

The Learning Curve

Episode 4: Interactive Strategies and Foundational Skills with Dr. Anita Fennessey

Presented by the Academic Commons

[00;00;00;02 - 00;00;13;18] **Leah Miller**

Welcome to The Learning Curve, a podcast presented by the Academic Commons.

[00;00;13;20 - 00;00;17;24] **Leah Miller**

Your host for today's episode are me, Leah Miller.

[00;00;17;26 - 00;00;20;00] **Demi Harte**

And Demi Hart.

[00;00;20;03 - 00;00;45;09] **Leah Miller**

Our mission is to illuminate higher education, teaching and learning through the power of shared experiences and research informed practices through engaging discussions and expert insights. We aim to empower educators to transform their teaching practices, enrich student learning experiences, and contribute to a culture of evidence based pedagogy in higher education.

[00;00;45;12 - 00;01;15;10] **Demi Harte**

On this episode, we'll be discussing interactive strategies and teaching foundational skills with Anita Fennessey DRnP, RN, CNE. Doctor Fennessey is an assistant professor at Thomas Jefferson University, Jefferson College of Nursing. Her main educational emphasis is the utilization of methodologies to increase student knowledge and engagement, as well as interprofessional collaboration, in order to increase clinical judgment and critical thinking abilities of the undergraduate nursing student.

[00;01;15;12 - 00;01;18;04] **Demi Harte**

So thank you for joining us today, Anita.

[00;01;18;06 - 00;01;20;04] **Anita Fennessey**

Thank you for having me. I'm very excited.

[00;01;20;05 - 00;01;23;07] **Leah Miller**

So we're going to start with a get to know your question.

[00;01;23;07 - 00;01;27;23] **Demi Harte**

Could you describe your teaching practice in three words?

[00;01;27;25 - 00;01;43;01] **Anita Fennessey**

So when I think in my teaching practices I think of interactive I think of engaging. And I don't know if this is the right word. I think of gaming. I'm very into gaming. When I, teach students. I don't know if I should elaborate or not.

[00;01;43;01 - 00;01;43;17] **Demi Harte**

Those are great.

[00;01;43;17 - 00;01;54;10] **Leah Miller**

I would actually love to hear a little elaboration on the gaming, because that's not one we commonly hear. So I would love to hear like some examples of how you use gaming.

[00;01;54;12 - 00;02;18;12] **Anita Fennessey**

So in terms of what I use for gaming, it really started out with, you know, I try, as I said, interactive, engaging and trying to keep the students engage. I'm always like throwing out questions. And then which started with throwing out questions, I then, sort of. I had this basket I bring to class with me and, I have candy in it.

[00;02;18;12 - 00;02;41;14] **Anita Fennessey**

I actually at one point, got, one of these, old fashioned phones that that my kids used, and it was hard to find because now the play phones are different. And so I started out with because I wanted to students, when I teach, I don't want the students to ever feel intimidated. So I try to make it more fun.

[00;02;41;20 - 00;03;02;10] **Anita Fennessey**

So and I even say to them when I start asking questions, be like, it's okay. You know, I always try to say we're in a safe environment, so it's okay if you don't know the answer. I always tease, I say, maybe I don't know the answer, but we'll figure it out together. And so what I would do is I would like start throwing candy to ask the question, and then the student might answer.

[00;03;02;10 - 00;03;23;19] **Anita Fennessey**

If they weren't sure, they might throw the piece of candy to another student. And then we did another thing where I said, phone a friend. So I would throw my phone and I'd have them phone a friend. So they were kind of more interactive. And in terms of gaming, it really is. I would use things such as Nearpod and Nearpod is a great interactive.

[00;03;23;19 - 00;03;44;09] **Anita Fennessey**

And on it you ask questions, you can actually have them draw pictures. What other they have matching on it. So there's a lot of, different things on it in order to keep the students interactive, but also gaming because they actually become a little competitive as a who's getting the answer right. And they can see that.

[00;03;44;14 - 00;04;04;16] **Anita Fennessey**

And then also Jeopardy is another one that we have used that the students like, and that becomes fun. And then other things I do is I have a ball in my basket and I'll throw out the ball, and then the students will throw the ball to each other, like if the student gets it right, they can throw the ball to another student and ask that student a question.

[00;04;04;19 - 00;04;29;27] **Anita Fennessey**

So and I don't know if that is really gaming, but that's how I look at it. It is like just fun ways to keep the students engaged. I even one time had, a Dorothy basket. So it was a basket. You know, we can give Dorothy from the Wizard of Oz. And I had this basket, and what I did was I put all the students names in it, and I did explain to them, I have all your names in it.

[00;04;29;29 - 00;04;51;18] **Anita Fennessey**

I gave the basket to one of the students, and also some candy. And then when I wanted to ask a question, student who had the basket had to pull the students name out, and then they would say the student's name and the student is can always say pass, and they don't want to answer it. Or they could look to their friend, which a lot of times they'll do to answer the question.

[00;04;51;20 - 00;05;06;20] **Anita Fennessey**

But I try to make sure that they never I don't want the student to ever feel intimidated or threatened, like I make it like this is okay, you know, and I try, I always tease, you know, and say to them, you know, hopefully I know the answer and then they'll start to laugh.

[00;05;06;23 - 00;05;31;18] **Leah Miller**

That's, wonderful. It really sounds like your courses, all of those things considered interactive, engaging, the gaming. It truly sounds joyful, and I love that. So some of the things you mentioned, some of the strategies you mentioned, like Nearpod, getting students to kind of work with each other, passing if they're not sure coming back around to people, students can rely on each other for support.

[00;05;31;18 - 00;05;43;21] **Leah Miller**

As an instructional designer, that sounds a lot to me like active learning methods. Do you use the term active learning or is active learning kind of a newer term for you?

[00;05;43;23 - 00;06;07;29] **Anita Fennessey**

No, because we have been in the College of Nursing really trying to do more active learning. The other thing we try to do is break students into groups and have them interact, like do a case study and work on it together. So I guess active learning is newer within this so many years, but I feel like we had been really trying to, do more of that in the classroom, which we know that students learn better.

[00;06;08;05 - 00;06;35;01] **Anita Fennessey**

You know, just sitting there and lecturing, I think isn't as effective as, you know, getting students engaged. And like I say, moving around. I've even had students stand up and sing or get music going, just, you know, to get

because I feel like when you start moving, it really starts to get the energy going and the blood going, and you can start thinking, more effectively, that's incredible.

[00;06;35;04 - 00;06;50;26] **Demi Harte**

Yeah. And I think of like some of my favorite courses or most impactful courses, it's always the ones that are more creative or things, you know, there's there's different types of activities and instructors really get into it and get everyone into it. And so that's awesome.

[00;06;50;28 - 00;07;17;17] **Anita Fennessey**

And I try and I hope, you know, I hope that I am doing a good job. But I guess my ultimate goal is I always say to students, I want them to be able to leave the classroom really knowing and not having to have to go home and study, study, study. They are going to have to study, but I feel like I want them to leave my classroom where they have like a sound knowledge of what I taught, you know, and they're not going home and spending hours studying.

[00;07;17;20 - 00;07;26;08] **Anita Fennessey**

And I do have some students that say that the way, because I also have a tendency to repeat a lot. And they say that that repetition helps.

[00;07;26;10 - 00;07;40;12] **Demi Harte**

Yeah. Especially with, you know, nursing and then the types of courses and stuff you have to learn for that. And so for listeners who may not be familiar, could you actually, tell us about some of the foundational skills for nursing and why they're so important?

[00;07;40;12 - 00;08;07;28] **Anita Fennessey**

Yes. When we use the word foundational, I think, one of our first courses in nursing is, Foundations in Nursing, and that is their first course where they learn all the basics. So we learn things such as communication. They start to hear this word, critical thinking. They learn about assessments, they learn about, infection control and things like that and professionalism.

[00;08;08;06 - 00;08;31;26] **Anita Fennessey**

So they are foundational in that, you know, we need a sound foundation of those skills to build on. So what happens is we start to talk to students and teach them in one of the first courses about communication. Therapeutic communication is so essential for a nurse communicating with the patient in the family, but also communication with the healthcare team.

[00;08;32;02 - 00;08;57;20] **Anita Fennessey**

We're not only communicating with the patient, we have to be able to communicate with the physicians, nurse practitioners, occupational therapy, physical therapy. And that is such a big, important role as a nurse. Professionalism is another foundational skill, but they also become essential skills. So when I say foundational assessment, that is a foundational skill but is also an essential skill.

[00;08;57;20 - 00;09;20;18] **Anita Fennessey**

As a nurse, you have to be able to assess your patient in order to figure out you know, how to proceed with their care or to be able to pick up, you know, what's going on with your student. And that assessment helps build on your critical thinking skills. So we say these foundation skills, and some people will think of foundational skills like communication, professionalism, assessment.

[00;09;20;21 - 00;09;48;04] **Anita Fennessey**

They're foundational but become essential. But then other foundational skills that they first learn are like some of your technology, like using an IV pump or putting in a Foley catheter. They're foundational and you'll build on them, but they're also those essential that critical thinking is such an essential part of our role that being a professional another is, essential part.

[00;09;48;06 - 00;10;14;06] **Anita Fennessey**

And then other things we think of that are essential. And also maybe foundational is can passion. You know, we talk about compassion because, you know and empathy they're essential skills of a nurse. And so again we start with a lot of this. When they first start their first nursing course. And then we build on it as they proceed through the program.

[00;10;14;07 - 00;10;17;10] **Anita Fennessey**

And I don't know if that's if I went in the right direction or.

[00;10;17;11 - 00;10;21;15] **Demi Harte**

No, no, that's that's what I was looking for. Thank you for that.

[00;10;21;18 - 00;10;47;02] **Leah Miller**

Yeah, that was great. And it sounds like a lot of the skills you mentioned like especially communication, critical thinking, being able to assess the situation, professionalism, compassion and empathy, those sound like skills that can be applied to disciplines outside of nursing. How do you think that kind of works in the broader educational context?

[00;10;47;05 - 00;11;06;06] **Anita Fennessey**

So just make sure, yes, these are skills in nursing, but yes, they are in other professions. And are you thinking of more health care, such as like physical therapy, occupational therapy? Like the other health care professionals we talked with or just outside? It could even be an accountant.

[00;11;06;09 - 00;11;17;06] **Leah Miller**

I think even yeah, I think even broader than health care. I'm curious what your thoughts are about how they can be. Some of these skills can be applied outside of even the health care fields.

[00;11;17;09 - 00;11;35;25] **Anita Fennessey**

And I agree, they definitely can. And we just said, you know, and it can, you know, and I just think that because my son is going to be an accountant and they had to have, you know, yes, they have to probably have their foundational skills in math and all that. But they also had to have be ethical.

[00;11;35;28 - 00;11;59;26] **Anita Fennessey**

And as nurses, we have to be ethical. They have to be they have to critically think as they're looking at number today, I know my son was having some issues with the class and, you know, he had to be able to like look at the numbers. And we talked about analyzing and critical thinking about it. You know, he they also have to be able to communicate to communicate to the people they work with, to communicate to their customers.

[00;12;00;04 - 00;12;36;18] **Anita Fennessey**

So it really could go from accounting to my daughter works in sales. So again, you have to have honesty and integrity. And I know there are other things that we talk about as nurses as being integrity, to have integrity, and that I think you would find in all professions. But I think communication is something that is very important, professionalism that and even like assessment, it's like when we're just talking, I'm thinking, you know, a salesperson and an accountant, a lawyer, they have to be able to assess the situation and be able to take it from there.

[00;12;36;18 - 00;12;37;17] **Anita Fennessey**

What the next steps are.

[00;12;37;18 - 00;12;49;16] **Demi Harte**

Thank you. So when we, talk back about the different strategies you use, how do you assess the effectiveness of your teaching strategies?

[00;12;49;19 - 00;13;13;07] **Anita Fennessey**

So and that's a good question. I guess one of the things that we use and I do use is we the students do course evaluations and they do evaluate, I get an evaluation each semester and every course that I teach. And I do look at them to see what the students say. If they thought you know, what I did was effective, because students will answer, they'll rate things low rate if they like.

[00;13;13;07 - 00;13;32;18] **Anita Fennessey**

What I did though, rate if I didn't like what I did. But I also use in terms of evaluating the effectiveness is when I'm teaching them how engaged they are, if they're. And that was the one thing I do like about the Nearpod. I've done it where you can see how many students are getting the answer right or wrong.

[00;13;32;20 - 00;13;57;20] **Anita Fennessey**

And so a number of the students answered the question wrong or they did the matching wrong. Then I'll take a step back at that moment, and I know that I need to clarify. I know that I need to go back a little bit and say to the class, I'm wondering if we really, truly understood what I was talking about when I was talking about respiratory failure.

[00;13;57;23 - 00;14;19;06] **Anita Fennessey**

And then I'll take a few minutes and then, I'll reinforce that and really how we'll see how effective that is, is one of the ways that we can see how effective is when we do exams. But the other thing that we do and that I've seen to see effectiveness is case studies break them into groups. And have them do case studies and see how well they can do it.

[00;14;19;08 - 00;14;43;15] **Anita Fennessey**

Last semester, I felt like we were struggling a little when I was talking about chronic kidney disease. And so what I had to students do was break into groups, and they had to develop a concept map on what we taught on what they learned in the. I tried to get them to do it without looking at their books or notes, try to see if they could do it spontaneously to see what they retained.

[00;14;43;18 - 00;15;03;18] **Anita Fennessey**

And then I had another group come up with the key points of what was taught in that lecture. And I was amazed when I and I and actually I had them do it with pen and paper. We didn't do the computer anything. We wrote it down and I collected it, and I could see that the students actually did understand the information.

[00;15;03;18 - 00;15;19;16] **Anita Fennessey**

So I felt like that made me feel that that was an effective class, because I was able to tell looking at these papers that they were able to figure out the concept map, figure out what the key points were that they needed to, remember.

[00;15;19;16 - 00;15;50;10] **Leah Miller**

That is a lot of data that you're kind of gathering, whether it's formal or informal. And I feel like you kind of touched on concepts of alignment, like our students learning what the objectives for the course are and also formative assessment, and even in an informal way like Nearpod can be used for formative assessment or just even kind of reading how the students are responding to the content, what they're understanding, what they're not quite getting in the moment.

[00;15;50;13 - 00;16;14;10] **Leah Miller**

So you're using all of these incredible strategies. We're actually going to switch gears slightly. Now, we've talked about all the great things in the classroom, but I would love to focus on what are some of the challenges you think educators face when teaching foundational skills, and how have you addressed these challenges, or how are you still addressing these challenges?

[00;16;14;12 - 00;16;37;12] **Anita Fennessey**

So, and I do think there are definitely challenges, and I think for me, one of them could be more, I'll start with some technology because the students today truly are they know technology, they know computer systems and

everything. And I could be considered an older educator, and I didn't grow up with the same technology that students did.

[00;16;37;15 - 00;17;10;09] **Anita Fennessey**

And so I sometimes struggled with that with trying to learn, like Nearpod and trying to learn different things that will keep the students engaged. I even tried one time they had them use their cell phones, and that's a technology where I sometimes struggle with because I would ask students to put their cell phones away. And I've had time to around teaching and again, and I have students texting on their phone and, you know, and I try like you said, I never want to be intimidated.

[00;17;10;09 - 00;17;41;04] **Anita Fennessey**

But one time I did go up to a student and I said, do you want to share that with us? You know, and here he goes. I was I was asking my, friend what they were doing for lunch. I said, oh, I said, okay, I'm hungry too. What are we what are we doing for lunch? And so I do find that thing with the cell phones, a little bit, because I know some of the I think in the, grade schools, they're taught to remember high schoolers talking about, you know, not letting students have them.

[00;17;41;09 - 00;18;01;12] **Anita Fennessey**

And I struggle because our students, a lot of them are older or not, but they may have families and children and they may need that. And so I don't have a problem with that. I just ask them to try to, you know, not be on it all the time and maybe step out of the classroom if they need to be on it.

[00;18;01;16 - 00;18;19;15] **Anita Fennessey**

But I do find, especially when the students sitting right in front of me and they start texting and then, they're trying to get their attention. And then what I have done is I've gone over and I call on them, and then they look at me and they're like, And I'm like, okay. But then but then I try to make it a little bit.

[00;18;19;15 - 00;18;42;02] **Anita Fennessey**

I again, I don't want to be too intimidated of. I try to make a little bit of it fun, like, okay, and then they'll put their phone away and then they'll get more engaged. But what I really would like to do, and I think this is where I need to get better with, is find a way to use their cell phones more in class, like our students have iPads and they use their iPads, but then they also have their cell phones.

[00;18;42;07 - 00;19;04;19] **Anita Fennessey**

So and I did try that. I do have ideas, and I really want to try to come up with better skills of myself, with the students, to be able to get them to use their cell phones during class where they're looking things up. But then that gets tricky because then you have some that are using them to look things up, but then you have other ones that are taking their time.

[00;19;04;24 - 00;19;24;13] **Anita Fennessey**

And we've had that in clinical because in clinical years ago when I originally did clinical, we had our, our drug book with us. So I always told the students to bring the drug books. But now as time has gone on, they can go into the computer or they can go on their cell phones. And I've had and I don't have a problem with that.

[00;19;24;18 - 00;19;46;16] **Anita Fennessey**

My biggest thing is I want the students and know their medications before they give them to their patient so they can look at them. But where I see struggles is then the other nurses see the students with their cell phones and then think that they're and then we'll say something to me. And when I go over, the student actually was looking up all their medications because they were getting prepared to give.

[00;19;46;19 - 00;20;05;21] **Anita Fennessey**

So that's one of the things I find to be a struggle. And I think that, you know, and I'm sure I did, you know, find time and do more research because I'm sure other instructors have had the same concerns and had found ways to make it into a positive experience, because that's what I always try to think of when I'm in the classroom.

[00;20;05;21 - 00;20;16;16] **Anita Fennessey**

I want to make it a positive experience. And I'm not sure if I really answered your question fully. I hope I did.

[00;20;16;19 - 00;20;40;10] **Leah Miller**

Yeah, you did. And so I come from a, high school teaching environment before I came to Jefferson. And the phone really are a double edged sword because they can be a super powerful tool right at your fingertips. But then at the same time, it's so full of distractions. And where is that balance? So I definitely understand that.

[00;20;40;12 - 00;20;56;23] **Demi Harte**

So other other challenges, regarding both students and colleagues perhaps, but have you encountered any resistance from either group to certain teaching methods or educational innovations? And if so, how have you address these situations?

[00;20;56;25 - 00;21;19;02] **Anita Fennessey**

So I think in terms of colleagues, I have to say the College of Nursing, we're always all looking for different ways of teaching engaging students. So I think in that that's actually more positive. Like my colleagues see me using Nearpod and they want to learn Nearpod. I see them using Jeopardy. So I feel like that part has been with the colleagues.

[00;21;19;04 - 00;21;40;08] **Anita Fennessey**

Using different, strategies has actually been positive. The students sometimes, you know, like some students really love Nearpod and then other students, when you said, how do you evaluate? I have had students say, oh my gosh, do you have to use Nearpod? And that's why I try, because for a while I was using it a lot. And so then I'm trying to maybe balance it out.

[00;21;40;08 - 00;22;12;17] **Anita Fennessey**

And I think that sometimes with all this technology and trying to come up, you know, I feel like we're always trying to come up with different strategies and just different interactive things. And sometimes that may be overwhelming for the students. And so I think what it is, is learning a balance between, you know, you find something good, like, I know somebody, colleague was using Kahoot and then the students, if you use it too much, they're like, so it's always I feel like it's finding that balance for the students.

[00;22;12;23 - 00;22;34;15] **Anita Fennessey**

And, you know, and I have said to students and after I got some of my evaluations and said, oh, she's using Nearpod again. And so I have said to students in the classroom, I'm using this Nearpod today because I feel like for this lecture, it would be the better way to go. So I and then I tried and I always tried to ask the students their opinions.

[00;22;34;15 - 00;22;55;18] **Anita Fennessey**

And I always say to them, you know, is this working for you? And I know that students would like to wait and just tell you everything on the evaluation. But sometimes I'll say to them, it's better for me to know in the here and now, like, you know, if this isn't working and I always say to them, it's okay to tell me, I'm asking you because in this way I can kind of learn from there.

[00;22;55;22 - 00;23;17;14] **Anita Fennessey**

But I think in terms of challenges, I think with students you just have to. It's more finding a balance. If you find something you really, really like, but you use it too much, they then start to kind of push back. So but with my colleagues, I really feel like we're all in this together. And we're all learning from each other.

[00;23;17;20 - 00;23;38;23] **Anita Fennessey**

Like the other day, one of the, my colleagues did something. I did something with this song. I think, for teaching sepsis. And, I think she really like that. And she goes, oh, I want to see you do that again. So she may take some of what I did and use it. And I've done the same thing where I've sat, because we do a lot of team teaching where, when I'm in the classroom, there's another teacher in the classroom.

[00;23;38;25 - 00;23;58;25] **Anita Fennessey**

And it's good because you really can learn from your fellow instructors. And I tried to listen to what, you know, my fellow instructors are doing or colleagues are doing and try to build on that. So I think that part I really is positive. Students. I just sometimes feel like you have to find a balance because if you do anything too much, they're going to there may be a pushback.

[00;23;58;28 - 00;24;41;11] **Leah Miller**

Finding a balance is definitely key. That's excellent to keep in mind. But it's great you have the support of your colleagues as well. That's a huge hurdle sometimes. And it's wonderful that JCN is supportive of kind of active learning and all of those things. So kind of along the same lines a little differently. Still kind of talking about,

maybe not student resistance as much, but how can educators effectively communicate the importance of foundational skills or essential skills to students who may see them as less critical compared to like clinical skills or advanced techniques?

[00;24;41;14 - 00;25;12;29] **Anita Fennessey**

So that is a great question, and one that we probably still struggle with, because I think of some of our courses, such as, nursing research or evidence based practice or we had this one course it's Global Perspectives. And so you're right, students will like they will think that the foundational courses, learning new foundational skills sometimes are more important than some of these others, such as research.

[00;25;13;03 - 00;25;35;21] **Anita Fennessey**

So if you're taking research with a clinical course, they'll put more impact and studying into that clinical course because they think that's more important. But what we try to emphasize, and this is a struggle, is that even though this research course, which is evidence based practice, that is important because you're taking care of these patients who are sick.

[00;25;35;27 - 00;25;51;13] **Anita Fennessey**

But there's got to be that this evidence base like, things that we do are based on something. And you as a nurse have to know that many, many years ago, like I said, I've been a nurse a very long time. We used to do things and we would say. And somebody would say, well, why are you doing it?

[00;25;51;13 - 00;26;26;29] **Anita Fennessey**

I'm like, well, doctor, I was told to do. That's how we always did it. But we can't say that today. We have to base what we're doing on the evidence. So, you know, students may not think and they're thinking, oh, I had to do this poster. I have to do this research paper that that is a struggle. And that's where we had to constantly say that and try to, you know, encourage them to when you're doing their research to find, something that interests them, like if they're really into OB, they then find something related to Obi that you know, that you can use as your research.

[00;26;27;04 - 00;26;50;28] **Anita Fennessey**

So and I do find that that does help then with that course, professional practice is another course that they need to take and they find that is some students will say that's fluff. But and so again, that becomes difficult trying to I mean, again, a lot of different interactive strategies my colleagues used because I'm not in that class right now, but I know sometimes that's a struggle.

[00;26;51;06 - 00;27;14;16] **Anita Fennessey**

And so then, you know, the faculty really try to come up with different projects for them to do different things to keep them engaged, like those classes, maybe not giving them, an exam. I find that things that help is having them work in groups or finding like different ways to do things. And I know that I don't know if they did something where they had the students do a podcast and they enjoyed that.

[00;27;14;21 - 00;27;35;20] **Anita Fennessey**

So I think with courses like that, it's important to find strategies to keep them engaged, to find different strategies, because by doing that, you're getting them engaged, and you're also trying to reinforce that, even though you may not think that this is important, this is important. This professional practice is teaching you reinforcing ethics like the ANA Code of Ethics.

[00;27;35;20 - 00;27;52;15] **Anita Fennessey**

You need to know that. And then, you know, learning how to communicate. So I think those courses can be a struggle. But I think it takes a lot more, I want to say convincing or really coming up with different strategies of keeping the students engaged.

[00;27;52;16 - 00;28;07;24] **Demi Harte**

Yeah, I think with foundations in any subject can be difficult to convince that it's important because, you know, a lot of students are just want to move forward. They want to get to the specific topic that they're interested in. And it's it's an no.

[00;28;07;24 - 00;28;31;21] **Anita Fennessey**

And I agree, it's like the students get excited about learning about sepsis because everybody knows it's sepsis. Can you know, but then if I go to teach, about something such as I'm trying to therapeutic communication they're like, but I'm like, well, in order to be able to pick up that your patient's septic, you have to be able to communicate with them, and you have to communicate with the family, and you have to be able to.

[00;28;31;25 - 00;28;43;07] **Anita Fennessey**

So sometimes when you face things like that, it helps to further, I guess, get your message across that all of this is important.

[00;28;43;07 - 00;28;46;27] **Demi Harte**

Right, right Emphasize why it's important. So,

[00;28;46;29 - 00;28;48;03] **Anita Fennessey**

I agree.

[00;28;48;05 - 00;29;06;24] **Demi Harte**

Thank you for that. And we are closing up. We're wrapping up the the episode. So our last question for you is what 1 or 2 pieces of advice would you give to educators who want to make their courses more interactive and impactful?

[00;29;06;26 - 00;29;29;27] **Anita Fennessey**

So I think a couple things. I think, if that's okay. So the one thing is, I think a more new educators and I would start there because I think what happens and I know myself when you come in and you're seeing expert educators, you want to jump in and do things just like them. And I think what happens is what I and I learned this myself.

[00;29;30;03 - 00;29;52;11] **Anita Fennessey**

I think sometimes we have to almost take a step back and be more engaging and maybe go to different educators classes and get ideas. But I think in order to really be interactive and impactful, I think as an educator, you have to first of all, you have to be knowledgeable. And I'm going to tell you, I learned the hard way.

[00;29;52;11 - 00;30;13;02] **Anita Fennessey**

When I very first started teaching, I was a nurse for a long time. So I thought, I know all this, this isn't going to be difficult. So I get my PowerPoint and I start teaching with students and I learned, look at things differently than we do. And I just think, oh, they understand this and I learned the hard way.

[00;30;13;02 - 00;30;36;08] **Anita Fennessey**

And then they started asking me all these questions and I learned, yes, I was knowledgeable, but I didn't know it to the level that you need to teach. And so one thing I would say is that when you go to teach, make sure that you really know your subject and what I do and, when I'm preparing, I always try to start thinking, what would a student ask me?

[00;30;36;10 - 00;31;01;02] **Anita Fennessey**

What would somebody who has no knowledge of nursing ask me? And I can give you another example. So when you give, a medication in a needle and I don't know if anybody's gotten the vaccine and you get the vaccine, well, when you go to get the medication, you have to aspirate it, right, or pull it up. Or actually when you give the needle, you aspirate to see if there's any blood in there.

[00;31;01;07 - 00;31;20;10] **Anita Fennessey**

Well, I was teaching a class and I kept on saying, aspirate, aspirate, aspirate. And at the end of the lecture, after an hour, I had a student raise their hand and ask me what do you mean by aspirate? And so then the whole class looked at me like, yeah, we have no idea what you're talking about.

[00;31;20;12 - 00;31;43;14] **Anita Fennessey**

So that's the other thing I really do is when I'm preparing my my notes, I really try to look at the wording. I really try to make sure that my knowledge is to the foundational level, to the basic level, because, you know, you never know what question you're going to be asked. And so in order to teach something, you really have to make sure that you're knowledgeable of it.

[00;31;43;16 - 00;32;03;26] **Anita Fennessey**

And I think sometimes what happens is, you know, somebody else taught it and they want to help you and you never taught it before. They may give you their PowerPoint and say, yeah, this is a great PowerPoint. The students like it. Go ahead and teach it. Well, that I've tried that and it doesn't work. You have to really know that information and also make it your own.

[00;32;03;26 - 00;32;22;05] **Anita Fennessey**

It's always good to get stuff from others, but you have to make it your own. So I think in thinking of, giving advice, make sure you have true knowledge of the subject, make sure you've made it your own, and try to think like a student. Try to think, what would a student ask me? Because I really think that's important.

[00;32;22;11 - 00;32;44;08] **Anita Fennessey**

And then in terms of interactive, I think the advice with that is you really do, especially today. You just can't stand there for three hours and teach. You want to get those students engaged. And what I'm always doing is it's, I guess, gauging my audience. I'm not just standing there, I'm going over things, but I'm always gauging how they're getting to me.

[00;32;44;12 - 00;33;11;03] **Anita Fennessey**

And I can tell. Or if they're getting bored or gauging that I'm losing them. So and I think that's a constant thing that you're doing, is that you have to constantly, like, gauge what your students are and then you may need to pull back. For me, I have my basket, and then that's when I'm like, okay, time to throw the ball or time to pull out a name or a time to throw out a piece of candy, because I'm starting to lose the student.

[00;33;11;09 - 00;33;31;04] **Anita Fennessey**

So I think it's really important to be truly knowledgeable of your whatever you're teaching and to, you know, try to think like a student as you're preparing and then also really coming up, like when you go to teach. I always had like, you know, I use my Nearpod, but I always have other strategies there. I don't go in.

[00;33;31;04 - 00;33;52;24] **Anita Fennessey**

I guess that's what I'm trying to say. I don't go in with just one interactive strategy. I try to have multiple, because I think sometimes something may work, but then it may be the students had an exam earlier in the day and now they're with you at 3:00 in the afternoon. And they're already, they're exhausted and everything, but you still have to get the information across.

[00;33;53;00 - 00;34;17;28] **Anita Fennessey**

So that's where I sometimes have what I call my basket of tricks, just so that I can kind of get the students engaged. And then what I would do to another thing I've done, especially if I gauge that I've lost the students when I have them again, I may start that class with questions from that previous lecture to see where we are and to see if they really got the information.

[00;34;18;05 - 00;34;21;05] **Anita Fennessey**

I think it's good advice, I hope it's good advice and can help others.

[00;34;21;05 - 00;34;22;16] **Demi Harte**

That's great advice. Thank you.

[00;34;22;16 - 00;34;46;16] **Leah Miller**

Yeah, that's excellent advice. I think the call to new educators, relying on people who know what they're doing, making it your own, always having a backup plan, the ability to pivot, starting the next class, assessing the learning from the previous class. So many wonderful pieces of advice in there. So that actually brings us to the end of our interview today for today.

[00;34;46;18 - 00;34;54;13] **Leah Miller**

Doctor Anita Fennessy, thank you for taking the time out of your day to be here with us and for sharing your knowledge and expertise.

[00;34;54;15 - 00;35;05;02] **Anita Fennessey**

Thank you. And thank you again for having me. I you know, I, like I said, I love to teach and I enjoy sharing with others. And I hope that, you know, as others listen that it's very helpful.

[00;35;05;03 - 00;35;11;15] **Demi Harte**

You were wonderful. Thank you so much.

[00;35;11;18 - 00;35;38;12] **Jacob Santos**

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[00;35;38;14 - 00;35;39;15] **Jacob Santos**

Thanks for tuning in!