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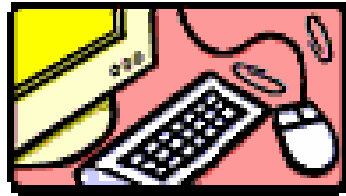
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# News For Today's Healthcare Educators

Editor's Excerpt

## Learning Curves and Angles

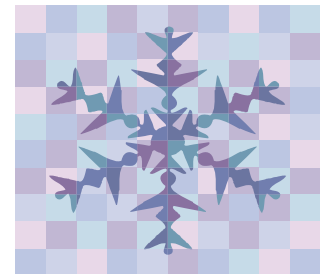


by Carol Aslesen

**T**rivia question: Where did the phrase, *learning curve*, originate? *Steep right angle* is a more accurate description in my opinion. Learning does not flow in a neat, smooth, mathematically calculated arc; it's much choppier than that. I take in a lot of new information as quickly as I can (the vertical rise of a step), and then act on it as I move forward (the horizontal tread of the step.) When I learn enough to get the job done, I tend to plateau and move on the horizontal path for long periods of time, until something or someone nudges me to take the next step. Conferences are one of those times when I feel the nudge (or challenge!) to take a step up in my learning. Even if I bring back one new thing and apply it in my job, it's a step up. In this newsletter, WISHET members share some of the learning steps they have taken as a result of our fabulous fall conference. Read on, you'll find much more, including the answer to the trivia question above!

*Snowflakes are one of God's most fragile creations, but look what they can do when they stick together!*

*~Author Unknown*



## Conference Highlights

*Contributed by WISHET Members*

**I** have been labeled a creative teacher but was running out of ideas and needing something to rekindle my creativity. The Fall Conference certainly did that. The first opportunity to use some of Michele Deck's creative ideas came not at work, but at a Bible Study I

teach. I figured the group would be kind to me because after all, this was a Bible study, so I tried a magic trick! Well, the first week they were amused and gave me great feedback. So, each week I pulled out a new magic trick I had learned at the conference and each week they told me they were looking forward to seeing what tricks I had up my sleeve. Of course, they were more than just *tricks*. I used them to illustrate a concept or focus on a topic. The hair rubber band trick has been especially fun with this group and some other classes I have taught.

*Roxy Schouten, Clinical Coordinator, Agnesian Healthcare*

I really enjoyed hearing Michele again. The review strategy using **Question and Answer Bags** works well to help learners answer their own questions. Have people write down a question on one slip of paper and an answer on another slip of paper. Place all the questions in one bag and all the answers in another bag. Punctuate your presentation or meeting by having someone randomly draw and read aloud a question from one bag and an answer from the other bag. It's surprising how often the answers make sense. Either that or they are so ridiculous that everyone laughs.

*Karen Miller, Staff Development Coordinator, Lakeview Health Center, West Salem*

My plan is to use the **Two Gift Bags** for a Customer Service object lesson. One gift bag will be a beat up and dirty brown paper bag and the other will



be nicely wrapped. I will randomly assign people to one of two groups and give each group a bag. They will both contain the same gift (i.e. chocolate candy.) We will discuss how each group felt about their gift, both before and after they saw that they received the same thing and relate that to customer service. The patient care we give is our gift to our patients, but the way we give it is like the gift wrapping. And that impacts how the patients feel about their care.

*Pat Trapp, Clinical Manager, Home Care Hospice, Beaver Dam*

*Editor's Note: Pat is expecting her whole family home for Christmas, a son's wedding January 5, first grandbaby in mid February with a few showers in between, but she still found time to contribute to the Newsletter. Thanks Pat!*

Our Nurse Executive Committee **wrote their name on a piece of paper with their non-dominant hand** and then with their dominant hand. We talked about how it made them feel, both ways. We talked about how this could be an opener when introducing any new thing or equipment to staff. I also had fun doing the **Circle, Star, Triangle** magic trick, even though I had to make my own magic wand. (Sorry, I'm not going to explain that one.) *Carol Aslesen, Health Educator, Franciscan Skemp-Sparta Campus, Sparta*

**One kind word can warm three winter months.**

**~Japanese Proverb**

## Meet the Board

### President, Deb Drexler

I am looking forward to being the President of WISHET. When I came home from the conference and told my husband, "I just accepted becoming the next president of WISHET" he just shook his head and smiled. He knows I love a challenge.

**"I was always determined to be the best nurse I could for my patients, so I continued to learn and put information into practice."**  
*Deb Drexler*

I would like to say my burning desire since I was a child was to be a nurse, but it wasn't. I wanted to teach. I started college as an education major, but was encouraged to choose another major, because of the surplus of teachers at the time. Since I wasn't very good at cutting hair, I went into nursing! I'm kidding, of course, but there were not as many opportunities for woman as there are now. After graduating from UW Oshkosh with a BSN, my first job was in the Theda Clark ICU. My orientation was, "Good morning, you have the three critically ill patients at the end of the hall". I also worked at St. Elizabeth and then spent most of my career at St. Agnes Hospital in Fond du Lac, working in psychiatric, telemetry, chemotherapy, and addiction units.



In 1988, I became an educator—my dream job. In 2002, I became the Director of Staff and Organizational Development at Agnesian Healthcare. That same year, I had a life altering experience. Sitting in the Milwaukee airport, ready to fly on vacation to Puerto Vallarta my left leg doubled in size. I developed a huge ileofemoral blood clot from my vena cava to my foot. When faced with the possibility of death, you start to look closely at priorities. I realized that there were things I had always wanted to do but hadn't—one was getting my masters. So, while continuing to work full time, I earned a masters degree in Organizational Leadership and Quality from Marian College. Then I was ready for a new challenge, as Director of the Fond du Lac Regional Clinic. About a year ago, I was considering retirement, but the Lord had other plans for me. An opportunity presented itself to go back to my passion as a teacher, as a part time Education Coordinator for Ripon Medical Center, which is where I am now.

I enjoy being involved in civic organizations, including chair of the successful Fond du Lac Downtown Fall Festival for the last four years. This year we obtained the Guinness World Record for fondue (Fondue Fond du Lac --get it) with an attendance of over 15,000. Jeff, my high school sweetheart, and I have been married thirty-eight years. He is my best friend and the love of my life. We have two grown children, John and Shana, and three granddaughters, Abygale (5), Peyton (2 ½), and Ava (1). I am delighted to be their "Nana" although I had forgotten how much energy little ones have. My favorite hobby is shopping but I love reading and traveling, too. I am at a point in life

where "time" is what I value most; time to be with my family and time to do the things that I have always wanted to do. I have been blessed and want to give back to my profession and community.

### Treasurer, Roxy Schouten

I have always loved education. I remember sitting my younger siblings on the steps of the open staircase in their home and giving 'lessons' to my audience. My teaching has taken many forms: Sunday School, 4-H, tutoring, Early Childhood teacher's aide, quilting and crafts, and participating in and writing dramas for church.

I am a woman who has been truly blessed to *have it all*, just not at the same time and perhaps in the usual order. After being a full-time homemaker for eighteen years, at age forty-two, I became a non-traditional college student and loved the challenge of learning. Juggling full-time college, a part-time job, family and home responsibilities and two children's weddings is not something I would recommend lightly to anyone! For the last fourteen years I have been happily working as an educator in a hospital setting.

My husband of nearly forty-five

***"I am thankful for the opportunity to serve on the WISHET Board. The talent and dedication to education of the people in this organization amaze me."*** Roxy Schouten

years and I have four children who are all married. They have blessed us with ten grandchildren, ranging from one to nineteen years of age. Family and friends are very precious to me. I have a passion for quilting, sewing, gardening and crossword puzzles, and dabble in other crafts as well. We are nearing our goal of visiting all fifty states, and will add to our list by visiting Hawaii in a few months. My husband is retired and I really enjoy the added freedom that comes from him sharing a few of the household chores. I am looking forward to retirement in a few years.

### Membership Coordinator, Amber Eckstein

Amber is the Quality Resources Administrative Assistant at Evergreen Retirement Community. Amber attended UW-Madison and UW-Stevens Point, where she majored in Sociology and minored in Psychology. Though she has worked at Evergreen Retirement Center for close to three years, Amber just moved into her current position earlier this year. She enjoys working closely with Traci Raether. Future plans include more education, but Amber is currently undecided on a long range career path. She likes working with WISHET members and hopes our organization continues to grow.

Amber and her husband Trevor have been married for two years and live in Oshkosh. Trevor is a correctional officer and fire fighter. They have no children or pets, as Amber's black and white cat Pepsi lives with her mom. Soon, she and Trevor may be adding a yellow lab to the family. Amber's interests include planning and decorating for parties, especially Halloween and visiting theme and



water parks. Harry Potter and Lord of the Rings movies are among her favorites.

Web Gems



How Full Is Your Bucket?

Web site contributed by Karen Miller

Karen Miller, recommends the website: www.bucketbook.com.

This commercial site promotes the best selling book, How Full Is Your Bucket, by authors Tom Rath and the late Donald Clifton, PhD. Clifton, who died in 2003, was known as the Father of Strengths-Based Psychology, chairman of Gallup, Inc., and the inventor of the Clifton Strengths Finder. Rath has worked at Gallup for thirteen years, in workplace and leadership consulting.

According to the bucket and dipper theory, each of us has an invisible bucket. It is constantly emptied or filled, depending on what others say or do to us. When our bucket is full, we feel great. When it's empty, we feel awful. Each of us also has an invisible dipper. When we use that dipper to fill other people's buckets - by saying or doing things to increase their positive emotions -- we also fill our own bucket. But when we use that dipper to dip from others' buckets -- by saying or doing things that decrease their positive emotions -- we diminish ourselves. A full bucket gives us a positive outlook and renewed energy. An empty bucket poisons our outlook, saps our energy, and undermines our will. So we face a moment by

moment choice: We can fill one another's buckets, or we can dip from them. It's an important choice - one that profoundly influences our relationships, productivity, health, and happiness

Visit the site to:

- Take the positive impact test to see how much bucket filling you do.
• Print bucket filling questions to help you make each positive interaction individualized and specific.
• Visit the discussion board to share your ideas, tips, and read what others are doing.
• Set up bucket filling e-mail reminders.
• Track your positive-to-negative interaction ratio using the interaction scorecard.

Karen Miller, RN, BSN, is the Staff Development Coordinator at Lakeview Health Center in West Salem

Trivia Answer

The learning curve refers to a relationship between the duration of learning and the resulting progress. Initially a psychology term, it has acquired a broader interpretation. A 19th-century German psychologist, Hermann Ebbinghaus, coined the term in his study of the efficiency of memorizing as influenced by various factors. He tested the long term memory by memorizing a series of nonsense syllables, and found that the more he repeated it, the more he could remember. (No kidding!) He also introduced the term, forgetting curve, but we've forgotten that. (Source: The freedictionary.com)

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President: Deb Drexler, RN, MS, BC Ripon Medical Center Phone: 920.748.0423 Email: debdr@rmcnet.org

President-Elect: Darlene Johnson, RN, BSN Evergreen Retirement Community Oshkosh Phone: 920.237.2134 Email: djohnson@EvergreenOshkosh.com

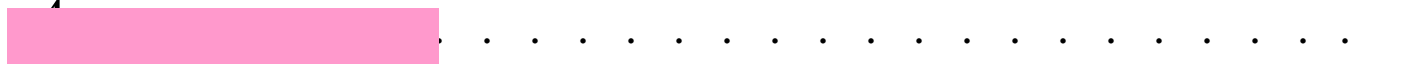
Past President: Lori Hendricks-Soderberg, RN Browntown, WI 53522 Phone: 608.966.4389 thesoderbergs@tds.net.

Secretary: Shirley Frost, RN, MSN Berlin Memorial Hospital Phone: 920.361.5502 sfrost@partnershealth.org

Treasurer: Roxy Schouten, RN, BSN Waupun Memorial Hospital Phone: 902.324.6535 schouten@agnesian.com

CEU Director: Marla Noordhof, BSN Deaver Dam Community Hospital Phone: 902.887.5987 mnoordhof@bdch.org

Editor: Carol Aslesen, BSN Franciscan Skemp - Sparta Campus Phone: (608) 269-2132 aslesen.carol@mayo.edu





From the President's Pen

Farewell

By Lori Soderberg



My final column as President of WISHET brings me joy as I am excited to pass the baton to Deb Drexler for the President's role later this month. We are lucky to have someone who is excited to take on this new role herself but also has been a longtime member and a recipient of some our awards previously, so she is well qualified! The board will be meeting as a group this next week to do planning for 2008 and to pass the batons.

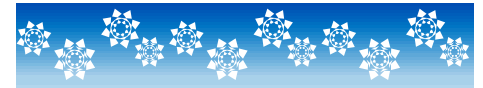
The WISHET Fall conference in Oshkosh was remarkable! Our speakers were so well received and I can say for most all of us that we were kept engaged and had fun also. How many of you can still do some of the magician's tricks? I have already used a couple of them. It is great fun to learn new things and be able to apply them to our real life jobs. Conferences and networking with so many smart people always inspires me and gives me energy to dig in and try new things for the next several months.

I am teaching a different kind of student these days, as I have moved from hospital and clinic education to teaching the CNA/SNA program at Blackhawk Technical College and I love it.

Most of the students are pre-nursing and it is exciting to see such an energetic and stimulating young crop growing in their pods and to be able to help with watering and feeding (nurturing) their brains to grow bigger and smarter! It also makes me happy to see hope for the future with nursing shortages on the horizon.

I would like to recommend that you all read the most recent *Nursing Matters* newspaper that just came last week. It has some wonderful articles on humor and how "laughter really is the best medicine." Laughter brings joy, healing and camaraderie among patients and staff.

For this holiday season, I wish you peace, hope and joyful laughter for your blessings in the New Year!



Well Weathered Thoughts

**Don't knock the weather; nine-tenths of the people couldn't start a conversation if it didn't change once in a while.**

~Kin Hubbard

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*I prefer winter and fall, when you feel the bone structure of the landscape - the loneliness of it, the dead feeling of winter. Something waits beneath it, the whole story doesn't show.*

~Andrew Wyeth

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**In seed time learn, in harvest teach, in winter enjoy.**

~William Blake

