias in story selection, but when integrated thoughtfully, storytelling aligns with competency-based curricula. Ultimately, incorporating storytelling into nursing programs not only enriches the educational experience but also prepares graduates for compassionate, patient-centered care. This presentation will focus on describing the practice of storytelling, focusing on its many applications to better prepare students for the nursing role.

Objectives:

1. Describe the practice of storytelling in nursing education
2. Evaluate the benefits of storytelling in nursing education
3. Design a storytelling experience appropriate for their student population

C. Leveraging Data Analytics to Enhance Nursing Student Success

Speaker: Tammy Pleasant, MSN, RN, CNE

Description: This 1-hour session explores how educators and administrators can utilize data analytics, predictive modeling, and digital tools to identify at-risk nursing students, tailor learning experiences, and continuously enhance nursing education programs.

Attendees will gain practical strategies for implementing data-driven approaches that boost student success, strengthen clinical readiness, and promote excellence in nursing education and workforce development.

Objectives:

1. Understand data analytics in nursing education.

2. Learn predictive modeling for student success.
3. Explore practical implementation strategies.

D. Communication in Crisis: Teaching Nursing Students to Navigate Clinical Conflict with Confidence

Speaker: Melissa Overton, RN, BSN

Description: Conflict in the clinical environment is inevitable. When managed poorly, it can impact patient safety, team dynamics, and student confidence. This engaging and evidence-based session will empower nurse educators with tools to help students recognize and respond effectively to conflict during clinical rotations. Drawing on the neurobiology of the fight-or-flight response, participants will explore how stress impacts communication and how to guide students through the process of de-escalating conflict using three key tactics: listening to understand, owning their part, and focusing on solutions. This session includes actionable strategies and real-world scenarios to enhance classroom and clinical instruction, ensuring tomorrow's nurses are equipped not just with skills—but with emotional resilience and conflict competence.

Objectives:

1. Explain the neurobiological foundation of conflict, including the fight-or-flight response and its impact on clinical communication.
2. Demonstrate three tactical responses—listening to understand, owning your role, and focusing on resolution—that can be taught to students for use in high-stress clinical interactions.
3. Provide nurse educators with tools and language to integrate conflict navigation strategies into simulation, post-conference debriefings, and classroom dialogue.