

faceted discipline that takes years of training and a love of lifelong learning to be proficient at.

As we are both ending our second year at St. Clair, both of us are excited to apply what we have learned in the classroom to the critical care setting, and we hope that our placements make us well rounded Respiratory Therapists. We cannot wait to see what clinical has in store for us, and what the next cohort of students is able to add to the Lung Nerdz of SCC. Hopefully it leaves everyone more excited than this picture of Samir practicing patient transport.



Two Sides of The Same Coin Respiratory Therapy at Two Different Schools

Harry Kanathasan SRT & Nivetha Jeyakumar SRT

Recently my class decided to take a class picture - a beautiful tote to the culmination of a wonderful year. It was a sign to take a look back and reminisce about the experience as a first year RT student. I was discussing these experiences with my friend who so happens to be studying Respiratory Therapy at another school. What we came to realize is that although we may be learning the same material, our school experiences have been very different. I thought it would be nice share this exchange and give everyone a glimpse of how first year was at two different schools. This a recollection of our experience at Michener and Fanshawe.

1. Living at home vs. living away

Harry: The majority of students at Michener are commuters. So we have the luxury of living at home. Although there is the daily inconvenience of commuting, you get to go home and enjoy all the convenience it provides.

Nivetha: Yes, living at home is something people should not be taking for granted. I moved to London Ontario for school and it was a pretty big culture shock. I haven't ever lived on my own, so the cooking and general housework really put a toll on me first semester. But it's not all bad. Despite the stress, I was able to meet a lot of new people. The majority of us had moved in for this program so although we were all different, the commonality drew us closer.

2. General education requirements

Harry: You told me recently that you had to take general education courses. I found that quite different. At Michener, I believe the vast majority of our courses are directed around Respiratory Therapy. The only general course I believe we take is statistics in second year.

Nivetha: Yeah! I'm not taking any general courses

personally because I had credits for it already, but in second semester a lot of us have to take a general education requirement.

Harry: Isn't that stressful?

Nivetha: Well it can be overwhelming, but my classmates have told me that it's nice to learn something new outside of our scope. Since our program is just one in a large multidisciplinary college, there is a wide array of courses we have to choose from.

Harry: That's cool. Michener is a very focused school, so all programs offered here are geared towards allied health. I really like that about our school. We don't have outside of the scope courses per se, but we have a lot of seminars that are offered. They usually take deeper dives into relevant health topics. I find that really nice because you can learn something different without having the stress of being tested on it. It's knowledge for knowledge's sake.

3. What about the tests?

Nivetha: I remember seeing your schedule. You have had tests and assessments since February!

Harry: Yeah, we kind of had a wave of tests from the get go. But we did have gaps in between.

Nivetha: Wasn't that stressful? How did you guys handle it?

Harry: I mean it was, but it was a way to keep us on our toes. Since testing was very regular, we constantly had to stay caught up with the material. But I thought the testing was done at a good pace. We were tested while the material was still fresh. I think the biggest thing is time management. Doing a little bit regularly really helps you stay on top of

things.

Harry: I honestly prefer that to what you guys do. I heard you guys have one week of back to back testing.

Nivetha: Well I look it as two sides of the same coin. You guys have it spread out, we have it all together. I mean it is very stressful having back to back exams, but we have a lot of recovery time. We have that calm after the storm. Just like you, I think it's about doing a little everyday. If you try to cram last minute, it will really come to hit you hard. Trying to study for 6 courses all at once last minute, is an impossible task. However, if you pace yourself and stay on top of your courses, you will do well.

4. Labs Labs Labs

Harry: When I came to visit you I saw your mini hospital suite. That was pretty cool.

Nivetha: Yeah, that's where our labs happen. We have one lab class where we put all our skills to the test.

Harry: Yeah we actually have course specific labs.

Nivetha: That's interesting!

Harry: Yeah, so whatever we learn in class we apply the same week in lab. It's really cool because it really helps us consolidate what we learned and put it into context.

Nivetha: That's nice. We have a multifocal approach. I like it because it feels more realistic. I feel that in real life I am never going to learn one single skill in isolation, so it's nice that we get that sort of experience so early on in our education.

5. Final thought?

Harry: Looking back, how would you describe your first year?

Nivetha: Honestly? It was bittersweet. In the beginning, it was stressful. I had to experience living in another city, making friends, learning new concepts related to the healthcare field all in one month. Over time, I grew to love this program and the friends I made along with it. I gained a better understanding of what Respiratory Therapists actually do, and to my surprise they do a lot more than I could have ever imagined. I cannot wait until second year starts and we are off to clinicals!

Nivetha: How about you?

Harry: I really loved my first year. I met a lot of people and learned so many new things. I feel like

I am progressing towards a career that has a real impact, and the stuff that I've learned really make me feel accomplished. I'm really looking forward to second year.

Harry: Is there anything you would change, if you could?

Nivetha: Although we have one week of exams and then a long break, I would not mind having the exams more spaced out. Personally, I would want to get tested on materials while it is fresh in my mind rather than getting tested on it all at once.

Harry: After talking with you, one thing I would have really liked in first year is that consolidated lab course. I really love the way we do course specific labs in first year, but simulation labs in first year does seem kind of cool.



St. Clair College Respiratory Therapy students and faculty enjoyed "movie night" on April 2nd. Seeing the movie "Five Feet Apart" was a pathophysiology field-trip suggested by our first-year students. What a great way to further our understanding of Cystic Fibrosis!!