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Community engagement: Nursing students engaging in oral histories of United States veterans and “giving back” for social gerontology

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Community Engaged Learning (CEL) at Binghamton University is a course designation in which students are involved in community partnerships and through these engagements and experiential learning meet course objectives. The purpose is to enrich learning and provide a service learning opportunity for the student. In this presentation, the students in the introductory nursing course, Socialization to the Professional Role I are meeting the course objectives of communication and interviewing elders for their introduction into a health history. Their primary objective for their assignment is to gather data for demographic information. However, in realizing the valuable information in social gerontology, the rich history to be shared through oral histories is realized when the student interviews the residents of the facility to gather an oral history. The Veterans of the United States shared their experiences with the nursing students through oral histories of their lives. In return, the nursing students gathered demographic information for the purposes of their nursing assignment and later wrote their own reflections of the interviews. When reflecting upon the community engagement, we felt it was important to give back to the Veterans so in return they spent time writing poetry, transcribing the interviews, preparing memory boxes and giving mementoes of the interview to the Veterans to keep as a remembrance of their history they shared. This presentation will discuss the experience of social gerontology and the benefit to the health care team through oral histories.

Biography

Margaret Decker is a Clinical Assistant Professor for the Decker School of Nursing and is a Certified Nurse Educator. She is currently pursuing her PhD from the Decker School of Nursing. Her areas of specialty are leadership and management, geriatrics and orthopedics. She is a 2015-2016 Faculty Fellow for Community Engagement at Binghamton University. She engages students through flipped classroom style learning. She advises students from the Watson School of Engineering with interests in bioengineering. For the Decker School of Nursing, she serves as a board member for the Broome County Community Organizations Active in Disaster.

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