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What motivated you to become a gerontological nurse educator?

My academic training as a certified adult-gerontological nurse practitioner was where the beginnings of my desire to educate began. I enjoyed teaching patients and families and I enjoyed clinical teaching, in the form of precepting nurse practitioner students, primarily in settings where we care for older adults.

Favorite experience as a gerontological nurse expert educator?

So far my favorite experience has been working with students in the DNP program and observing them as they learn and connect the complexities of Gerontological advanced practice nursing care. It is exciting to see the "light-bulb" moments of what it means to care for older adults. It also makes me feel good when students who didn't think they would like geriatrics have epiphany moments and come to terms with their own love for this patient population.

Who is a key person who supported you in becoming a gerontological nurse educator?

Dr. Laurie Kennedy-Malone has to be credited with supporting me in my development in the field of gerontology and in education. She was my professor in my nurse practitioner training at UNC-Greensboro. She became a colleague of mine as I went into clinical practice full time and grew in my clinical expertise. And she continued to support me by serving as my dissertation chair as I completed my PhD. She is a well-known gerontological nurse educator and scholar and mentor. She continues to support me collegially as I develop in my new role as a nurse educator.

Where would you like to see gerontological nursing education to be at in 5 years?

I would like to see Gerontological nursing education taught in nursing programs as a separate entity like we



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teach peds, OB, etc. I believe this will help students and remind faculty of the unique perspectives and skills it takes to care for older adults.

Key words of wisdom for those nurses interested in becoming a distinguished educator in gerontological nursing education?

For those interested in becoming a distinguished educator in Gerontological nursing education I would advise staying immersed in your specialty.

About Tomika

Dr. Tomika Williams is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Advanced Nursing Practice & Education at the College of Nursing. Dr. Williams' research interest are centered in gerontology. She holds dual certification as an Adult & Gerontological Nurse Practitioner and has clinical practice experience in rehabilitation services, long-term care, and employee wellness clinics.