



Considerations When Using Videos in Lamaze Classes

Barbara A. Hotelling, WHNP-BC, CD(DONA), LCCE

ABSTRACT

There are enough worthwhile videos available today so that a Lamaze Certified Childbirth Educator could literally teach an entire class series using only videos and feedback discussion. In this column, the author explores considerations in choosing videos for adult learners in Lamaze birth classes. Some things to consider when using videos should be the adult learner's attention span, whether the video increases fear of birth or empowers the learner, and if the video is appropriate for the culture of the class participants. Finally, the author provides a list of some of the many wonderful videos available to Lamaze birth educators.

The Journal of Perinatal Education, 21(3), 189–192, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1891/1058-1243.21.3.189>

Keywords: videos, Lamaze classes, empowerment, adult learners, childbirth education

The use of multimedia can be an effective way of educating adult learners in Lamaze birth classes. Videos can demonstrate normal birth in ways that role-playing and facilitated discussions cannot. Videos give adult learners the ability to see real-life situations of parents managing labor that learners have not been exposed to even though they have seen many birth dramas on television. There are full-length films created to familiarize viewers with concepts such as home birth, the midwifery model of care, and humanized birth in hospitals that are not well-known to friends, family, or clinicians from whom parents get much of their information.

Lamaze Certified Childbirth Educators (LCCE educators) have difficult decisions to make about the use of videos in their classes. Some things to consider when choosing videos are the adult learner's attention span, whether the content of the video

increases fear of birth or empowers the learner, and if the video is appropriate for the culture of the class participants (Tumblin, 2005).

It is important to note that the adult learner's attention span can vary, depending on the individual's level of attention: focused attention or sustained attention.

Focused attention is a short-term response to a stimulus that attracts attention [such as instant

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messaging]. The attention span for this level is very brief, with a maximum span . . . that may be as short as 8 seconds [Dukette & Cornish, as cited in Wikipedia, 2012]. . . . After a few seconds, the person is likely to look away, return to a previous task, or think about something else.

Sustained attention is the level of attention that produces the consistent results on a task over time. (Wikipedia, 2012, para. 2)

If the task is letting labor begin on its own, a mother showing sustained attention will stay on task and be comfortable with the midwife’s instructions to eat, drink, and rest awhile before coming to the birth center. A laboring woman who loses focus may feel panicky and out of control and may seek medical attention earlier than is necessary, thus leaving herself vulnerable to unnecessary interventions.

“Consider that the average adult attention span is between 15 and 20 minutes. Afterwards, an individual’s focus must be rejuvenated either through rest or by changing activities” (Kiraly, 2011, para. 2). Mary Jo Podgurski, a long-time LCCE educator and former president of Lamaze International, recommends that when showing videos in class, we have to allow a minute of facilitated discussion for each minute of the video to properly process the content (M. J. Podgurski, personal communication, February 29, 2008). If we show a video for 25 min and then follow with facilitated discussion lasting 25 min, we have created two opportunities for losing the attention of parents we are trying to inform. Consider using only parts of videos or individual chapters at a time, with breaks in between for processing. Many shorter videos are available, so total viewing and processing time can be less than 20 min.

Videos can provide “instructional variation because it helps to capture the attention and imagination of learners and bring content to life” (Kiraly, 2011, para. 2). Nothing says letting the mother choose her position for birth as well as seeing a mother give birth on a birthing ball. Videos are useful for meeting the needs of learners who are

engaged mostly by auditory and visual information. Learners whose primary learning style is tactile can be engaged in the postvideo discussion when demonstration and return demonstration are used.

A necessary question to ask is, “Does this video create more fear and tension, or does it empower parents to listen to their bodies and intuition for direction in labor and birth?” Earlier videos seemed wonderful to LCCE educators because videos were scarce and they demonstrated information that seasoned birth advocates wanted to see. Some scenes of babies emerging from a stretching perineum were gifts to the educators but not necessarily to young women and men who were not planning to pursue a career in birth education. Nurses taught these classes then, and I am sure one reason was so fathers watching videos in their work clothing with tight-fitting ties could be resuscitated when they fell out during the video. Good thing we all sat on the floor in those days!

Another consideration when choosing videos is whether they are appropriate for the culture of the class participants. While teaching an Egyptian childbirth educator in training, we watched videos I had found useful. These same videos could not be shown in his culture because of the nudity in birth that we, in the United States, consider normal. Some parents in my classes are also uncomfortable with parts of these videos. It is important in any class situation to allow parents to “pass” on any activity including watching videos. Parents attending our childbirth classes come from all types of cultures and ethnicities. They have personal experiences that tie to emotions affecting how they receive the information. Adult learners are in childbirth classes to learn what *they* need to know; and if they are empowered to decline a class activity, perhaps they will be empowered to discuss medical interventions before agreeing to them.

Table 1 provides a list of videos that have been chosen from among *many* great ones because they offer short time lengths, support of normal birth views, and in most cases are extremely affordable. Some of the longer videos, although more expensive, can be shown in short segments because they are divided into chapters. “Leave them inspired, not frightened” (Amis & Green, 2012, p. IV–84).


 For additional video ideas and resources, visit the Lamaze Video Library (<http://www.lamazeinternational.org/LamazeVideoLibrary>) and Shop Lamaze (<http://astore.amazon.com/lamazeintern-20>).

TABLE 1
Recommended Videos for Use in Childbirth Education Classes

Epic Women by Harriet Hartigan

- Portraits of women in the profound effort of labor, with wisdom to trust themselves, and courage to be strong. Set to “The Rose” by Bette Midler.
 - Length: 3.5 min
 - Cost: \$28 (DVD)
 - Available from Harriette Hartigan (website: www.harriettehartigan.com or phone: 313-677-0519) and Passion for Birth (website: www.passionforbirth.com or phone: 866-742-4784).
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Celebrate Birth (2000)

- Classroom segment contains section titled “An Inside Look at Labor.” Animated graphics—narration and scenes from actual labors. Realistic view of the flow of labor.
 - Cost: \$149.95
 - Available from Injoy Videos (website: www.injoyvideos.com or phone: 800-326-2082).
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Everyday Miracles: A Celebration of Birth (2000)

- Empowering narration as three women give birth. Inspiring look at the ways they dealt with labor and their support.
 - Length: 7 min
 - Cost: \$49.95
 - Available from Passion for Birth (website: www.passionforbirth.com or phone: 866-742-4784) and Injoy Videos (website: www.injoyvideos.com or phone: 800-326-2082).
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Relaxation, Rhythm, Ritual—The 3Rs of Childbirth by Penny Simkin (2003)

- Uses examples from the labors and births of 10 women using relaxation, rhythm, and ritual to cope with the pain of labor.
 - Length: 15 min
 - Cost: \$50 (DVD)
 - Available from Penny Simkin (website: www.pennysimkin.com).
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Amazing Talents of the Newborn (1998)

- A classic for all parents to see. Shows infant temperament, infant states, the first hour after birth, movement and rhythm, attachment, breastfeeding, and fathers.
 - Cost: \$18 (DVD)
 - Available from Penny Simkin (website: www.pennysimkin.com).
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Of Nature and Birth by Harriette Hartigan

- Gives sight to the splendid beauty of women opening to the birth of life. These moments are choreographed to a chorus of women chanting, “I am opening up in sweet surrender to this beautiful baby in my womb.”
 - Length: 3.5 min
 - Cost: \$28 (DVD)
 - Available from Harriette Hartigan (website: www.harriettehartigan.com or phone: 313-677-0519) and Passion for Birth (website: www.passionforbirth.com or phone: 866-742-4784).
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Birth in the Squatting Position (1979)

- Mothers birth upright, with their privacy so protected that, afterward, they are undisturbed as they gaze at their newborn. They are enraptured. Viewers are left wondering, “How have we strayed so far away from birth as it once was?”
 - Length: 10 min (DVD)
 - Cost: \$50
 - Available from Cascade HealthCare Products (<http://www.1cascade.com/ProductInfo.aspx?productid=5909>) and BirthWorks International (website: www.birthworks.com or phone: 888-862-4784).
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Through Their Eyes—Breastfeeding: The Gift for Life by Amy Spangler (1997)

- Collage of breastfeeding mothers and babies with diversity of family members of all ages and nationalities.
 - Length: 4 min (DVD–NTSC and PAL; VHS)
 - Cost: \$12.95
 - Available from Baby Goo-roo (website: www.babygooroo.com/store or phone: 770-913-9332).
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(continued)

TABLE 1

Recommended Videos for Use in Childbirth Education Classes (Cont.)***Breastfeeding in All the Right Spaces* (2005)**

- Looking for images to open a breastfeeding class? Trying to illustrate how women can breastfeed without feeling exposed? There are no words, just gentle music. Photographs by Marilyn Nolt, with music by Rob Yoder.
- Length: 3 min (DVD)
- Cost: \$25 from Marilyn Nolt (send e-mail requests to Marilyn Nolt: noltphotos@mail.com) or \$20 from Passion for Birth (website: www.passionforbirth.com or phone: 866-742-4784).

***Orgasmic Birth: The Best-Kept Secret* by Debra Pascali-Bonaro (2008)**

- Lengthy documentary, but has chapters you can choose for 7- to 8-min segments. Each chapter showcases one of 11 couples giving birth with pleasure instead of pain. Subtitled in French, Spanish, German, and Portuguese. DVD contains chapters and extras that are not provided with digital download.
- Length: 85 min (DVD–NTSC and PAL)
- Cost: \$29.99
- Available online (at <http://orgasmicbirth.com/>).

***Organic Birth: Birth is Natural!* (2011)**

Film adapted and edited from the 85-min, award-winning documentary *Orgasmic Birth: The Best-Kept Secret*. The expanded midwifery section, more concise format, and added chapter navigation make this film a “must see” for expectant parents and the perfect resource tool for use in childbirth education classes. Undisturbed birth.

Length: 52 min

Cost: \$19.99

Available online (at <http://www.organicbirthmovie.com/>).

The Essential Ingredient: Doula

- This documentary on birth and postpartum doulas will enhance your doula practice. Share it with potential clients, caregivers, friends, and family to help them fully understand the role of the doula.
- Cost: \$25 (free to DONA International members who are only required to pay \$4 for shipping and handling)
- Available from DONA International (website: www.dona.org).

***Delivery Self-Attachment* (1992)**

- This video shows the ability of a newborn (unmedicated and not separated from its mother) to crawl up his mother’s abdomen and self-latch to the breast.
- Length: 5 min
- Cost: \$20 from the International Childbirth Education Association (website: www.icea.org or phone: 800-624-4934) or \$22.95 from Geddes Productions (website: www.geddesproduction.com or phone: 323-344-8045).

***Follow Me Mum: The Key to Successful Breastfeeding* by Rebecca Glover, IBCLC (2000)**

- A how-to video for teaching attachment to prevent sore nipples.
- Length: 18 min (DVD)
- Cost: \$130
- Available from Hale Publishing (website: www.ibreastfeeding.com or phone: 800-378-1317).

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BARBARA A. HOTELLING is the perinatal nurse coordinator for the Maternal and Child Health Program and a nurse practitioner in the Department of Family Medicine at the University of North Carolina Department of Family Medicine in Chapel Hill. She has served as the president of Lamaze International and of DONA International, as well as chair of the Coalition for Improving Maternity Services.