



The
Scholar Practitioner Program
Newsletter

Winter 2016



Greetings,

This edition of the NU SPP newsletter is filled with great ambition and activity as we now settle into our new facility at Med-West. Despite our adaptation issues in respect to such issues as physical space, scheduling, and internet access, the collaborative energy between both learner cohorts and faculty keep our building abuzz with activity and engaging communities of learning.

Both semester topics this term, Functionality of Mind, Body and Spirit as well as Retooling and Redesign, garner a level of adaptability—how one adapts to the intersect between the physical, psychological and emotional aspects of ourselves and as the continued adaptability experienced within our learning journeys. Adaptability to external concerns surrounding fiscal deficits, national economy, labour disruption, reduced employment within the health care sector are but a few of the realities that impact our resilience to adaptability.

Adaptability also plays a critical role within our interpersonal relationships, as well as through behaviours that support and nurture the larger collective, such as with the SPP as a whole. Please reach out to someone new and offer your support in their adaptation process!

*Once Confucius said
As the water shapes
Itself to the vessel
That contains it,
So a wise man adapts
Himself to the circumstances.*

*Blaming the circumstances
Or people in the surrounding
For own misfortune or misery
Seldom yield tangible results
Instead a positive mindset
Faith, hope and courage
With willingness to adapt
Brings miraculous outcomes even in
The most adverse circumstances.*

Jaipal Singh

*A more whimsical approach to adaptability is offered
by George Bernard Shaw, as follows:*

*"Reasonable people adapt themselves to the world.
Unreasonable people attempt to adapt the world to
themselves. All progress, therefore, depends on
unreasonable people."*

*In conclusion, let's embrace the unreasonable and role
model the adaptability seen within all aspects of
ourselves along our lifelong learning journey!*

-Baiba

Greetings From Way up North: Tales from an SPP Alumnus

By: Rachel Davie

“Student, you do not study to pass the test. You study to prepare for the day when you are the only thing between a patient and the grave” - Mark Reid

No truer words could be said of what the process of becoming a nurse meant to me before, during, and after my time in the SPP program. Unlike many of my co-learners I knew where I was likely to end up working following graduation. I had after all decided to go back to school to become a nurse since it would afford me more opportunities for work, and advancing my already growing healthcare knowledge, in the more remote areas of Ontario. My partner had gotten a job teaching high school full time in the north (in Hornepayne, a town of 800 people which we now call home) and we both knew we were likely to settle here for at least a little while. While I liked a lot of the things about living in Central Ontario, I also liked the time I spent up north and I could see myself living here full time. It all just seemed to make sense.

So the SPP program... well it seemed to fit me like a glove. I'd been working as a kinesiologist for almost 7 years before I entered the program. I loved learning, pushing myself, and independent learning was my thing. Like many of you in the program I liked learning what I needed to know to be great at what I was doing that particular semester, but I also wanted to push myself to learn what I needed to in order to fill my other gaps at my own speed and on my own time. Many times this occurred on a VIA train between Hornepayne and Toronto Union (a 16 hour ordeal on a good trip) and I also loved choosing from all the placement opportunities available at UHN (my base organization). I started with two placements at Toronto Rehab: first on geriatric dialysis and then on spinal cord rehab. These were good placements to get my feet wet, although it was difficult at times seeing things from “the other side” since I had worked in a rehab physiotherapy driven field for more time than I had worked in the nursing world. I pushed myself to try more acute care nursing, doing my third semester placement at TGH with Thoracics and Respiriology. This placement taught me a lot about acute care nursing, but also showed me a lot of the things I DIDN'T want to be as a nurse. I didn't want to be jaded and I didn't want to be more concerned with myself than my patients or working as a team with the other nurses on the floor. I had a challenging semester with my original preceptor and was blessed that a kind, helpful, and understanding nurse took me under her wing and became my “new” preceptor. She showed me that sometimes you just have to laugh, grin and bear it, but no matter what never lose the person you are to the job. What started out as an awful semester turned into a great semester and pushed me to grow in ways I needed

to. I have a better understanding of the importance of team work and also saw firsthand the type of nurse I wanted to be as opposed to the type of nurse I didn't want to be! I did my 4th semester at Sick Kids, and learned the vast and different ways nursing applies in the pediatric world compared to the adult world. My final two semesters I requested, TGH Multi-Organ Transplant followed by TGH ER, to push myself to learn to work fast but efficiently. When time is tight you need to be on top of your game but never lose sight of the importance of meaningful connections with patients- no matter how brief the time that you spend with them ends up being.

Throughout all my semesters I wanted to learn as much as possible, be involved in anything happening on the floor as much as I could, and develop what I knew would be the skills that would serve me well in the north. These skills needed to be vast and varied, as every single day that I work now I have absolutely no idea what I'm going to see coming through the doors. My hospital is not unlike many others in the north, we treat anyone between the ages of birth and death. We have acute care beds, an emergency room, a family medicine clinic, and also 14 long term care beds. With only one RN working per shift, it's a lot to have on your plate and you often have to change gears at a moment's notice. One minute I can be changing a patient's diabetic ulcer on their leg, the next I'm assisting a PSW with bathing a LTC patient, and then I might get an ambulance bringing someone in who was in a car accident involving a moose or they're having a heart attack.

I think both the learning opportunities I had in the SPP program, and the manner with which the program allows you to go about these learning experiences, have had a huge impact on my current nursing career. The SPP program also further emphasized to me that I am a life-long learner. Since starting my job I've done numerous courses and completed the Provincial Standardized Chemotherapy course which would allow me to give chemotherapy to patients who are unable to travel out of town to Thunder Bay for their treatment. During nursing school many of my fellow co-learners stressed a lot about the exam, and I'm not going to say it wasn't on my mind at times either, but there's so much more to being a nurse than passing the RN licensing exam. The things you have the opportunity to learn are so much broader and complex! School shouldn't be all about the exam - there's so much more that happens after that!

The Second Time Around

By: Ashley Williamson

I was originally part of the second SPP cohort. During my 5th semester I was unable to successfully meet the academic requirements.

I have, for many years, suffered from depression and anxiety disorders. My current diagnoses are double depression (which I didn't even know existed until I was diagnosed with it) and general anxiety disorder. During that last semester it got the better of me and brought me to a place where I was unable to cope with the weight of the program. Even with my physician trying to help by offering counselling and medication changes – which often feels like one of those claw machines grasping for random toys; sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't; sometimes you just end up screaming at the machine – I was unable to bring myself into a healthy place mentally or physically.

A year and a half later, after many months of medication changes, counselling sessions, and an amazing mother that helped me when I couldn't help myself, I'm back at it.

While away, all I could think about was how much I wanted to get back into clinical. Especially after having to work at a call centre (for all those who have done that in the past I feel your pain); all I wanted to do was be a nursing student again. But, the closer the time came for me to return the more anxious I became. I was coming into a close knit group that had been together for the past year and a half as a total stranger – with the exception of one person. I had no idea if and how the program changed or where I would be placed in clinical.

Now for anyone who does suffer from anxiety or know someone that does, the “what-ifs” can overtake any and all thought processes and consequently take over your life. What if I forget everything I had learned in my previous semesters? What if I hate my placement? What if fall into another severely depressive state again? What if...

Cut to the first day of inquiry – terrified but with a smile on my face – I show up to a room of unknown faces, clinging to the one person I do know. With no surprise, everyone was warm and welcoming, and the fear started to subside.

Some things have changed since the last cohort, most of which seems to have occurred in the earlier semesters, but for the most part it is the same – for better or for worse. Working in groups to create a setting where we will all benefit from knowledge gained in a way that is beyond just a lecture and a series of slideshows with furiously scribbled notes. It was one of the things that really drew me to the program in the first place.

Even getting back onto the clinical floor; the physical assessments, medications, and personal care seems to be coming out of the crevices of my brain – some needing a review but other pieces coming back like I haven't been gone at all. Of course coming back onto a floor with more independent clients I have the fear that my clinical skills will be lacking, which seems to be a theme in our program. But what I will learn is so much more than just foleys and insulin injections (but I've done a lot of that in cats and dogs so that counts right?).

I've also made sure to take advantage of the services available to us through the university. Since we are all of forty or so in a cohort with nothing to call a campus, I felt (and still feel) a bit isolated from all the services that are available to those that are at the North Bay campus; most of which are often offered as drop-in only and not available online. It certainly takes more effort to get all set up to receive some of the services (counselling, academic assistance and the like). It is not ideal, but it's something.

I have learned a lot about myself and what I need to help me get me through my low points. So this time around, I'm ready.

Placement Profile

By: Maggie Lu

This semester my placement is at SickKids Hospital on the Bone Marrow Transplant unit, 8B. Coming from adult care at UHN, I didn't know what to expect. I was excited and a little nervous; but after a few shifts, I fell in love (as much as I thought I would). My preceptor is awesome in ensuring that I have many learning opportunities, and helps me with any learning gaps that I may have. The team on 8B is fantastic! Everyone is kind and helpful. I have never been part of a team with such cohesive and friendly staff.



Maggie with her preceptor Shahla from first semester at Toronto Rehab, Geriatric Psychiatry.

Transitioning to pediatric skills was a little hard at first, especially knowing that the normal ranges for vital signs are different for every child depending on their age. It was also a change for me that all the medications are weight based and require calculations. However, I was prepared! Honestly, practice makes perfect. It was different reading about the skills, but actually applying theory to practice is what helped me the most. The best part of being on 8B is that we get to know our little kiddies for quite some time. We get to see them throughout their entire treatment and build a rapport with them and the family. I am very thankful that I was able to get a pediatric rotation, I know that I will continue to learn so many more things in the shifts to come.

Preceptor Perspectives

"Being a preceptor was a very rewarding experience. It made me rediscover my passion for teaching others and made me self-reflect on my own strengths and weaknesses as a nurse. Having a student who was positive, excited to learn, and self-directed helped make my preceptorship very enjoyable. One fear I had, even after working as a nurse for 3 years, was that I would not know the answer to everything. I learned that, that was okay. Nursing is a career in which self-learning is a life long commitment."

-**Carmen Tang**, preceptor to Harpinder Sidhu at the Hospital for Sick Children

"Learn the knowledge behind the skill—with experience the skill will come."

-**Gloria Kwan**, preceptor to Sheileen Goobie at Toronto Rehab, Lyndhurst Centre



Preceptor, Gloria Kwan (far left) and co-learner, Sheileen Goobie (3rd from the left) with the nursing team at Toronto Rehab, Lyndhurst Centre, Spinal Cord Rehab.



Michelle Lenus, SPP co-learner (left), Carol Timmings, President-elect of RNAO, & Director of CDIP at Toronto Public Health (middle), & Anisha Garga, SPP co-learner; participating in the RNAO's Board of Directors student placement

Seeing the Power of Nursing Through the RNAO

By: Anisha Garga and Michelle Lenus

During our initial semesters at Toronto Public Health, we saw firsthand how the work of the public health nurse benefits the community. However, we often felt frustrated seeing our clients and their families negatively impacted by the social determinants of health. We worked with individuals affected by large issues such as unsafe housing; and as students, we felt we did not have the power to address these issues.

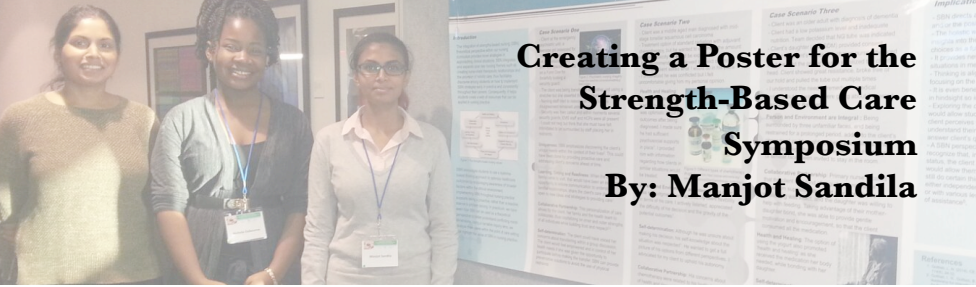
Our views on the power of nurses changed after participating in the RNAO's Board of Directors student placement over the past two years. The placement involved learning about RNAO initiatives,

discussing these initiatives with MPPs, attending Question Period at Queen's Park and hearing from the three major political parties on their perspectives of current healthcare priorities.

Seeing advocacy at the provincial level showed us that nurses collectively have the power to address larger healthcare issues. Our experience emphasized the importance of being involved in advocacy as students. The RNAO provides an existing platform not only for RNs, but also for students to voice their concerns about how current healthcare issues affect our individual practice. Politicians

respect the experiences and opinions of nurses, allowing us to come together and advocate for change. Nurses have already created change in issues such as medical tourism and continue to advocate for change in larger issues such as pharmacare and homelessness.

As students, we all understand the struggle of staying engaged in the nursing profession. It is easy to lose sight of the bigger picture in the midst of portfolios, change projects, and preparing for the NCLEX. But at the end of it all when we have become RNs, how will we use and sustain the power of our profession?



Creating a Poster for the Strength-Based Care Symposium By: Manjot Sandila

This past November Nichole Osbourne, Talisa Pinto, and I did a poster presentation at the Strength Based Care Symposium. During our summer semester we had all studied Gottlieb's strengths based nursing theory. When we found out that there was going to be a symposium about this topic, we were excited to apply. We all wanted to get out of our comfort zones and this was a perfect way to showcase some initiative and leadership, which was a theme from last semester. We decided to present a series of cases in which we implemented strengths based nursing in the previous semester.

The process of being able to present at the conference was longer than we initially thought. First, we had to write up an abstract to submit for approval. Since we all had different placement schedules and other assignments due, we had to make time to coordinate our thoughts. We had conference calls and worked on a Google Doc together. Along with the time management piece, we had to double check the symposium's objectives and make sure these points were highlighted in the abstract. We also had Baiba Zarins' help in proofreading our final draft.

Next, once we found out that we had been accepted, we then had to put together the actual poster. I had some previous experience of making this kind of poster during my first undergraduate degree, but this would be looked at by the wider health care community rather than just my fellow students.

We downloaded a simple yet appealing PowerPoint template and worked on it simultaneously through Google Slides. We scrutinized how our information would look on it in terms of font, format, etc. However, since our topic did not follow the traditional research format, we did not have any graphs or charts that we could include. We did not want a wall of text, so we hunted down some relevant copyright-free pictures.

In order to test if this poster was printer ready, I then printed a scaled down version of the poster. Baiba's advice was to make the poster timeless so it can be used and shown again. We really took this advice to heart as it was not cheap to print it!

On the day of the symposium, there were other floor nurses also presenting posters. Their posters were about how they implemented strengths based nursing on their units. It was interesting to see that even though these RNs were not researched focused, they were still able to incorporate current research into their practice and show others how to do it as well. The biggest thing that I learned was that the presentations did not go how I thought they would. People did not criticize or have nitty gritty questions. They were mostly just curious about the different case scenarios that we highlighted. There were many nice informal conversations.

A Morning with Mike DeGagne

By: Baiba Zarins

On December 2nd, the SPP learners and faculty had the opportunity to meet and engage in an open dialogue forum with Nipissing's President and Vice Chancellor, Mike DeGagne. Mike is an avid supporter of the SPP and continually aims to meet with our program learners on an annual basis to provide us the opportunity to inquire and share in questions, comments and narratives.

Within this session, Mike shared administrative updates from Nipissing University, beginning with the well-publicized labour negotiations/collective bargaining process and news that the subsequent labour disruption had recently reached a formal settlement (pending ratification) by parties representing unionized faculty and university administration. The open questions of concern and resulting clarification of information was well received by all attendees.

Mike provided his narrative of his professional journey intertwined with influential threads of personal and professional impact, starting from his educational achievements within administration and law as well as numerous executive positions within provincial and national government agencies; specifically addressing Aboriginal health, law and governance, but most notably through his work with the Aboriginal Healing Foundation. Prior to his appointment to Nipissing in October 2012, Mike held the position of Chairman of the Child Welfare League of Canada and Board of Directors membership for the Mental Health Commission of Canada.

Announcements

- The Nipissing University Undergraduate Research Conference is scheduled Friday, April 1st and Saturday, April 2nd, 2015 in North Bay, Ontario. A student from any undergraduate discipline, who has worked on a scholarly project in which s/he has taken a leadership role in its development and execution, are eligible to participate in the conference. Proposals can be disciplinary specific or multi/interdisciplinary. Students are invited to present an original poster, oral presentation of a paper or a panel presentation of a series of related papers. This conference is an excellent opportunity for undergraduate students to showcase their work in a professional setting before their peers, faculty, and the public. Further information is located at:

<http://www.nipissingu.ca/academics/research-services/ors/ugrc/Pages/default.aspx>

- As we are all well aware of the current economic status within all sectors of our lives, it is with regret that an off-campus graduation will not be possible for October 21st, 2016. All program graduates of the NU SPP will be invited to participate in the Nipissing University commencement ceremony in June, 2017 at North Bay campus. Although understandably disappointing, the North Bay campus ceremony offers a larger and very visible venue in which to celebrate your academic achievement with graduates of other NU programs. Creative celebratory options will be further discussed with the co-learner council to acknowledge our program grads.
- The NU SPP Journal club is seeking interested learners (a particular shout-out to 2015 cohort learners) who like to engage in sharing, scholarly discussion and review of interesting publications. Group meetings are on Thursdays at Med-West. For further information, please contact Meagan Crawford.
- The next HESI (NCLEX review bundle) will be offered **May 25th, 26th and 27th, 2016** at Med-West. The computer adaptive testing component for the pre, post and final CAT testing will be scheduled at the Michener Institute (222 St Patrick St, Toronto), as it provides a 30 seat computer lab

which fits our IT needs. Tentative computer lab testing dates are May 4th, 5th and 6th and June 8, 9 and 10th that surround the May live review dates at Med-West. The CAT (mock NCLEX exam) date is offered either July 6, 7, 8th, August 17th, 18th and 19th or August 24th, 25th and 26th. Dates are confirmed at Michener, but are subject to participant registration. Stay tuned for further details and registration once received by our Elsevier representative!

In Recognition

- A heartfelt congratulation is extended to Amy Rust, who was honored by a family through a thoughtful donation to the Grateful Hearts campaign at Mount Sinai Hospital. The family sent an appreciation card which states - "Thank you for the special care given to ___ in his final days. You made a very difficult time a little easier." Amy has also been awarded a Grateful Hearts pin to acknowledge her compassion and empathy in meeting both the patient and family needs during a very emotional time. The nurse manager at Mount Sinai also recognized Amy's excellence in care during her recent practicum placement. Congratulations on your award, Amy!
- Nichole Osbourne received and accepted an invitation to join the prestigious Sigma Theta Tau International (STTI) Honour Society of Nursing, through the local Toronto chapter. STTI offers its members career, academic and networking opportunities throughout North American and international forums. Nicole is the first SPP learner to join the STTI. Nicole's induction ceremony will be sometime in May as she looks ahead to the professional opportunities through this organization.



Mike DeGagne speaking to SPP faculty and co-learners

Faculty and Learner Academic Scholarship

Louela Manankil-Rankin will be presenting a micro keynote presentation at the Qualitative Methodology Conference, University of Alberta, International Institute for Qualitative Methodology, Glasgow, Scotland in May 2016. Her presentation will address *A journey into data analysis: Moving from Field Texts to Research Text in Narrative Inquiry*. Louela also led two group author sessions titled *Moving from Field to Research Text in Narrative Inquiry: Lessons Learned* as a Golden nuggets presentation as well as *Understanding How Nurses' Experience Living Their Values Amidst Organizational Change: A Narrative Inquiry as an oral presentation* at the Qualitative Health Research Conference, University of Alberta International Institute for Qualitative Methodology in Toronto in October, 2015.

Stephanie Chu, Valini Geer, Katalin Pare and Krysia Theriault will be presenting the NU SPP on a global stage at the Royal College of Nurses CN Education Forum International conference and exhibition, Partners in practice: the global perspective on March 16th 2016 in Telford, United Kingdom. The SPP faculty were invited to present a narrative inquiry pedagogy to transform nursing education symposium comprising of individual topic papers on:

- Nipissing University's Scholar Practitioner Program (Krysia Theriault)
- Utilizing Narrative inquiry pedagogy in clinical practicum: new approaches to nursing education (Katalin Pere)
- Mask-Making: A narrative introduction to the therapeutic nurse-client relationship (Valini Geer)
- Innovative teaching strategies: the use of narratives in nursing education curriculum (Stephanie Chu)

Congratulations to our entire program faculty on their support of our philosophy of lifelong learning through continued contributions to our broader academic community!

What is HSPnet and why does it have such a big impact on SPP practicum placements?

By: Baiba Zarins

The SPP prides itself in our adaptability and flexibility in securing 1:1 preceptored practicum placements each and every semester of our six semester program of study. This serves not only as a cornerstone of our curricular philosophy, but also as an unintentional marketing attraction for both prospective program applicants and post-graduation employers. Quoting directly from the HSP-NET home page, "HSPnet is a comprehensive, web-enabled Practice Education Management system for the health sciences, addressing challenges of discipline-specific and interprofessional student placements." <http://hspscanada.net/>

The Goals of HSPnet are to

- Increase the availability and quality of practice education opportunities for students
- Streamline processes and improve coordination and communication among agencies that place and receive students

- Identify untapped opportunities and provide access to a greater range of placement settings including rural and community
- Support evaluation and improvement of learner outcomes
- Enhance the profile and priority of practice education

Initially, SPP placements were a careful orchestration between affiliate health care placement coordinators and program faculty to meet the pre-secured placement needs of our small cohort of learners. With every growing cohort intake and semester requests, this process became more complex to organize and meet the changing capacity in both academia and practice environments. As a result, the SPP joined all other programs within NU in using this practicum placement platform in its intended manner to streamline, coordinate and review placements by the many stakeholders representing the University, our program faculty, our program learner and affiliate organization perspectives. As capacity becomes a growing reality in respect to preferred placement requests, our adaptability to creative practicums that meet our learning goals will become an evolving reality.



Why I Want to Be a Nurse?

By: Ping Zou, RN PhD

I have been constantly asked by my co-learner students why I want to be a nurse. Yes, this is a good question which can lead to a deep reflection. Here are my answers:

I fell in love with nursing because:

Nursing is a lantern that lights my journey of immigration and settlement in Canada.

Nursing is a job that brings my family a decent life and makes my family proud of me.

Nursing is a philosophy that helps me make sense of life events both sad and happy.

Nursing is knowledge that turns me into a helpful person in personal, family, and social circumstances.

Nursing is human care that we all want in our critical time.

Nursing is a privilege that allows us to stay at people's bedsides, listen to their stories, and touch their hearts.

Nursing is a heroic career that we saves lives everyday but never count how many.

Nursing is someone I incidentally met but fell in love forever.

Ten years ago, inspired by the belief that Canada is the best country to live in the world, my family landed in Canada with great pleasure. Today, I am proudly working as a nurse because I believe that nursing is the best profession to be in. I would love to thank every individual and every effort for helping me to be a nurse today.

Now, it is my turn to ask you what led you to nursing and how you feel about nursing. Please put your hands on your chest and feel your pounding heart. When you feel your heart beats, you will understand the beauty of life. At that moment, you will know how proud you are as a nurse.