

Using the GEM method to increase nursing student care of the geriatric population

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There is a new world-wide health care crisis; not a new virus, bacteria or disease. Rather it is the aging of the world's population. People have survived pan and epidemics, wars and benefited from new medicine and technologies. From 2010 to 2050, the number of individuals over the age of 60 will double and the areas of greatest growth will be in areas of the world considered underdeveloped. It is estimated that by 2020, up to 75% of a nurses time at work will be spent with providing care for the elderly.

Who will care for the elderly as the amount of older individuals explodes worldwide? How will these nurses be prepared to provide specialized care to the elderly? Seton Hall University's Mission states that it prepares students to be leaders in their professional and community lives in a global society. At Seton Hall University College of Nursing, Gerontological Nursing is a 2 credit theory course only, placed in first semester junior year. The students are concurrently enrolled in an Adult Health course as their first clinical course.

The General Educational Method (GEM) was used in this course to increase the student's exposure with the elderly. Through the process of experiencing, understanding, judging and deciding, the student is able to incorporate the theory and facts of this course into the real world. There are weekly reflections as well as a LifeStory that is part of the course. Through these methods, the outcome is to educate better prepared new nurses to care for all types of people.. No longer would the elderly be a series of facts or figures but real people with real lives, needs, positives and negative, and most importantly, unique individuals The ultimate outcome being excellent, capable nurses who value the elderly and not cast them aside. By experiencing the elder, the student is deciding and judging for themselves what it means to be an elderly individual.

Biography:

Graduated in 1975 Magna Cum laude from Seton Hall University, MSN from Wagner College in Adult Nursing and Education, and Ed.D from Seton Hall University in Leadership and Administration in Higher Education. Worked as a staff nurse in GYN and then Surgical ICU for over 20 years. Started teaching at Seton Hall University in 1986 and continues to teach currently. Has also served in the role of Undergraduate Nursing Chair and as associate dean. Currently teaches in the area of Pathophysiology and Gerontological Nursing. Has received awards for teaching from Gamma Nu Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International, and the National League for Nursing, New Jersey Chapter