

## 1999 First Place Award

### University of Akron—College of Nursing

#### Akron, Ohio

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#### ***Abstract***

The baccalaureate curriculum in the College of Nursing includes two courses with specific gerontological nursing content. The focal point is a gerontological course found in the junior year that helps students understand and integrate the paradigm shift from dependence and disability in older adults to a model of prevention and successful aging (Rowe & Cohen, 1998). Students are taught to use a holistic and eclectic approach by applying a nursing theory (Kolcaba's Comfort theory). During the progression of the course, students are encouraged to appreciate the positive aspects of aging and learn to value an interdisciplinary perspective in multiple clinical settings. A key component is the use of the nationally known "ACE" (Acute Care for Elders) model as implemented at Summa Health System. The second acute care unit of its kind in the nation, the ACE program has statistically demonstrated a decrease in functional decline in hospitalized elders. While all students cannot practice on the ACE unit, all students are taught the ACE principles and encouraged to apply them throughout their clinical experiences.

An important support course, in the sophomore year, is an integrated course with major gerontological content stressing the strengths of disabled older adults. Content focuses on geriatric nursing problems within major physiological systems. Student activities include a discharge planning paper, including a home visit, and daily journalizing. In the clinical component of the course, students complete an extensive assessment. An in-depth client-specific care plan is developed. Interventions have included student-made picture boards for stroke victims and music therapy for agitated clients. The students learn of specific variations needed to administer medications to the older adult and they begin attending interdisciplinary conferences.

#### ***Innovation***

Presenting gerontological content in the context of acute care and using the ACE model for clinical application is unique. Combined with a nursing base and an emphasis on successful aging, the students are presented a more holistic model of practice. Research is also used to demonstrate that successful aging is a matter of planning and not a "game of chance."

The combination of the two courses allows students the opportunity to see and work with older adults in all stages of health and dependency. The continuum of clients range from the entirely independent client living in the community, through illness, recovery or rehabilitation, and culminates with the completely dependent, dying client. This range of exposure offers the students examples of both successful and unsuccessful aging. Multiple sites also assist the students to evaluate the effects of location and approach on the client such as dying in a nursing home versus dying at home.

#### ***Replication***

Material regarding the ACE model is available through publications in the professional journals. The model emphasizes principles of holistic care, thus providing a low-tech inexpensive model of older adult care that can be applied anywhere. Development of teaching methods to complement the model requires commitment and creativity of faculty.

## 1999 Second Place Award

University of Maryland School of Nursing      Baltimore, Maryland

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### ***Abstract***

In 1992, the University of Maryland School of Nursing distinguished itself as one of the first schools of nursing in the U.S. to offer a course dedicated exclusively to gerontologic nursing within its baccalaureate curriculum. Gerontologic nursing is now presented along a continuum of care and fully merged within the School's baccalaureate education structure – a model featuring concentric circles that indicate the learner's progress. Students begin with a focus on healthy aging and recognition of the older adult as a person. Then, select principles related to care of the elderly are established as the student moves into acute, long term and community-based care. Current research is introduced with clinical implications in the areas of incontinence, fall prevention, exercise for health maintenance and rehabilitation.. Capitalizing on the technologically rich environment of the new School of Nursing building opened in January 1999, didactic learning is supplemented by computer simulation and experiential opportunities for students. Today, our baccalaureate students have an unprecedented opportunity to declare gerontology as an Emphasis Area, which allows them to develop this clinical focus. In addition, students may select gerontology electives enabling them to work with masters level nursing students and interdisciplinary colleagues. These opportunities offer the baccalaureate students an in-depth analysis of concepts related to fluctuations in the health of frail older adults. Particularly noteworthy are the interdisciplinary and collaborative teaching and learning options available through the Geriatrics and Gerontology Education and Research (GGEAR) program. This state-supported university initiative among the schools of nursing, medicine, pharmacy, dentistry, social work and law, mandates the imperative to strengthen and improve care for the elderly citizens of Maryland. The School is well endowed with five doctorally prepared gerontology nursing faculty who are directly involved in the instruction of over 220 new baccalaureate students each year. Distance learning technology is employed to share the School's gerontologic nursing expertise and curriculum with faculty and students statewide, and has vast potential for regional and national expansion. Upon graduation, regardless of their chosen employment or pursuit of higher education, our baccalaureate nursing students are well prepared with comprehensive knowledge about the aged population that is increasingly dominating all care settings.

### ***Innovation***

The stand-alone gerontology course at the baccalaureate level, taught by doctorally prepared faculty, is one of a number of innovations in the study of gerontology at the University of Maryland School of Nursing. Critical to the growth of gerontology nursing knowledge and experience is the exposure these students have to the research of senior faculty and graduate students in gerontology so that the baccalaureate students can begin to learn evidence-based practice. Supporting the specialization component is the combining of baccalaureate and graduate students in two graduate level electives in gerontology as well as the incorporation of multidisciplinary experiences in clinical settings highly populated by elderly persons. The capstone Emphasis Area allows students to develop an expanded breadth and depth of knowledge and skills in gerontology.

### ***Replication***

Deliberate effort has been made to develop a very structured model of gerontological nursing education at the undergraduate level. Faculty competencies have been identified that could be used for qualifying appropriate faculty to implement the curriculum. The free-standing introductory course could be replicated using our Instructors Manual as a guide. A critical aspect of the adult health course is a textbook that was selected for its inclusion of key points in caring for older adults. In the end, replication is achievable with faculty expertise and dedication, a stand alone course, attention to integration of gerontology content throughout the curriculum, and the opportunity for specialization. All of this will result in a model of excellence.

## 1999 Second Place Award

### The University of North Carolina at Greensboro - School of Nursing Greensboro, North Carolina

Lynne Pearcey, PhD, RN, Dean, Beth E. Barba, PhD, RN-C (faculty contact)  
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#### ***Abstract***

The gerontology curriculum at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro School of Nursing is based on two required gerontology courses, three elective gerontology courses, and is integrated in required gerontology content in several other courses. Placement of the courses at the senior level indicates the complexity of the course content. Demographics of aging, developmental processes of aging and physical processes that have a high incidence in the aged are the focus of the required courses. The elective courses focus on specific populations of older adults and on culturally appropriate community services. Innovation is particularly evident in the web-based activities used to stimulate student learning, to challenge students to examine their attitudes towards aging, and to encourage critical thinking about aging issues. These activities include case studies; accessing government, organizational and institutional web sites appropriate to gerontology; and participating in discussion groups in which personal and professional experiences are shared to produce rich, revealing, and insightful dialogue. The clinical experiences are community-based in senior housing, continuing care retirement communities, special care units, acute and transitional geriatric units, and service learning clinics. Students have the opportunity to work side-by-side with faculty who are active in the clinical settings and community activities related to aging. This integration of community with faculty strengths and creativity has created an innovative learning experience.

#### ***Innovation***

**Classroom Strategies.** The gerontology courses utilize a variety of web-based activities to stimulate student learning. Students are required to access census data to determine demographic information; multiple government websites to determine current information on legislation, programs, and issues related to aging; organizations such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, and Stroke to determine responses to queries posed for student discussion. Case studies and critical thinking activities offer students opportunities to apply knowledge of pathophysiology of disease and normal changes of aging. Students participate in weekly discussion via class email folders related to aging in which they share personal and professional experiences, summarize threads of discussion, and say what they have learned and how it can be applied to practice. Students credit these discussions particularly with changing their attitudes about aging in general, their own aging, and the aging of their clients and family members.

**Clinical Strategies.** Extensive, supervised clinical experiences with older adults and the network of aging services occurs in community settings such as nursing homes, continuing care retirement centers, and subsidized housing environments, and in acute care and rehabilitation centers. Students focus on high-level wellness, older persons' individual strengths, and systems and supports of the aging network in the community. Elders are engaged as facilitators for students to learn about the challenges of aging in this complex society. Students pair with 6-8 elders in the community for the duration of the semester, thereby having the opportunity to assess individuals in-depth and over time. Cooperative learning experiences with GNP students in service learning clinics have proven to be an exciting, inspiring partnership.

#### ***Replication***

Gerontological content has clearly defined course objectives and clinical subobjectives rather than content being integrated into several courses as might occur in a lifespan model. Gerontological texts, videos, interactive videodisks, and computer-assisted instructional resources are readily available. The Internet has a wealth of comprehensive and reliable information on such topics as government services and programs and pertinent websites addressing topics as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases. The clinical experiences are easily replicable since nothing new was created, but rather the faculty assessed where older adults were in the community and arranged for students to meet them there.

## *1999 Honorable Mention Award*

### *San Diego State University, School of Nursing* *San Diego, California*

Patricia R. Wahl, RN, MSN, FAAN, Dean;

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#### *Abstract*

San Diego State University, School of Nursing has been systematically evaluating, developing and integrating essential gerontological nursing content into the baccalaureate program since 1989. It began with the establishment of the San Diego Geriatric Education Center. The Center was a collaborative, inter-institutional, multi-professional partnership with other schools and health facilities and addressed the question: how to educate health-care professionals with attention to a multidisciplinary approach to meeting the needs of the elderly with special attention to minority elderly.

From this base of activity, the School of Nursing developed a course in Gerontological Nursing required for all undergraduate majors, and curriculum guides for the integration of gerontological nursing content into all other clinical nursing courses except pediatric nursing. The Gerontological Nursing course emphasizes wellness and healthy aging, the health-illness continuum and provides weekly clinical experience with seniors in their homes, residential facilities, assisted living apartments, health centers and senior centers. Students have also been involved in the Senior Olympics and other similar activities as the opportunities arise. The clients served by the clinical agencies reflect the cultural diversity of California and include many first-generation immigrants. A description of the course is included in J. Lantz et.al., (1992) "The Level and Focus of Geriatric Nursing Content in Associate and Baccalaureate Nursing Programs", *Journal of Nursing Education*.

Age-related content has also been integrated into the Health Assessment course, the Psychiatric-Mental Health Nursing course, women's health and grandparenting in the Obstetrical Nursing course, Adult Health Nursing, and Community Health Nursing. A new elective course also includes health issues of concern to the older woman.

#### *Innovation*

We believe that the process should start early in the student's curriculum and provide sensitive and meaningful experiences that excite students about the riches of nursing practice in this specialty area. A separate course early in the student's educational process is therefore critical. In addition, the full commitment by faculty allows gerontological content to be fully integrated into other courses to support sustained learning in geriatrics. The faculty agreed to reduce the number of courses in other areas to allow room for a separate course in gerontologic nursing and to assure that clinical opportunities were available. Diverse clinical learning opportunities and cultural diversity in these settings help to reinforce the content and to translate it to practice.

#### *Replication*

The faculty must fully recognize the need to educate nurses with the knowledge and skills to care for the growing elderly population. The curriculum plan is based on assessment of the uniqueness of the community, the consumer, and the provider. It includes an important issue relevant in California and nationally: how should baccalaureate and associate degree programs be different? The process to develop the course included the following steps: a gerontology nursing advisory committee of experts, a needs assessment, content analysis from "Healthy People 2000", survey of experts, identification and inclusion of essential content.

## **1999 Honorable Mention Award**

### **University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, College of Nursing Little Rock, Arkansas**

**Linda C. Hodges, PhD, RN, Dean,**

**Janet Lord, PhD, RN (faculty contact)**

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#### ***Abstract***

Geriatric content and experiences across settings are integrated throughout the undergraduate curriculum, culminating with two specific courses at the senior level: Nursing Care of the Older Adult Theory and Practicum. Students examine attitudes about aging, challenge stereotypes, and focus on the continuum of care delivery for the elderly. Health promotion and illness prevention are emphasized. Students practice with an interdisciplinary approach in a variety of acute, rehabilitation, long term care, and community-based settings with clients from various ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. One clinical site is the College of Nursing Clinic in a cluster of elderly high-rise apartments with 600 residents. Students from several undergraduate and master's level courses practice at this site. Throughout the curriculum, in addition to assessing and meeting physical, mental, and emotional needs of these clients, students identify and refer the elderly to appropriate community resources.

#### ***Innovation***

The faculty initiated a pilot effort this year and converted Older Adult Theory to a web-based course. The course objectives remained the same; however, web-based methodologies such as asynchronous and synchronous discussions, e-mail, web searches, and scenarios were used to deliver the course to students' homes. A faculty member who teaches the Older Adult course was supported by the College to attend an institute on online education and provided the resources needed to convert the course to web-based. The pilot was so successful the College submitted a federal grant application to support additional web-based courses in the curriculum.

#### ***Replication***

Conversion of traditional courses to web-based applications can be replicated in any program. Commitment from the faculty and adequate resources from administration are essential for success of such a project.

## 1999 Honorable Mention Award

### University of Pennsylvania, School of Nursing

#### Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Norma M. Lang Ph.D., FAAN, FRCN, Dean; Linda P. Brown Ph.D., FAAN, Associate Dean and Director of Undergraduate Studies; Kathleen M. McCauley Ph.D., FAAN, Former Interim Associate Dean and Director of Undergraduate Studies; Sarah H. Kagan Ph.D., RN, CS, AOCN, Course Director, Nursing Care of the Older Adult ( faculty contact)  
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#### ***Abstract***

The University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing (UPSON) offers an undergraduate education in nursing through an integrated curriculum that incorporates liberal arts, comprehensive professional practice, and focused scholarly course work in nursing. The curriculum emphasizes aging population and the nursing response required - from generalist clinical care across the health care continuum to health and social policy. Gerontological content is integrated across the curriculum and through each curricular element as appropriate to student experience, the health care continuum, and bio-psycho-social alterations. Curricular highlights detailed in this application include a required upper division course on care of the older adult; study abroad at Oxford-Brookes University, Oxford, UK; the upper division case study elective on "Living with Dementia"; the required senior level course that incorporates self-selected clinical placement enabling students who desire careers in gerontological nursing to pursue more extensive preparation; and the senior inquiry course which provides the avenue for scholarly literature review on topics relevant to student interest and faculty research in gerontological nursing science. These highlights are reviewed within the context of outlining the significance, objectives, innovation, clinical relevance, and replicability of the gerontological components of the curriculum.

#### ***Innovation***

The UPSON curricular innovation relies on the matrix created through integration of gerontological content throughout the curriculum juxtaposed with required and elective exclusively gerontological courses. The required upper division course diverges from expectations about courses on gerontological nursing. A framework of feminist-informed, mutually respectful, collaborative, restorative and rehabilitative care for older adults distinguishes the course. The elective upper division case study course demonstrates innovation as a collaboratively taught initiative. This course is designed to create excitement and interest among nursing, medical, and other health professions students around caring for this challenging group of older adults while providing substantive exposure to precepts of gerontological practice.

#### ***Replication***

The UPSON undergraduate curriculum innovations are easily replicated by other programs with adaptations for specific intra- and extra-mural resources available. The matrix of integrated and exclusively gerontological curricular content programmatically encourages a focus on care of older adults and the context of an aging society. The assignments in N270: Nursing Care of the Older Adult and N366: Living with Dementia rely on field observations and presentations to synthesize classroom and clinical experiences into education for professional, research-based practice with older adults in an aging society. Replication requires adapting the general strategies to make use of community resources and faculty strengths. UPSON faculty are available to colleagues interested in exploring this adaptation and use of curricular and course frameworks as well as specific teaching strategies for other academic environments. Consultation to colleagues is provided through the Gerontological Nursing Consultation Service (GNCS). The GNCS is one of the Gerontological Practices of the Penn Nursing Network.