Normal Birth Crossword Puzzle

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ABSTRACT

In this column, readers are introduced to Dawn Kersula and a crossword puzzle she designed to refresh and empower Lamaze childbirth education class participants with normal-birth information. The column's author goes on to demonstrate several ways crossword puzzles can be used in Lamaze classes.

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At first glance, using a crossword puzzle in childbirth education classes may seem reminiscent of outdated didactic teaching. The instructor asks class participants to complete the puzzle during class and then goes over all the answers, one by one, so class participants will know the right ones.

Yet, Dawn Kersula's crossword puzzle (see page 48) is more than a mere game requesting regurgitation of birth terminology. It is designed to reinforce the messages presented in Lamaze International's six care practice papers (see Box), inform birth partners of helpful measures to move labor along, integrate knowledge, and empower birth partners to support mothers during labor and birth. Kersula's puzzle requires recall of internalized knowledge and application that is different from regurgitation.

Lave and Wenger's (1991) model of situated learning tells us that, instead of looking to learning as the acquisition of certain forms of knowledge, we try to place it in social relationships—that is, in situations of coparticipation. It is not so much that learners acquire structures or models to understand

the world; rather, they participate in frameworks that have structure. Thus, learning involves participation in a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

BOX

Lamaze International's Six Evidence-Based Care Practices that Promote, Protect, and Support Normal Birth

1. Labor begins on its own
2. Freedom of movement throughout labor
3. Continuous labor support
4. No routine interventions
5. Non-supine (e.g., upright or side-lying) positions for birth
6. No separation of mother and baby, with unlimited opportunity for breastfeeding

For more information on Lamaze International's six care-practice papers, log on to the organization's Web site (www.lamaze.org), visit the Lamaze Institute for Normal Birth site (www.normalbirth.lamaze.org), or call Lamaze International toll-free at 800-368-4404. Also, each of the six care-practice papers, along with commentary by leading childbirth educators and health-care providers, is presented in the entire issue of *The Journal of Perinatal Education* (2004), Volume 13, Number 2.

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Kersula's exercise is virtually a labor rehearsal in puzzle format. Parents are required to understand the situation based on their learned information from class discussions, recall the suggested behaviors for these situations, and then fill in the blanks with common words rather than medical terminology.

Puzzles or other paper activities can be used in several ways to promote maximum learning and provide minimal embarrassment to shy members in childbirth education classes. Parents can be formed into small groups to complete a puzzle or other exercise. Depending on the size of the class, fathers or partners can pit their knowledge against the mothers'. Couples can participate together in small groups or, depending on the amount of time one wishes to allot to the exercise, the facilitator can enlarge the puzzle and encourage couples to participate as a team. Kersula's puzzle can also be assigned as a learning task to be completed at home during the week.

Whichever way childbirth educators wish to use Kersula's puzzle, we thank her for sharing her work and allowing us to enjoy this unique teaching tool. I encourage readers to send their own creative ideas and strategies for inclusion in future "Tools for Teaching" columns. Mail them to me at 2112 Bretton Drive, Rochester Hills, Michigan 48309-2952.

ABOUT DAWN KERSULA

As a certified Lamaze instructor, Kersula has been a featured speaker at national conferences. Recently,

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she spoke at a conference in Pittsburgh, where her topic was using belly dancing as a way for pregnant women to become more at ease with their bodies, get their babies into a good position for an easier labor, and use the natural movements of belly dance to help themselves be more comfortable during labor. Kersula is also a certified lactation consultant at Brattleboro Memorial Hospital in Vermont. She recently completed her master's degree in lactation.

For more information on improving adult learning, log on to the Web site for the Education Development Center, Inc., and read "Characteristics of Adult Learning: A Baker's Dozen" (<http://www2.edc.org/NTP/bakersdozen.htm>).

REFERENCE

Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning. Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge, MA: University of Cambridge Press.

BARBARA HOTELLING is an independent childbirth educator and doula in Rochester Hills, Michigan. She has served as president of Lamaze International, president of Doulas of North America (DONA), and chair of the Coalition for Improving Maternity Services (CIMS).

WINNING STRATEGIES

He who has the plan wins. Without a plan of your own, you run the risk of waking up one day and finding out that you've ended up where somebody else wanted you to go! Make a list of five things that you least want to do that would change your life if you did them. Pick the first one and start doing it.

— Errol Smith, *Black entrepreneur*

Don't bunt! Aim out of the ballpark. Aim for the company of the immortals.

— David Ogilvy

You can do anything if you have enthusiasm. Enthusiasm is the yeast that makes your hopes rise to the stars. Enthusiasm is the spark in your eye, the swing in your gait, the grip of your hand, the irresistible surge of your will and your energy to execute your ideas. Enthusiasts are fighters, they have fortitude, they have strong qualities. Enthusiasm is at the bottom of all progress. With it there is accomplishment. Without it there are only alibis.

— Henry Ford

Labor Support Crossword Puzzle

ACROSS

2. A pelvic tilt will rock them
4. A back ____ feels great in early labor
7. The Beatles were right: Hold her ____
8. To create a soothing atmosphere, bring some to listen to on your CD player
11. Put some in a sock to make a hot pack
12. The basis of all labor coping skills
13. Your focal point may be a teddy bear or a work of ____
17. Pay as much attention to her in labor as you did on your first ____
20. A special woman who provides labor support
21. When moms are asked what they most want from dads during labor, they are likely to say, "I just want him to ____" (two words)
22. Keep your jaw like this to avoid headaches and help keep 41-Across relaxed
23. Opening of the cervix (medical term)
27. Great position for 16-Down when you're pregnant (we tried it with massages)—opens pelvis, too! (three words)
29. Make your room a little island of calm ____ the confusion
30. A good idea in early labor before the nausea hits later on. When mom reaches 6-7 cm dilation, dad should do this, too.
33. You take one at the beginning and end of a contraction (two words)
35. Thank Dr. Arnold for these pelvic-floor exercises
37. Stay in bed on her back? Just say ____!
38. When the cervix is like this, it thins out and dilates more easily
40. Best "nonactivity" in earliest parts of labor
41. The birth canal
45. A good position for pushing—it helps slow the baby down for a gentler birth

47. Often signals the end of first-stage labor. If it comes early, remember to pant (three words)
49. Reduces friction during massage
50. Use this or a cold pack to help relax shoulders, back, and more
52. When labor is latent, ____ lazy
53. Keep the lights down ____, the music quiet, your voice and touch calming
54. The hospital ones have plastic covers—so if you love yours, bring it with a colorful case so they know it's yours
57. Once she hits 5 cm, treat her like she's a queen. . . truly ____
58. When you forget all "the rules," remember just to be ____ to her
61. These kinds of voices are usually heard the best in labor
62. Flavored ice treats— great way to get fluids in

DOWN

1. Laboring woman's best fluid friend, inside and out
2. Don't use big, long words. When you come in the room just say ____
3. Put this in a ziplock and place it in a fanny pack on Mom's back to relieve her back pain
5. Lactic acid buildup in the uterus (one cause of labor pain) is cleared out when mom ____
6. Acupressure points on the ____ help labor progress, and mom often loves to have these ache-ers rubbed
9. We'll throw you in to help the baby come out! A favorite form of hydrotherapy.
10. Probably the best position for back labor. Try it with 51-Down.
11. Breathe, move, dance, keep it in ____

14. In early labor, a mom may disappear—often kind of go off and ____ awhile
15. Fill this to submerge yourself in 1-Down
16. This kneading melts moms
18. The art of good scents
19. You'll see couples doing this in the hall without any music (two words)
24. The baby's reaction to movement is observed in this prenatal procedure (abbr.)
25. Change in baby's movements; seeing lights; swelling that won't go away—these are all examples of ____ signs that make you call the doctor
26. Some moms love to brush this to calm themselves
28. If the contractions are longer, stronger, closer together, it's probably "the ____ thing"
31. If the contractions are just plain putzy, stay ____ home unless waters leak
32. When mom does this each hour, there's more room for the baby to descend

34. What mom will and won't ____ changes her feelings and the way you help her "manage" labor
36. An intrathecal or an ____dural are regional anesthesia used for pain relief during labor
39. A written birth ____ helps you discuss your hopes and dreams about labor with your partner and caregivers
42. Do this with fluids after each contraction
43. Opposite of push
44. If mom doesn't like what dad is doing to help, ask him to ____
45. Bloody ____ means the baby's head is descending
46. ____ in the Jacuzzi may feel good
48. A medication given "IM" (intramuscular) is given as a ____
49. During birth, the folds of the vagina ____ like a flower
51. "If you can't turn the baby, turn the mom"—fit the ____ in the lock
52. Hips and back hurt? Try one of the birthing ____

55. Lay on this side to give baby the best amount of oxygen and nutrition
56. Breathing rhythm often becomes faster at the ____ of a contraction
59. Keep up your fluids or you'll get dehydrated; "buy yourself" one of these (abbr.)
60. Dad gets to do this with the cord
63. Usual position of the baby who's giving mom back labor (medical abbr.)

(Solution on page 61)