



**THE JOHN A. HARTFORD FOUNDATION
INSTITUTE FOR GERIATRIC NURSING**



**American Association
of Colleges of Nursing**

Award

for

Exceptional Curriculum

in

Gerontologic Nursing



1998

Baccalaureate

Models of Excellence



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of Colleges of Nursing

1998 Baccalaureate Models of Excellence Exceptional Curriculum in Gerontologic Nursing

First Place:

Minnesota State University, Mankato – School of Nursing

Runners-Up:

University of Alabama in Huntsville – College of Nursing

University of Arkansas, Fayetteville – Eleanor Mann School of Nursing

University of Pittsburgh – School of Nursing

Honorable Mentions:

Quinnipiac College – Department of Nursing

***Radford University School of Nursing -- Waldron College
of Health and Human Services***



*Award
For Exceptional Baccalaureate Curriculum
in Gerontologic Nursing*

PURPOSE:

- To provide models of excellence that encourage the highest standards of gerontological nursing education.
- To provide national recognition to those eligible schools or programs of nursing that exhibit an exceptional, substantive, and innovative baccalaureate curriculum in gerontologic nursing education.

ELIGIBILITY:

Schools and programs of nursing that lead to a baccalaureate degree and offer a strong curriculum in gerontologic nursing are encouraged to apply. Reviewers will be looking for small, innovative programs, as well as larger, well-established curricula that can be showcased as proven models of excellence. One entry per school.

SELECTION CRITERIA:

- *Innovation* of approach to gerontology nursing education
- *Demonstrated relevance* in the clinical environment
- *Replication* for other schools/programs of nursing

AWARDS:

One First Place award of \$1,000
Two Runner-up awards of \$500 each
Two Honorable Mention awards

SHOWCASE:

Presentation at the AACN national meeting
Curriculum summarized and distributed to nursing programs nationwide
Involvement in Hartford Institute for Geriatric Nursing curriculum initiatives

FIRST PLACE AWARD

**Minnesota State University, Mankato – School of Nursing
Mankato, Minnesota**

**Cheryl Samuels, PhD, RN, Dean; Mary Huntley, PhD, RN, Interim Associate Dean;
Regina Smith (faculty contact)**

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Abstract:

The gerontologic program includes two gerontologic nursing courses that have the same status as other traditionally-recognized specialty courses in the baccalaureate curriculum. Five activities in the didactic course facilitate student learning by challenging attitudes and assumptions about aging. Case studies provide opportunity for students to apply pathophysiology and psychosocial knowledge to health problems. Students learn the complexities of health issues due to multiple body system problems along with the bio-psycho-social-spiritual process of aging. Students attend a day-long workshop after which they are certified as an Alzheimer's care giver. In addition, the nursing program has collaborated with the Health Science Department in developing a gerontology minor.

In the clinical course, students are assigned to a variety of settings. Students learn the rehabilitation function of nursing homes and the interdisciplinary team approach to planning and implementing care for elderly clients. Community experiences provide students with a holistic perspective as well as a strong understanding of the continuum of care in the health care delivery system. All students have an experience working with an elderly developmentally disabled person at a community group home. They also spend time in a gerontological neighborhood nursing clinic that provides health assessment, health promotion, education, and illness prevention interventions.

Innovation:

Classroom Strategies: A wide range of teaching strategies are used in assisting students to better understand what it is like to be elderly, to examine their own attitudes about aging, and to bring reality to the issues older adults experience. Examples include: assimilation exercise using The Aging Game; small group discussion of the board game Sex in Aging; evaluation of social discrimination through analyses of greeting cards and television programs; and the evaluation of community access in facilities such as health clinics, supermarkets, and theatres.

Clinical Strategies: Emphasis is placed on providing nursing home and community settings. Students are required to prepare patient histories and perform physical assessments of both a nursing home resident and a community client; to interview an elder for life review; to experience the health care team concept by observing care plan development with occupational, physical and rehabilitation therapists; to work with an Alzheimer's patient on a one-to-one basis; to use community-based service facilities, to spend a day in an adult day service; to work with developmentally disabled older adults, to work in nurse-managed clinics in community facilities such as apartment buildings, fire stations, and senior centers. A unique aspect of the nurse managed clinic experience is that senior community health nursing students mentor the junior gerontology nursing students.

Replication:

Knowledge, commitment, and creativity without expensive equipment make the curriculum replicable. All classroom materials are easily available. Clinical service-learning involves creative school and community. Faculty can be trained in national train-the-trainer programs.

RUNNER-UP

University of Alabama in Huntsville – College of Nursing Huntsville, Alabama

**C. Fay Raines, PhD, RN Dean; Elizabeth Tanner (faculty contact)
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Abstract:

The University of Alabama in Huntsville College of Nursing curriculum provides educational experiences that prepare registered nurse students in a baccalaureate program (RN to BSN) to practice in rural under-served areas. The program helps students meet the challenge of delivering community-based care to vulnerable clients. The importance of addressing the needs of an aging population is emphasized throughout the curriculum, and principles that relate to gerontologic nursing are applied in continuous clinical experiences with elderly clients. Theory and course content are reflected and applied in an on-going clinical program that targets local vulnerable elders in the region. The 39 hour/semester program rests on faculty who are committed to advancing nursing frontiers especially to the under-served poor.

The program's central core is an on-going clinical experience that is collaborative in nature and community-based in delivery. A coalition of health care experts, social service agencies, and civic groups join with the College of Nursing to address the educational needs of students and health needs of the rural elderly in northern Alabama. Students enroll in courses focusing on theory, research, health assessment, long-term care and care of families, aggregates and communities. Students provide holistic assessments and help create community-based strategic care plans for a caseload of rural elders. Outcomes from these experiences are far reaching for both the community and the students.

Innovation:

The CHEERS Project (Coalition for Health Enhancement of Elders and Referral Services) is designed to prepare nurses for community-based practice with an aging population. This student learning experience is a collaborative, community approach that serves to: 1) identify vulnerable, homebound elders; 2) determine individual client needs and provide services; 3) offer recommendations to the Health Care Coalition for problem-solving and; 4) involves RN to BSN students in the provision of elder care by participation in a real-life, collaborative, community-based care model. Students work in pairs and are assigned a caseload of elders. They are supervised by faculty and have case conferences. Students appreciate the relationship of health risks and prevention activities, scarce resources to health outcomes, and costs and cost savings to quality of life.

Replication:

This program has been replicated in six other nursing schools in the southeast region of the United States. A conference was held describing the program's elements, and assistance was provided to help schools replicate it. A description of the model is being published.

RUNNER-UP

**University of Arkansas, Fayetteville -- Eleanor Mann School of Nursing
Fayetteville, Arkansas**

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Abstract:

Gerontologic nursing is the focus of two courses in the first semester of the senior year. A responsibility of the courses is to prepare students to use research-based practice when caring for older adults in a variety of settings (in-patient, long-term care, and community-based settings).

Students learn content related to the historical and cultural perspectives of gerontologic nursing; theories of aging; holistic assessment of older adults; health promotion for the normal aging process; and identification of health risks and caring for health problems associated with older people. Legal and ethical issues and public policy affecting older adults as well as future perspectives in the health care system concerning older adults are also explored.

Students research a topic and then become involved in translating findings into practice policy or protocol with a cooperating health care setting. As part of the capstone senior seminar course, students prepare and present in poster format their Research Utilization Project at the University of Arkansas Annual Nursing Research Conference. Students are able to share their work in ways that introduce nurses to new approaches to care based on research. In addition, the students have a project to visit an older person and become intimately involved in developing a wellness care plan designed to assist the older person in reaching the highest possible level of wellness.

Innovation:

The courses link gerontologic nursing research with policy and practice. The Research Utilization Paper is designed to facilitate a student-developed, research-based policy, procedure or protocol related to health promotion of older adults. This project is closely tied to research activities in three other courses: Care of the Older Adult, Introduction to Nursing Research, and Seminar in Clinical Nursing. Students use their research to revise or create policies, procedures or protocols for a care setting. The student's work is given to a cooperating facility where it may use the student's work for enhancing policies and protocols for caring for their patients.

The second innovation is the Project with the Older Person. Students have four separate visits with an elderly client. Assessment, wellness care plan development, continued evaluation, and redesign are the focus of the visits. The students interact with an older person living in the community, gain insight into the problems and rewards of aging and learn the importance of health promotion and maintenance for the elderly.

Replication:

Both projects are easily replicable. Creating links with nursing home administration and staff is critical to facilitate the research utilization project, including application of students' research findings in the practice setting. The project with the older person can be completed in any community setting where older adults reside.

RUNNER-UP

**University of Pittsburgh -- School of Nursing
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania**

**Ellen B. Rudy, PhD, RN, FAAN, Dean; Ann Yurick (faculty contact)
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Abstract:

Gerontologic nursing is a significant part of the curriculum at the University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing. This curriculum creates a positive image of the older person as a functional member of society with the ability to learn throughout life and to take measures to reduce the risk of health problems. Varied innovative teaching strategies are used to stimulate student interest in older adults and to provide experiences that demonstrate the impact nursing can have on elderly people. Learning activities in this curriculum include: providing traditional nursing care in acute- and long-term care facilities; promoting the psychological well-being of a long-term care resident over a seven week period; teaching a small group of elders about a pertinent health issue; conducting health screening and education to older individuals in the community; leading an exercise program in a HUD-subsidized apartment building for older persons; providing weekly respite for a caregiver and home care for a person with Alzheimer's disease over a seven-week period; evaluating the effectiveness of community agency programs; connecting older persons with appropriate community agencies; and providing written communication about clients for future care providers. In this curriculum all of the participants win!

Innovation:

The students are exposed to gerontologic material throughout the four year program. In addition to these basics, students take a required course in gerontologic nursing at the junior level. Because students complete a minimum of two clinical courses prior to the gerontologic course, they are ready and able to focus on the special needs of the elderly. The aim of the program is to understand nursing's role in promoting and maintaining optimal physical and cognitive functioning. In their senior year, the students move to more clinical work in an acute-care setting, in a psychiatric mental health setting, and in community health nursing. Emphasis on community nursing provides innovative experiences. Working with the Alzheimer's Association, students provide respite care and understand the complexity of caring for Alzheimer's patients first hand. The students do health promotion activities by making weekly visits to senior centers and apartment buildings and also work in a nursing homes to gain comprehensive skills and knowledge. Students also develop an advocacy skill.

Replication:

The school works hard to train faculty in geriatrics through the use of Geriatric Education Centers and other training programs such as those of the Alzheimer's Association. Dedicated faculty are an important ingredient as well as good linkages to the community.

HONORABLE MENTION

Quinnipiac College -- Department of Nursing

Hamden, Connecticut

Rita Hammer PhD, RN CS, Chairperson;

Elizabeth McGann, DNSc (cand) RN, CS (faculty contact)

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Abstract:

Quinnipiac College nursing faculty believes that the undergraduate nursing curriculum should have a significant emphasis on gerontologic nursing concepts to meet the challenge of delivering high quality health care to an expanding elder population. Holism is the guide that supports the overall and gerontologic portion of the nursing curriculum. Gerontologic nursing concepts, practice, and policy issues relative to advancing age are integrated throughout the curriculum. For example, health promotion/disease prevention in the elder aggregate is introduced in the foundational nursing course, and inter-generation issues are introduced in the family nursing course. A gerontologic concentration exists in two senior courses. These courses provide specialized knowledge, skills and essential concepts that are critical in providing care to elders. Teaching methods include case study, class discussion, and computer assisted software. Guest speakers present on such topics as elder law, advanced wound care, mental health issues, and community services available through the Local Area on Aging. Clinical practice takes place across the continuum of care with opportunity for direct care and an appreciation of the leadership and management strategies useful in this aggregate. Community based experiences take place with professionals in assisted living, case management teams, a geriatric assessment center, ombudsmen programs, meals-on-wheels, elderly outreach, adult day care, and senior centers. A specialized geriatric assessment component is taught in the campus health assessment laboratory.

Innovation:

The curriculum contains a special project known as *The Elder Student Project* (ESP). It is a mandatory program that involves pairing a well community dwelling elder with a nursing student to promote a positive relationship between them. This program spans both years of the upper division nursing major. The ESP serves to integrate the concepts of wellness and elder care. The student establishes a therapeutic relationship and performs a series of periodic holistic health assessments. The project also serves to sensitize students to the positive attributes of elders and sets a philosophical tone of positive regard for elders. Student evaluations of the gerontologic content have been consistently positive. Statistically significant results have been demonstrated on annual pre and post-test assessments of student knowledge and attitudes towards elders. Evaluations by the elder volunteers have also been favorable. Additionally, some students have expressed a desire to pursue graduate study in gerontologic nursing and our graduates have been employed in elder practice settings. Other program innovations include the use of computer assisted instruction, the opportunity for additional instruction and practice in the health assessment of the older adult, and the inclusion of community-based interdisciplinary experiences.

Replication:

The ESP is easily replicated with willing faculty and community links to locate elder volunteers.

HONORABLE MENTION

**Radford University School of Nursing
Waldron College of Health and Human Services
Radford, VA 24142**

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Abstract:

The nursing education curriculum is community-based and provides the undergraduate student with a rich diversity of clinical experiences across the continuum of care. The School of Nursing has contracts with over 150 community agencies for clinical experiences that focus on: wellness promotion; illness prevention; early disease detection and treatment; interventions for acute and chronic health problems; and care during the end of life. The innovative gerontology curriculum at the undergraduate level consists of three courses -- Nursing of the Adult, Externship in Clinical Gerontological Nursing, and Leadership in Nursing -- and the concept of "clinical partnering" is threaded throughout the courses. A faculty member certified as a Clinical Nurse Specialist in Gerontological Nursing coordinates both the undergraduate and graduate gerontology curricula. The Waldron Center for Applied Research provides support for research efforts with an emphasis on gerontologic concerns. Baccalaureate graduates are prepared as generalists for entry level practice in the profession. Several graduates have taken nursing positions in long-term care. They all indicate their undergraduate experiences with older adults made them more aware of the professional opportunities in this area.

Innovation:

Innovative clinical placements are key to integrating gerontological experiences into their courses. In the Nursing of the Adult Course, the students are paired with an elder in an assisted living facility for a semester. Assessment and care planning are emphasized here. Many students continue the pairings voluntarily long after the completion of the course. RN to BSN students also take the Nursing of the Adult Course during the semester. The Clinical Externship in Gerontological Nursing takes place during the summer after the junior year. Grant funds were obtained for this program. Students do course work and work as Certified Nursing Assistants in cooperating agencies. A conference concludes the summer. In the Leadership in Nursing course, senior students are assigned a clinical leadership rotation in a long-term care facility and work toward specific innovative improvements. Students present their work at the end of the course. Some students work with interior designers and facility management to improve environmental problems. Others write an orientation and training guide for volunteers.

The school recognizes one outstanding student in gerontologic nursing at graduation with a \$300 award. All recipients have continued gerontologic nursing as a career path.

Replication:

Replication of this curriculum requires developing close linkages with health care agencies in the community and a dedication to educate professional nurses who consider the special needs and attributes of their elderly patients in a consistent, comprehensive, and caring manner.

Common Elements
of
Baccalaureate Curriculum Models of Excellence

1. Free-standing courses
2. Multiple clinical sites
3. Creative uses of clinical sites
4. Experiential teaching techniques in classroom and clinical settings
5. Partnerships with community resources
6. Faculty knowledgeable in geriatric nursing care
7. Integration of gerontologic experiences into overall curriculum