

Student-Led Geriatric Nursing Conference: Evidence in Practice Teaching Strategy

Overview of Teaching Strategy

This teaching strategy provides students with the opportunity to develop research-based sessions that address key clinical issues related to care of older adults in hospital and rehabilitation settings. Students work in groups over a six-week timeframe to develop a 40-minute concurrent session podium presentation based on: 1) an ethical dilemma that occurred during their clinical experience that may have compromised the safe and effective care of older adults; or 2) a clinical protocol or event that occurred on the clinical unit that has impacted the care of older adults. The groups are asked to find evidence to support their selection of the ethical issue or protocol and discuss implications for safety and improved care. The conference has one keynote presentation, usually provided by a local nursing expert discussing research that lays the foundation for best practices in care of older adults. Successful implementation of the conference provides students with a beginning understanding about how to use leadership skills in improving care. This teaching strategy is based on a student-led, all-day conference that evolved over time at Community College of Philadelphia, and has become a much anticipated event in the Community College of Philadelphia Department of Nursing.

Download All Files for This Teaching Strategy

- [Community College of Philadelphia Conference Preparation Guideline](#)
- [Conference brochure example](#)

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Work as a group to plan and implement a concurrent session at a conference that describes ethical or clinical issues that impact the quality of care for older adults.
- Collaborate with peers to design a presentation that is based on review of evidence that underlies clinical nursing practice in order to challenge the status quo and offer new insights to improve the quality of care for older adults.
- Explore significant clinical issues that have implications for providing individualized, competent care to older adults.
- Use available evidence as a foundation to propose creative, innovative solutions to clinical practice problems and to advocate for improved care for older adults in hospital and rehabilitation settings.

Learner Pre-Work

This teaching strategy focuses on assessment of function and expectations, coordination and management of care, use of evolving knowledge, and making situational decisions with older

adults. It enhances students' human flourishing, nursing judgment, professional identity, and spirit of inquiry.

Each clinical group, with the assistance of their clinical faculty member, will develop a topic for discussion that will be presented at a conference. Tell the clinical groups to focus their presentations on either an ethical issue or a clinical guideline/practice issue that impacts the care of older adults on the clinical unit they are currently assigned to in their regular clinical rotation. Each group will be allotted a total of 45 minutes for their presentation.

Suggested Learning Activities

Each student will submit a critique of one scholarly peer-reviewed journal article that will be used to develop the presentation. A copy of the article must be submitted with the critique to designated faculty members prior to the presentation. Questions for discussion related to identifying and critiquing the research articles for presentation should include the following:

- Does the title of the article adequately describe its contents? Did the title stimulate your interest to read the article? Does the title relay significance for nursing practice?
- In reading the introduction, purpose, research questions and literature review, do the authors make a case for the significance of their study? Does it seem important as a contribution to evidence-based practice for nursing?
- Is this a qualitative or quantitative study? What information supports your answer?
- What did you learn from the discussion section of the article? How would you use this information in your practice with clients in general?

Find regular times for students to meet to discuss plans for the presentation, review research articles with the entire group and brain-storm about creative ways to deliver the information to their peers (i.e. case studies, use of internet resources, role-playing).

The conference is designed to be similar to a professional nursing conference. Therefore, students should be asked to dress professionally, rather than in their clinical attire. This aspect of the conference helps develop students' sense of professionalism, as well as prepare them for important roles outside of the clinical setting, such as in academic and policy settings.

Suggested Tools:

- The [Try This:® Series](#) from the Hartford Institute for Geriatric Nursing (HIGN) at the NYU Rory Meyers College of Nursing contains many evidence-based assessment tools. The tool, an article about using the tool, and a video illustrating the use of the tool, are all available for your use. The Try This: series is recommended for use by students as they consider best practices in clinical settings and how use of assessment data can influence care decisions.
 - As an example, one year a group of students addressed the fall risk protocol on their clinical unit and discovered that the assessment being used at the hospital was not

- evidence- based. As a result of the conference, the students were able to use the [Hendrich II Fall Risk Assessment Tool](#) to provide improved assessment of fall risk on their clinical unit.
- As a second example, students found the clinical protocol for pain assessment to be limited for patients with delirium or dementia; using the How to Try This [Pain Assessment Scale](#) and adapting it to clients with cognitive impairment, they were able to improve comfort guidelines on their clinical unit.

Conference Suggestions

- Large lecture hall or open space appropriate for a keynote speaker presentation.
- Adequate space to facilitate several concurrent podium presentation sessions. This space should also be conducive to 15 minutes or less of transition from one group presentation to another.
- One full day, ideally towards the end of the semester, which all students, full-time faculty, part-time faculty, and adjunct faculty can reserve for conference attendance.
- Conference brochure: the conference brochure should provide a clear itinerary for the day. It should also allow students to share with peers, faculty, and other members of the academic community who attend the conference the depth and breadth of their nursing scholarship.

Suggested Reading

[Appraisal of Guidelines for Research & Evaluation II](#)

AHRQ: Putting Evidence Into Practice: <http://www.ahrq.gov/clinic/healthaff.htm>

Author Information

Barbara McLaughlin, PhD, RN, CNE, ANEF
Community College of Philadelphia
Philadelphia, PA