

**Interview with nursing educator Michele G. Kunz, author of
“ACLS Certification Exam Q&A With Explanations.”**

Q1: Why and when did you become a nurse?

Michele: From a very young age I was always infatuated with the idea of becoming a nurse. Medical anything intrigued me. From my favorite medical TV shows to family and friends that needed assistance when they were ill - was exciting to me. Even in junior high and high school I found programs that would advance me towards a nursing career.

Q2: When, how, and why did you become a nursing teacher?

Michele: In high school I was enrolled in a medical technology program. This program gave us college credits in biology, and also allowed us to work in a nursing home. This really helped me know for sure that healthcare was the career for me. Once in nursing school I also worked in the nursing home as a nursing attendant on the dementia unit. It was difficult but rewarding. I don't think it was called dementia back in the 70's.

I graduated with an AAS degree, but felt that if I went right away to gain my BSN, I would be a better nurse. SUNY Plattsburgh afforded me the experience in a critical care unit. It was so different - I think I was frightened, but this was what I wanted to do. Know everything about the patient, head to toe, and be able to work in the highly technical environment.

Then in 1980 I went seeking a nursing career in critical care. There was a major nursing shortage in NY and the US. I was able to interview and get accepted into the ICU at Staten Island Hospital. Certainly the nursing home experience as well as the BSN were helpful.

Q3: What changes have you seen occur in nursing, and nursing education?

Michele: When starting in the ICU - I saw the need for neuro and cardiac specialists. There were traumatic brain injuries that required drains and expert assessments and treatments. The hospital had been doing cardiac catheterizations, but interventional cardiology was still in its infancy. I remember Laura Gasparis-Vonfrolio, my preceptor, showing me how the Swan-Ganz catheter works and how to assist in the procedure. This catheter is not used anymore in most critical care areas any more. I have seen team nursing (each nurse does one task for the all the patients) evolve into primary care nursing (the nurse does everything for her assigned patients). I have seen the eight-hour shift change to a 3-day-a-week 12-hour shift to give the patients a better opportunity for continuous patient care.

I have seen nurses use their voice to improve nurse patient ratios. I have seen when a hospital considers the importance of nursing education and invest in the nurses. These are the nurses that see how knowledge can improve the care and health of the patients, and themselves.

Q4: When did you and husband Joe start your medical training business?

Michele: When Joe and I met in 1984, I was working full-time in the ICU at Staten Island Hospital, and teaching a few classes on the side. Joe was building his first start-up company on Long Island, and began assisting me with the classes. By 1985 we realized that we wanted to take our little part-time business to the next level. So we took a part-time weekend job at a nursing service in Brooklyn where we taught certification classes to nurses and physicians. I taught the classes, and Joe learned all about managing the training business, the classes, the students, the classroom, the other instructors, and the equipment.

Eventually we started to teach more classes on our own. We very quickly built a dedicated following of nurses and physicians throughout New York City and Long Island. Then we started to grow the company very quickly and began training and certifying the medical staff at medical offices and then entire hospitals.

Q5: What made you decide to become an author and start your publishing business?

Michele: When we first started to teach the classes, there wasn't much practical and user-friendly study materials available for the students. The few books that were available were huge and difficult to learn from. And the amount of content that the students needed to learn was very important. So we had to create study materials that would really help our students.

The materials that we created became very popular with our own students. But as we taught more and more classes, the popularity and demand for our study materials spread around the country. When we started getting calls from all over the country from nurses and hospital asking for them, we realized that we had a great product. So we transformed the study materials into the *Zombie Notes Study Charts*.