

Gerontological Nursing Reflection

The Gerontological Nursing course offered as a Scholar Citizen Initiative course was a course that helped me place value on the lives of the elderly citizens in the community. This course consisted of a didactic and clinical portion. The clinical portion consisted of eighty-four clinical hours that were completed at Salem Terrace, the Virginia Veteran's Care Center, the Kissito-Brian Center of Fincastle, and PACE of Roanoke. While at these facilities, we interacted heavily with the elderly residents. There were three geriatric related simulation labs that were a requirement of this course. As students, we were also given the task of writing an aging paper, where we took our Critical Care case analysis patient and theoretically aged them to show the changes that would occur within the body as a result of not only chronic conditions, but also the natural aging process.

Both the didactic coursework and clinical work has better prepared me to care for the aging population. Many universities do not include a class dedicated solely to geriatric clientele; Radford holds this advantage and helps further prepare their students for the NCLEX test, ultimately increasing job marketability. I also feel that my view of elderly clients has changed as a result of this course. I now have the mindset that I should do interventions and make suggestions that maximize their functioning level and play off of their strengths, rather than trying to harp on weaknesses that may or may not affect their quality of life. I have learned to focus more on what the patient needs and wants to be happy and have an increased quality of life, rather than what I think is most clinically appropriate.

I will take the knowledge gained with me through this course into clinical practice as a nurse. The unit I will be working on will most likely have more elderly patients, making this course a perfect preparation course to help work with these patients. I now have a better

understanding and appreciation for these patients, which will allow me to better serve as an advocate for them during care. Having to become more familiar with elderly programs will also serve as an asset as I work with an elderly population because I will be able to more appropriately make referrals to promote continuity of care.