

EXPERIENCING NARRATIVE PEDAGOGY:  
CONVERSATIONS WITH NURSE EDUCATORS

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Submitted to the faculty of the University Graduate School  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree  
Doctor of Philosophy  
in the School of Nursing  
Indiana University

October 2012

Accepted by the Faculty of Indiana University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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## Dedication

This work is respectfully dedicated to Dr. Melinda Swenson for the tireless way that she has been with me over these past four years of intense work. Before beginning my doctoral studies, I met with Dr. Swenson to see if her research aims and mine matched. I knew so little about nursing education research at that point; I only knew that I wanted to find ways to enhance student engagement in learning. Melinda gave me her own copy of *Teaching the Practitioners of Care: New Pedagogies for the Health Professions* edited by Nancy Diekelmann. Her parting words were: “Read this. If it resonates with your way of thinking, we are a match.” After reading the first few pages, I felt the familiar sensation that I have learned to recognize as meaning “This is it.” It was my introduction to Narrative Pedagogy and a new way of thinking about teaching and learning. I am forever indebted to Melinda for introducing me to a whole new world of possibilities. Thank you, dear friend and mentor!

## Acknowledgments

While this has been a mostly fun, always mind-stretching, life-changing experience, I would not have been successful had it not been for key people and funding resources. The order of the naming has no significance. Thank you so much for the role that each of you has played in getting me through this. My thinking will never be the same again (that's a good thing!)

Thanks to my committee who have seen me through good, not-so-good, and very memorable times. I doubt that any of us will forget my asthma attack during my proposal defense – who would have thought that the aerosolized deodorizer packed such a powerful punch to someone with twitchy airways! Josh, thanks for your support through the independent study, your flexibility with my thinking, and for assisting me through learning a lot more about educational psychology than I would have thought possible in four years. Pam, you are an amazing person. I have been privileged to be a part of independent studies and private conversations with you and have benefitted immeasurably from your wisdom about nursing education, philosophy of Martin Heidegger, and Narrative Pedagogy. Sherry, I never cease to be amazed at how you come up with something “off the top of your head” that is so good that it becomes a working title, or something else that leads me to some new readings. Your insights in to how to get this done came along at the right time. Melinda, where do I begin and where do I end in expressing my gratitude and acknowledging all of your help in getting me through this work? The best way I know is to dedicate this work to you. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for gifting so much of yourself to my work, especially at a time when you had a lot on your own plate.

Thanks to my fellow “grasshoppers”, Wendy Bowles and Sue Owens. I am so glad we found each other at the right time for me in my work! Your thoughts and challenges to my thinking were indeed a part of my hermeneutic dwellings. Thanks for your help in preparing me for my defense!

Thanks to the doctoral students who were part of the hermeneutic circle. Thanks to Drs. Becky Sloan and Marsha Ellett for allowing me to be a part of your hermeneutic circle and adding to my understanding of Heideggerian philosophy.

Thanks to the Mininger Center Internal Grants for Teaching Faculty at Goshen College which helped to fund part of my doctoral studies.

At Goshen College, Dean Anita Stalter, thanks for the many ways that you personally and professionally supported me. Also thanks for the ways in which you allowed your office to help me on this journey.

To my chairs and director, Vicky and Brenda, who were supportive in many ways: 1) adjusting my teaching load; 2) suggesting and then helping me get an early sabbatical; and 3) finding “little bits” of funding here and there (every little bit helped!) And, above all else, thanks for your ever-enduring patience with me when the pressures would build and for the hand-holding along the way.

To my peer de-briefer, Joyce Hoffman, who gave of her precious time to review and critique my transcripts, stories, and themes. Between the two of us, we really put away the calories during those sessions! Thanks for your willingness to travel with me on this quest!

To my fellow teacher, Gail Weybright, who helped me prepare for my qualifying exam and proposal defense. Your Monday morning e-jokes and unexpected inspirational messages kept me going at just the right time.

To my daughters, Heidi and Gretchen, who were supportive in ways that are true to who they are. I am so proud of both of you and the strong women that you are. Thanks for helping me and journeying with me in this!

To my husband, Eric, who has given up the most of anyone during this four-year journey. I couldn't have done this hard work had you not been there for me all the way. You never faltered in your support of me. I look forward to joining you again on our long bike rides as well as other activities that have gone into a holding pattern for four years. Thanks for never doubting and reminding me that I really *could* do this!

And, finally to my grandchildren, three who were born after my journey began. Ian, Owen, Ella, and Lucy, you have provided grounding for me at times when I lost my focus. By your presence, you remind me what is truly important in life. You enrich my life beyond words. I hope that at least one of you chooses to be a health care provider as your life work, and that the work that I have done in this dissertation will in some way benefit you in your education.

## Abstract

Ruth A. Stoltzfus

### EXPERIENCING NARRATIVE PEDAGOGY: CONVERSATIONS WITH NURSE EDUCATORS

The increasingly complex nature of health care requires nursing graduates, upon completion of their formal education, to be fully capable of providing safe and competent patient care. Accrediting bodies for schools of nursing have challenged nursing education to develop and implement innovative, research-based pedagogies that engage students in learning. Narrative Pedagogy is an innovative approach to teaching and learning developed by Nancy Diekelmann after many years of researching nursing education using Heideggerian hermeneutic phenomenology.

As a new paradigm for teachers and students gathering in learning, Narrative Pedagogy is understood to be both a strategy and a philosophy of teaching. Narrative Pedagogy as a strategy provides an approach using the interpretation of clinical stories to better understand the experience of the patient, the nurse, and the family. Narrative Pedagogy as a philosophy of teaching offers Diekelmann's Concernful Practices as a way of comportment for teachers and students as they gather in learning and teachers as they incline toward teaching narratively.

This hermeneutic phenomenological study examined the experience of Nurse Educators with Narrative Pedagogy. Findings include overarching Pattern: *Narrative Pedagogy as Bridge*. Two themes are: 1) Students and teachers gathering in learning, and 2) Inclining toward teaching with Narrative Pedagogy. Positive teaching experiences and



positive learning experiences with Narrative Pedagogy will advance the science of nursing education by adding to the body of knowledge of alternative pedagogies.

Melinda M. Swenson, PhD, RN, FAANP, ANEF, Chair

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## Abbreviations

| <u>Abbreviation</u> | <u>Term</u>  |
|---------------------|--|
| AACN                | American Association of Colleges of Nursing  |
| AMA                 | American Medical Association   |
| ANE                 | Academic Nurse Educator  |
| CAT                 | Classroom Assessment Technique(s)  |
| CCES                | College Classroom Environment Scale  |
| IOM                 | Institute of Medicine  |
| IRB                 | Institutional Review Board   |
| NCLEX-RN            | National Council (of State Boards of Nursing) Licensure<br>Examination for Registered Nurses |
| NLN                 | National League for Nursing  |
| NP                  | Narrative Pedagogy   |
| PBL                 | Problem-Based Learning   |
| ZPD                 | Zone of Proximal Development   |

## Chapter I: Introduction & Background

A horizon is not a rigid frontier, but something that moves with one and invites one to advance further.

- Hans-Georg Gadamer, (1975/1982). *Truth and Method*. p. 217.

The Institute of Medicine's (IOM) 2011 report on the future of nursing challenges nursing education to prepare nurses that are capable of "meeting[ing] diverse patients' needs; function as leaders; and advance science that benefits patients" (IOM, 2011, p. 164). Because of increasing complexities within the healthcare setting, including technological advances, content continues to be added to the nursing curriculum while little or none is eliminated. Many advise caution in continuing this practice which often results in overwhelmed students (Benner, Sutphen, Leonard, & Day, 2010; Diekelmann, 1992; IOM, 2011; Ironside, 2004). The Carnegie Study on the Advancement of Nursing Education in 2010 challenged academia to educate nurses who are lifelong expert learners and reflective practitioners (Benner et al., 2010). The National League for Nursing (NLN) repeatedly calls for nursing education to develop and implement innovative, research-based curricula (NLN, 2004; NLN, 2005).

Nursing education must develop ways to recruit younger teachers in order to replace those who will soon be eligible for retirement. According to the IOM (2011) report on the future of nursing, the average age of teachers of nursing in 2008 was 55.2 years (p. 127). Believing that teachers with advanced degrees improve student learning outcomes, many state boards of nursing require that all classroom teachers have at least a master's degree *in nursing*. However, there is little financial incentive for qualified nurses to switch to the role of educator as most master's-prepared teachers can earn substantially higher salaries working in clinical practice as compared to teaching; the same is true for

doctorally-prepared nurses (Benner et al., 2010; IOM, 2011, p. 43). Once a nurse transitions to the teaching role, many factors threaten to send the new teacher back into clinical practice: the pressure to remain active in the clinical role; pressure to participate in scholarly activities; the time needed to prepare for teaching a course for the first time; and the hidden expectations for faculty members (for example participation in campus and departmental meetings, availability for students, etc.).

The focus of this chapter is two-fold: to provide an introduction to the study and to offer a preliminary review of the literature as it relates to the focus of this study.

### **Purpose of the Study**

Most teachers are comfortable continuing to teach using the same methods they have always used and find it difficult to use new approaches in their teaching. Narrative Pedagogy is a student-centered approach to teaching and learning developed from hermeneutic phenomenology research.

Narrative Pedagogy is an approach to teaching and learning developed by Nancy Diekelmann after many years of conducting research in nursing education using Heideggerian hermeneutic phenomenology. Narrative Pedagogy offers a new paradigm for teachers and students who wish to co-create learning. Transparency must be present in the learning environment as well as in the course design; in other words, students must be able to understand the purpose and goals of the course. Reading, writing, thinking and dialogue are the activities that appear in the classroom or clinical setting where Narrative Pedagogy is found. The role of the teacher in Narrative Pedagogy is as facilitator in the learning process; the teacher helps students determine what they need as they learn the concepts and application of new knowledge. Teachers may include many teaching

approaches in Narrative Pedagogy classrooms including, but not limited to, narrative interpretations, case studies, and mini-lectures. Diekelmann identified ten Concernful Practices<sup>1</sup> that teachers and students might use to make meaning of the educational experience.

Hermeneutic phenomenology, also called interpretive phenomenology, is a qualitative research approach used when the research question focuses on the meaning of a human experience. It is through explication of the experience that meaning is discovered. van Manen (1990) suggests that hermeneutic phenomenology is “discovery oriented. It wants to find out what a certain phenomenon means and how it is experienced” (p. 29).

From my studies of Narrative Pedagogy and in my own personal experience, Narrative Pedagogy offers a new way of thinking and doing nursing education. The purpose of this study is to develop a better understanding of the experience when Narrative Pedagogy is invited into the learning environment. Exploring the teacher’s experience with Narrative Pedagogy invites the reader to re-think and re-consider their approach to teaching and learning in the classroom and clinical settings.

### **Research Question**

I will use hermeneutic phenomenology, a qualitative research approach, to address the research question of interest in this study: What are the experiences of teachers who invite Narrative Pedagogy into the learning environment?

### **Relevance to Nursing Education**

With the pressure that teachers in nursing face to teach skilled, safe nurses who are able to navigate the challenging healthcare arena, use of learning-centered pedagogies

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<sup>1</sup> Further description of Concernful Practices is found later in this chapter. See also Figure 1.3.

in the learning environment are key. In a learning-centered classroom or clinical setting, learning becomes the focus while teacher and students actively participate in teaching and learning. Students and teacher together co-create learning.

Higher education primarily uses a teacher-focused approach to teaching and learning. This type of learning environment encourages classrooms that are “competitive, confrontational, isolating, and anxiety-provoking” (Ironside, 2003a, p. 123). A teacher-focused approach promotes dependent learning that results in the student being a passive recipient (Schaefer & Zygmunt, 2003). According to Schaefer and Zygmunt (2003), in a conventional classroom, learning is demonstrated by a change in behavior and measured by standardized testing. In a teacher-focused classroom, the teacher assumes the role of dispenser of facts. This approach is often the preferred teaching method for teachers who are focused on teaching a great deal of content in a short period of time; lecture is generally the primary method for delivering the content in this type of environment (Schaefer & Zygmunt, 2003). The focus in a teacher-centered classroom is on *teaching*, not on *learning* (DeYoung, 2009, p. 9).

Narrative Pedagogy shifts the focus from teacher and students to learning, including self-directed learning which is believed to facilitate an individual’s recognition of the importance of life-long learning (Diekelmann & Lampe, 2004; Rideout & Carpio, 2001). Davis (2009) suggests that even though lecturing might be as effective as some other teaching methods for conveying information, it is “less effective in encouraging independent thought, developing critical thinking skills, and meeting individual students’ pedagogical needs” (p. 135).

Understanding the interactions between and among teachers and students in the Narrative Pedagogy classroom will be helpful in deciding whether or not changes to teaching and learning are needed. According to Young and Diekelmann (2002), lecture is the primary mode of teaching in nursing education and it is “an efficient way to provide students with significant amounts of content (i.e., detailed explanations of nursing phenomena) to prepare them to safely enter nursing situations” (p. 405). The conventional classroom that takes a teacher-centered approach is commonly referred to as “Conventional Pedagogy” or a “top-down” approach (Bussema & Nemec, 2006).

### Conventional Pedagogy

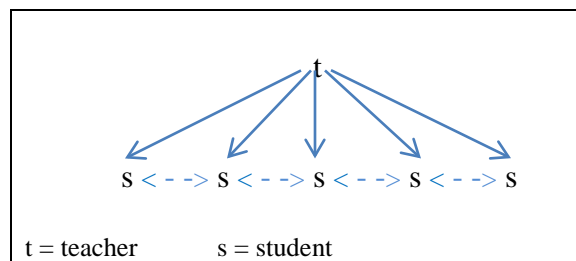


Figure 1.1: Conventional Pedagogy: Top-down teaching

Figure 1.1 depicts the relationship between the teacher (t) and students (s) in a conventional pedagogy classroom. The solid arrows moving away from teacher to the students indicate the type of relationship between students and teachers commonly found in a classroom that uses conventional pedagogies. Additionally, it represents the idea that the teacher delivers the information that students are expected to learn. The broken-lined arrows between the students depict infrequent interactions between the students. While there may be interaction between students in the conventional classroom, that type of interaction is not necessarily planned for or encouraged.

Diekelmann, Swenson, and Sims (2003) suggest that rather than eliminate lecture, students and teachers might benefit from simply getting rid of content that students

already know. Since there is shared responsibility for learning in the Narrative Pedagogy classroom, teacher and students discover and uncover new learnings together. The teacher in Narrative Pedagogy recognizes that there are more truths than what is known to the teacher. A Narrative Pedagogy classroom invites a free give-and-take (or responding and co-responding) between teacher and students, students and students, and students and teacher; learning takes center stage.

In Narrative Pedagogy, it is the between that matters. Neither teachers nor students are in the center, but are attending together to move away from roles such that learning and only learning occurs—listening to one another and co-responding in a restless to and fro holding everything open and problematic. This is the learner as teacher, and learning as teaching!” (Diekelmann & Diekelmann, 2009, p. 496)

A student-focused learning environment enhances relationships between teachers and learners (Ironsides, 2003a). Schaefer and Zygmunt (2003) suggest that a student-centered learning environment encourages “independence in learning, creative problem-solving skills, a commitment to life-long learning, and critical thinking” (p. 238). One concern with the idea of decentering the authority of the teacher is that “the attempt to decenter merely changes the center, that is, relocates or reinscribes the power structure” (Ironsides, 2001, p. 78). In other words, when an attempt is made to eliminate power structures, something else takes up that center focus of power. Teachers must decide what it is that should take center stage in their teaching and learning environments.

Figure 1.2 depicts Narrative Pedagogy and relationships within the teaching and learning environment. For the purposes of this paper, this relationship is understood to be a relationship of reciprocity. Reciprocity is understood as an exchange, or an interchange; it is also giving-and-taking. At first glance, this figure is a bit messy, untidy, but that

describes the interaction between learning and students and teachers in a Narrative Pedagogy-centered learning environment. The process of teaching and learning is not

### Narrative Pedagogy

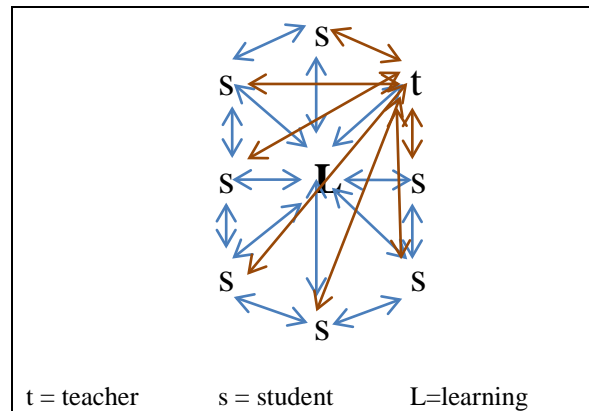


Figure 1.2: Narrative Pedagogy: Reciprocity in Schooling, Learning, & Teaching

linear, nor is it predictable. In a Narrative Pedagogy-centered space, learning (upper-case, bold-font **L**) takes the center spot surrounded by teacher(s) and students. The arrows going between and around students, teacher, and learning depict the give-and-take, the reciprocity, which occurs in this type of setting.

### Learning Theory

Understanding learning theories aids in developing a common understanding for the creation of shared hoped-for outcomes in a teaching and learning environment. Many theories exist to explain learning and cognition. Some learning theories commonly found in nursing education are behaviorism, constructivism, information processing, meaningful learning, and andragogy (Driscoll, 2005; Ramsey & Clark, 2009; Utley, 2011).

Behavioral theorists such as Watson, Skinner, Thorndike, and others suggest that learning can only be measured as a change in student behavior. Aspects of behaviorism



show up in learning environments in the form of positive reinforcement for students (rewards, praise, extra credit, or etc.) and negative reinforcement for students (potential extra work if assigned work is not completed on time or correctly) as well as in standardized testing (Utley, 2011). A behaviorist-centered classroom focuses on dispensing information; lecture is the most effective teaching method for dispensing large amounts of information (Young & Diekelmann, 2002).

The learning theory of constructivism was developed primarily in response to behaviorism. From a constructivist perspective, learning is “constructed by the individual by building upon previous learning” (Utley, 2011, p. 28). This is in contrast to the behaviorist’s beliefs that learning shows up as a change in behavior. In constructivism, the learner *constructs* their knowledge as they process or make sense of what they experience in the world; knowledge does not exist separately from the learner (Driscoll, 2005). Learners are not simply “empty vessels who come to school merely to be filled with curricular content by means of special instructional methods” (van Manen, 1991a, p. 7).

Because higher education has historically “been teacher focused and curriculum driven” (Peters, 2000, p. 166), it is not an entirely friendly environment for constructivist theory. In a behaviorist system, students are unaccustomed to actively participate in the design of their learning or in assuming responsibility for their learning. They expect that the teacher will dispense information that they will memorize and later feedback in the form of a standardized test (Benner, et al., 2010).

Educators often use aspects of Cognitive Information Processing (CIP) which suggests that before learning can make sense, connections must be made to previous

learnings (Gagné, 1970, p. 22). Gagné, an information processing theorist, developed a taxonomy of learning that included the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains (Gagné & Briggs, 1979; Utley, 2011). Gagné's theory of instruction offers eight types of learning: "signal learning, stimulus-response learning, chaining, verbal association, discrimination learning, concept learning, rule learning, and problem solving" (Gagné, 1970, p. 35). Gagné's theory acknowledges that students find limited usefulness for learning objectives; however, learning objectives benefit "teachers and other designers of instruction as a plan both for instruction and for testing" (Driscoll, 2005, p. 366). One common application of information processing is the idea of chunking<sup>2</sup>; this approach can be especially useful when memorizing large amounts of information (Driscoll, 2005) which is often required of nursing students.

Meaningful Learning theorist, Ausubel, introduced the concepts of advance organizers and anchoring ideas, methods that teachers in nursing frequently use. Anchors and advance organizers refer to ways in which teachers can create structures that result in meaningful learning. Ausubel (1960) suggests that advance organizers "draw upon and mobilize whatever relevant subsuming concepts are already established in the learner's cognitive structure and make them part of the subsuming entity" (p. 27) resulting in meaningful learning for the student. To enhance the possibility for successful meaningful learning, Ausubel and Fitzgerald (1962) suggest that when "preparing organizers for an unfamiliar field of knowledge, an effort should be made to formulate the organizing principles in terms of concepts that are already familiar to the learner and established in his cognitive structure" (p. 247). When no anchors or advance organizers are available for the learner, the result is that students "rotely memorize learning tasks for examination

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<sup>2</sup> Chunking is organizing smaller bits of information into larger groups to enhance learning.

purposes” (Ausubel, 1960, p. 271); in other words, meaningful learning does not occur. Teachers must find ways to make content meaningful for the student so that learning can occur.

Bruner and Vygotsky are two prominent theorists from interactional theories of cognitive development. They suggest that a learner’s cultural and social situation plays a role in learning (Driscoll, 2005). Constructivist (also called cognitive) theorists, Vygotsky and Bruner, believe that learning is “more than a change in behavior. . . [it is a] specific mental process used by the learner” (Utey, 2011, p. 23). More specifically, Bruner (1960) proposes that learning consists of three simultaneously occurring processes:

1. Acquisition of new information – often information that runs counter to or is a replacement for what the person has previously known implicitly or explicitly.
2. Transformation – the process of manipulating knowledge to make it fit new tasks.
3. Evaluation – checking whether the way we have manipulated information is adequate to the task. (p. 48).

Bruner (1960) suggests that creating structures around the subject matter enhances learning (p. 7) and went so far as to assert that “knowledge one has acquired without sufficient structure to tie it together is knowledge that is likely to be forgotten” (p. 31). Constructivist theorists such as Bruner believe that control for learning lies within the learner (Utey, 2011) but also posit that the teacher must provide the scaffolding (or structure) to enable that learning (Bruner, 1960). “Scaffolding consists essentially of the adult ‘controlling’ those elements of the task that are initially beyond the learner’s capacity, thus permitting him to concentrate upon and complete only those elements that are within his range of competence” (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976, p. 90)

While considered a constructivist in his approach to learning theory, Vygotsky's theory is more accurately considered to be social constructivism. Vygotsky posits that culture plays an important role in learning (Bruner, 1997). Implications of Vygotsky's thinking are that "learning pulls development; instruction should be scaffolded in the Zone of Proximal Development" (Driscoll, 2005, p. 223). Vygotsky (1978) proposed the idea of the Zone of Proximal Development to describe the balance between providing just enough information to encourage learning, but not too much that it stifles learning:

The distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under [teacher] guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. . . The zone of proximal development defines those functions that will mature tomorrow but are currently in an embryonic state. These functions could be termed the "buds" or "flowers" of development rather than the "fruits" of development. The actual developmental level characterizes mental development retrospectively, while the zone of proximal development characterizes mental development prospectively. (p. 86-87).

While teachers may find it challenging, creating this Zone of Proximal development results in a deeper type of learning for students.

Knowles was among the first of the learning theorists to suggest that adults and children learn differently (Wellman, 2009; Utley, 2011). He developed the theory of adult learning which he called andragogy. Knowles proposed andragogy as a "set of core adult learning principles that apply to all adult learning situations" (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005, p. 2). His six principles of learning are:

1. The learner's need to know
2. Self-concept of the learner
3. Prior experience of the learner
4. Readiness to learn
5. Orientation to learning
6. Motivation to learn (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005, p. 3)

When learning theories are understood, teachers are better able to adjust their approaches to teaching and learning. “[Teachers’] beliefs about learning provide the assumptions that underlie the approaches used in their teaching. Being cognizant of various theories is a prerequisite to effective teaching” (Vandever, 2009, p. 192).

### **State of the Science of Nursing Education**

Teachers in nursing face challenging times as the realities of balancing teaching load along with the pressure of maintaining clinical practice compete for attention, all of this while ensuring that graduates are skilled and safe care-providers. Nursing education is well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and remains largely unchanged from teaching methods used by teachers in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Although there have been a few changes in what nursing education looks like in the classroom and in the clinical settings, most of those changes are simply superficial alterations in methods or changes that have been demanded by technological advances in healthcare. There is great diversity not only in *who* nurses are, but also in *where* nurses work, from highly specialized and technical areas to ambulatory care settings. And, nurses teach students of nursing in the classroom, the simulation laboratory, and the clinical settings.

Many voices advocate for a change in the way nursing education is conducted; they are becoming more pronounced and persistent (Benner et al., 2010; IOM, 2011; NLN, 2005). The Institutes of Medicine (IOM, 2011) challenge nursing programs to eliminate the additive curriculum<sup>3</sup> under which most schools of nursing operate. The report on the state of nursing education from the Carnegie Foundation for the

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<sup>3</sup> Additive curriculum refers to the current trend in nursing and medical education to increase the amount of content to be learned. This may be due in part to the rapid increase in technological advances and the perception that students must know all there is to know in order to be adequately-prepared for clinical practice. Diekelmann (2002) points out that students have “reached their limits” (p. 469) with their ability to memorize or learn more content.

Advancement of Teaching calls for educating nurses so that they are prepared to be lifelong learners, reflective practitioners and expert learners (Benner et al., 2010, p. 4).

That same report offers this challenge to teachers in nursing:

We believe the search for an expanded workforce to serve the millions who will now have access to health insurance for the first time will require changes in nursing scopes of practice, advances in the education of nurses across all levels, improvements in the practice of nursing across the continuum of care, transformation in the utilization of nurses across settings, and leadership at all levels so nurses can be deployed effectively and appropriately as partners in the healthcare team. (p. xi)

Nursing education has no choice but to find ways of accommodating these changes.

In response to these many calls for change in nursing education, the remainder of this chapter reviews the literature in each of these areas: rationale for why nursing education must change; overview of the term “pedagogy”; examination of narrative pedagogy; exploration of possible barriers to changing current approaches to teaching; and ways to encourage nursing faculty to change how they teach.

### **The Case for Change in Nursing Education**

In a 2005 Position Statement, the National League for Nursing (NLN) challenged schools of nursing to develop innovative, research-based curricula capable of meeting the rapidly changing needs of the healthcare system (2005). This was not the first time the NLN voiced these challenges. For several decades, the NLN has called for re-examining the way that teaching has been enacted; the Curriculum Revolution in the 1980’s resulted from those calls for change (Tanner, 1990).

Understanding nursing education’s past enhances understanding of its future. In *Curriculum Revolution: Mandate for Change*, one of the books from NLN’s seminal Curriculum Revolution series, Bevis (1988) described “five turns in [the] Nursing

Curriculum”. These turns began in the 17<sup>th</sup> century with the French Sisters of Charity, progressed through Florence Nightingale (the second turn), the development of the *Standard Curriculum for Schools of Nursing* in 1917 (the third turn), then Ralph Tyler’s *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction* (the fourth turn), and finally culminated in the 1980’s with the Curriculum Revolution (the proposed fifth turn). Now, with new technologies available to teachers of nursing in the classroom and in the simulation lab, has nursing education entered yet the sixth turn?

The goal of the Curriculum Revolution initiative was to draw attention to the problems within nursing education from the NLN’s perspective. The NLN developed this initiative to:

Provide opportunities for teacher-scholars to engage in shared dialogue about the future of nursing education, to seriously question the pervasive reliance on outcomes and competency-based models in nursing education, and to advocate for substantive and sustained innovation in schools of nursing. (Ironsides & Valiga, 2007, p. 5)

Differences of opinion exist over whether this revolution was a success or failure.

Ironsides and Valiga (2007) observe that this initiative resulted in multiple conferences and publications, “research and scholarship in nursing education, the development of substantively new nursing pedagogies, and calls for the advancement of a science of nursing education” (p. 7). Diekelmann and Diekelmann (2009) suggest that the “Curriculum Revolution was a failure!” (p. 413). They suggest this is because nursing education continues with some of the same issues that plagued the profession when it entered the halls of academe decades ago.

Diekelmann (1990) describes the focus of the Curriculum Revolution as enabling conversations between students, teachers, and clinicians in an attempt to “transform

healthcare and the institutions in which [they] practice” (p. 300). Despite the calls to change how nursing is taught, barriers exist that make change difficult. Some of these barriers are discussed later in this chapter. Tradition often impacts the development and implementation of new ways of doing and thinking. While tradition in and of itself is inherently neither positive nor negative, it influences the future of education at the individual level, the institutional level, and the broader higher educational structure. “A tradition is never something left behind, rather it lives on and biases teaching and learning in both positive and negative ways” (Diekelmann, 1997, p. 147).

Nursing education has moved from hospital-based to university-based settings (Diekelmann, 1995), although some argue that the curricula in nursing education continues to reflect assumptions from the hospital-based setting (Diekelmann, Ironside, & Harlow, 2003) and from conventional or traditional pedagogical methods (Diekelmann, 1995). The behavioral model (also referred to as conventional, traditional, or Tylerian model), with its focus on objectives and learning outcomes, has been the primary method used in nursing education (NLN, 2004). Many teachers in nursing argue that the Tylerian approach does not meet the needs of the current learners and teachers in nursing education (Diekelmann, 1993; Ironside, 2001; NLN, 2004; Swenson & Sims, 2000).

McEwen and Brown (2002) suggest that a change from the current focus on content, which is an assumption of the Tylerian/behavioral model, to a focus on the process of learning would improve the development of critical thinking skills in nursing students. Diekelmann (1992) observes that one outcome of the behavioral model is that students appear to be overwhelmed in the classroom due to the amount of content to be learned (p. 77). Some of the behaviors observed that led to this assessment include



students who exhibit the following: “use of resistance, silence, nonperformance, lateness, and absence” (Andrews et al., 2001). Others note that there is so much content to be taught that both students and teachers are overwhelmed and overloaded (Benner et al., 2010; Ironside, 2004), while others suggest that perhaps the wrong content and skills are being taught (Finkelman & Kenner, 2007).

Several things have happened within the nursing curriculum since it entered the halls of academe; some are structural issues and some are outcomes of increased technological advancements in the healthcare setting. In the early 1960’s, “nurse educators felt pressured to conform to academia’s style of presenting abstract, decontextualized, formal theories” (Benner et al., 2010, p. 67). In his forward to Benner’s (1994) book, *Interpretive Phenomenology: Embodiment, caring, and ethics in health and illness*, Hubert Dreyfus traces this pressure to develop a theoretical framework for an academic discipline to Socrates (about 400 B.C.) who suggested that the fields of physics, astronomy, and geometry succeeded primarily because they were based in theory (Benner, 1994).

Perhaps the requirement from nursing’s accrediting bodies that curricula be constructed around a theoretical framework might be traced to nursing education’s need to prove worthiness to be admitted into the halls of academia. These theoretical frameworks generally consisted of work by one of nursing’s grand theorists such as Orem, Watson, King, Leininger, Parse, among others. Since schools of nursing must adhere to the guidelines established by accrediting agencies, Benner et al. (2010) posit that this requirement to construct the curriculum around one specific nursing grand theorist stifled creative curricular design. As nursing attempted to gain status in the

academic world, nursing education “emulated other fields that valued abstract, formal, and classificatory knowledge” (Benner et al., 2010, p. 79). This created an environment susceptible to an overload of content to be learned (the additive curriculum).

### **Tyler’s Rationale**

Ralph W. Tyler, education and curriculum scholar, wrote *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction* in 1949. Tyler (1949) said that his book was not intended to be a “manual for curriculum construction” (p. 1) but that it simply offered one perspective for creating a curriculum. This early work was, in reality, a syllabus for a class that he was teaching. Despite Tyler’s words of caution, his book, his syllabus, became just what he said it was not to be – *the* model for curriculum design and development for nursing and other disciplines. Tyler suggested four fundamental questions that should be addressed when developing a curriculum. These questions have formed the basis for much of the current field of curriculum design and are known as “Tyler’s Rationale”:

1. What educational purposes should the school seek to attain?
  2. What educational experiences can be provided that are likely to attain these purposes?
  3. How can these educational experiences be effectively organized?
  4. How can we determine whether these purposes are being attained?
- (Tyler, 1949, p. 1)

While Tyler offered suggestions on how to approach curriculum and course design, he also recognized that the resulting design would be site-specific.

Development and adherence to a set of behavioral objectives were some of the outgrowths of Tyler’s Rationale. He advocated for the development of a comprehensive philosophy of education that would be used by schools for developing objectives (Tyler, 1949). These principles of behaviorism and objectivism, upon which the current nursing

educational system is built, emphasize observable, measurable learning outcomes; individualized learning; and the notion that there is one correct answer and one process by which that answer is obtained (Driscoll, 2005).

Some (Hunkins & Hammill, 1994) suggest that Tyler's approach to curriculum development provides a "sense of comfort knowing that curriculum is essentially a plan composed of identifiable components (objectives, subject matter, methods, and materials)" (p. 7). Tyler's influence can still be found within nursing education since the focus on course objectives and outcomes assessment remain key criteria for student and curriculum evaluation. While teachers of nursing understand how deeply ingrained Tyler's work is within the educational system, most teachers prefer to deal with the things that are known than to work with the unknown; they would rather not challenge the assumptions that currently are comfortably entrenched within the academic system (Hunkins & Hammill, 1994).

Bevis (1988) urged that the Tyler rationale, which has long been used in nursing education, be discarded and replaced with methods that educate nurses that are more than just technically trained. She suggests four reasons that the Tylerian approach to nursing education be abandoned:

1. The current model is based in behaviorist learning theory and behaviorism lends itself to training, not to education.
2. Behavioral objectives are too narrow and lack the creative energy necessary to guide the awakening discovery that must mark true education.
3. Behavioral objectives, by their nature, obviate education.
4. A curriculum development model cannot be the dictator of our educational progress and our response to the societal mandate. (Bevis, 1988, p. 33)

Bevis (1988) challenged nurse educators to distinguish between "learning that is training and learning that is education" (p. 28). State boards of nursing and the NLN continue to

use the Tylerian method of behaviorism as the standard for assessing the nursing curriculum (Bevis, 1988; Diekelmann & Diekelmann, 2009; McEwen & Brown, 2002). This results in a focus on *training* for the technical skills that nurses have needed in the past and not for *learning* the critical thinking skills<sup>4</sup> needed by nurses in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The Tylerian method might also be referred to as conventional pedagogy.

### **Alternative Pedagogies**

Advances in nursing education have been stymied for many years by bickering over entry into practice, licensure and professional titling. These disagreements threaten to distract educators from the more important task of developing new research-based approaches for teaching to enhance student learning. Some have called for the development of alternatives to the behavioral model for education that have for so long been the archetype for nursing education (Diekelmann, 1993; NLN, 2004; Tanner, 1990). Some (Diekelmann, 2001; Ironside, 2001) assert that these alternative pedagogies should be based in research and created specifically *for* nursing. In the past, much of the work in the field of alternative pedagogies was done in schools of education and was “more academic than practical” (Ironside, 2001, p. 72). Continuing the argument supporting research in nursing pedagogies, Ironside (2003a) states that “it is no longer sufficient for a teacher to ‘just know’ that a new pedagogy works – or does not work” (p. 127). Nursing would do well to continue the development and evaluation of research-based pedagogies.

Alternative pedagogies seek to de-center the teacher’s power and create an environment where students are empowered in their learning and may provide a more

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<sup>4</sup> Critical thinking is an elusive concept, difficult to describe and challenging to teach (Willingham, 2007). Benner et al. (2010) argue that nursing should shift from an emphasis on critical thinking to *clinical reasoning*. They define clinical reasoning as “the ability to reason as a clinical situation changes, taking into account the context and concerns of the patient and family” (Benner et al., 2010, p. 85).

effective approach to nursing education (Ironside, 2001). Problem-based learning (PBL), another alternative pedagogy, offers possibilities for teachers of nursing interested in helping students gain understanding of the connections between classroom learning and clinical application (Barrows, 1994). PBL emphasizes self-directed and integrated teaching. In order to solve the problem (in PBL), content from different courses, subject-matter, and/or disciplines must be consulted. Swenson and Sims (2000) describe PBL as an “inductive and prospective approach to clinical problem-solving” (p. 110). PBL begins with a specific observation or a problem to be solved and requires that the student creates a solution that leads to formation of general concepts. By requiring students to find possible solutions for authentic problems, PBL encourages meaning-making out of real life experiences through student-centered learning.

Diekelmann and Diekelmann (2009) found that when students and teachers gather in meaningful dialogue, space is created for the type of learning that is required for nursing graduates. Student-centered, alternative pedagogies have the potential to enhance “the student’s self-concept, promote autonomy, self-direction and critical thinking, reflect on experience and involve the learner in the diagnosis, planning, enactment and evaluation of their own learning needs” (Milligan, 1995, p. 22). Brown, Kirkpatrick, Mangum, and Avery (2008) posit that “nontraditional pedagogies result in a learning climate that is more cooperative and egalitarian” (p. 283). The behaviorist approach to teaching and learning complete with its goals and objectives style approach used in nursing may have been effective in the past (Black, 2006) (although that point may well be argued), but is no longer the best approach for educating the current generation of nursing students (Black, 2006; Brown et al., 2008).

Most teachers of nursing continue to teach using the same methods that were used when they were students (Diekelmann, Ironside, & Harlow, 2003; Tanner, 1999). To engage students in the learning process, teachers need to adapt their methods to meet the different values and expectations of the 21<sup>st</sup> century students as well as address the needs of the rapidly changing environment of healthcare (Andrews et al., 2001; Ironside, 2003a; Walker et al., 2006). Benner et al. (2010) suggest another reason for improving nursing education: “if students experience high-quality teaching in nursing, more are likely to enter nursing education and be better teachers” (p. 6). With the current shortage of nursing faculty, this should be an important motivation.

### **Pedagogy**

The meaning of the term *pedagogy* has evolved over time and more recently has come to refer to the art and science of teaching, but it is also used to connote curriculum, instruction, and method of teaching. *Pedagogy* is derived from the Greek term *pedagogue* which refers “not to the teacher, but to the watchful slave or guardian whose responsibility it was to lead . . . the young boy . . . to school” (van Manen, 1991a, p. 37). The Greeks used the term *pedagogy* to refer to the *task* of accompanying the child to school; there was a clear distinction between the task of *accompanying* and the task of *teaching*. The *pedagogue* was expected to follow the student to school and protect the student, or make sure that the student’s behavior was appropriate and that he did not get into trouble. The modern use of *pedagogue* has come to mean *teacher* or *leader*. Pedagogue as protector or guardian has been forgotten or covered over.

Knowles posits that the term pedagogy refers strictly to the instruction, or literally “leader”, of *children* (Knowles et al., 2005). According to van Manen (1991a), *pedagogy*

has gained broader usage over the last few decades and that “the distinctive meaning of the term has been covered over and blurred rather than explored and articulated” (p. 28). Lusted (1986) suggests that *pedagogy* should focus on “the transformation of consciousness that takes place in the interaction of three agencies – the teacher, the learner and the knowledge they together produce” (p. 3). Currently, the common understanding of pedagogy is in reference to specific methods rather than a more philosophical usage that articulates the act of being a teacher. Ironside (2001) suggests that a broader notion of pedagogy be considered that includes the way teachers and students come together in learning. Pedagogy should be less about the *how* (method) we teach and more about *who* and *what* we teach.

Confusion over what comprises pedagogy has led to misappropriation of the term. Lusted (1986) suggests that “as a concept, [pedagogy] draws attention to the *process* through which knowledge is produced. Pedagogy addresses the ‘how’ questions involved not only in the transmission or reproduction of knowledge but also in its production” (p. 3). He also suggests that when viewed through the lens of *pedagogy*, what is taught, how one learns, and how one teaches become inextricably intertwined. van Manen (1994) proposes that what comprises the construct of pedagogy remains unknown. Understanding this construct would enable the discernment of the qualities that are needed to maintain pedagogical relationships that are at the heart of effective teaching (van Manen, 1994). According to van Manen (1982), pedagogy is relationship oriented, “a relationship of practical actions between an adult and a young person who is on the way to adulthood” (p. 284). In other words, pedagogy should be described as the *relationship* between teacher and learner.

## Narrative Pedagogy

For more than two decades, Nancy Diekelmann engaged in nursing education research using Heideggerian hermeneutic phenomenology<sup>5</sup>. Diekelmann (2001) developed Narrative Pedagogy after conducting a 12-year Heideggerian hermeneutic study involving students, teachers and clinicians. Diekelmann (1992) observes that Narrative Pedagogy “embraces critical, feminist, and phenomenological pedagogy” (p. 73); these are often called “interpretive pedagogies”. These interpretive pedagogies, including Narrative Pedagogy, focus on creating spaces for conversations between students and teachers (Ironside, 2001). Providing opportunity for conversations between students and teachers changes the traditional power structure within the classroom; it empowers students and shifts the power that teachers have traditionally held within the conventional pedagogical structure.

Many consider Narrative Pedagogy to be a strategy which uses story-telling as a teaching device. According to Diekelmann (2001), Narrative Pedagogy is “not [just about] using storytelling as a strategy for learning. Nor is it a pedagogy as such. . . . Narrative Pedagogy is a gathering of all the pedagogies [including conventional] into converging conversation such that the possibility for anything to show itself is held open” (p. 55). Vandermause and Townsend (2010) acknowledge that some aspects of conventional pedagogy may appear in Narrative Pedagogy, although they do not specify the shared attributes. Narrative Pedagogy is an alternative pedagogy that invites active

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<sup>5</sup> Heideggerian hermeneutic phenomenology is a qualitative research method based on the philosophical work of Martin Heidegger. This method of research focuses on the phenomenon of interest as experienced by people as “being in the world”. The goal of this research is to describe and “discover meanings as persons live them in their everyday world” (Beck, 2006, p. 464). Also see “Theoretical Underpinnings of Narrative Pedagogy” p. 31.



student participation in learning and empowers them to take more control in their learning (Dahlberg, Ekebergh, & Ironside, 2003).

As stated above, pedagogy is often understood as teaching *methods*. In Narrative Pedagogy, *pedagogy* is more “a way of thinking about and comportment within education” (Ironside, 2001, p. 73). Pedagogy, in this sense, might be considered more of an epistemological approach to schooling, learning and teaching (Young & Diekelmann, 2002). “Narrative Pedagogy is not a strategy to be implemented but rather a way to create an environment within nursing education that invites teachers, students, and clinicians into converging conversations” (Dahlberg, Ekebergh, & Ironside, 2003, p. 28).

Diekelmann and Diekelmann (2009) posit that “in Narrative Pedagogy, schooling learning teaching is an invisible co-occurring phenomenon . . . Schooling learning teaching always co-present and arrive together” (p. 421). In other words, rather than to consider schooling, learning, and teaching as separate phenomena as they usually are with conventional approaches, in Narrative Pedagogy they must be examined as a whole. Diekelmann and Diekelmann (2009) offer this understanding of schooling, learning, and teaching:

Whenever there is a teaching, there is a learning; and whenever there is schooling, there is [*sic*] teaching and learning. Wherever there is learning, there is a teaching; someone or something, perhaps a situation, is a teaching. There is always already learning; even non-learning is a moment of learning. (Diekelmann & Diekelmann, 2009, p. 438)

Diekelmann (2002) and Ironside (2005a) point out that the volume of information that students are expected to know exceeds the abilities of students to memorize and especially to learn. “Conventional pedagogies focus on content, while Narrative Pedagogy shifts attention to meanings, meaning-making, and significance” (Andrews et

al., 2001, p. 257). As teachers and students challenge taken-for-granted assumptions, new ways of thinking and learning are uncovered.

Nursing education must be more flexible in order to create an environment that meets the needs of an increasingly diverse student population (Diekelmann, 1993). However, openness to flexibility often is “closed down by budget constraints and a systemic adherence to objective performance standards designed to promote success on standardized tests” (Diekelmann, 1993, p. 246). An unintended outcome of certain practices, specifically testing, within the conventional model is that “students feel overwhelmed, competitive and isolated” (Diekelmann, 1992, p. 78). Diekelmann (1993) proposes that “the kinds of activities we use, e.g., care plans, nursing diagnoses, and objective tests, discourage situated or reflective thinking; lectures often encourage analytic thinking” (p.248), not critical thinking or clinical reasoning. Willingham (2007) points out how elusive and difficult it is to teach critical thinking; “it is a type of thought that even 3-year-olds can engage in – and even trained scientists can fail in” (p. 10). Critical thinking is important and “competent practice requires more than content knowledge applied in clinical situations” (Ironside, 2003b, p. 508). Narrative Pedagogy can help to uncover assumptions of conventional pedagogy that give students a false sense of knowing.

### **The Narrative Pedagogy Project**

The Narrative Pedagogy Project is a group of schools of nursing committed to inviting Narrative Pedagogy into the curriculum. In 1999, seven schools in the United States and two international schools of nursing “from diploma through doctoral programs” examined how Narrative Pedagogy might “assist in reforming their schools”

(Diekelmann, 2001, p. 54). Representatives from each school met regularly by teleconference to talk about what was going well and areas that were problematic. Some of the schools used a story-telling day as an opportunity to invite teachers and students to reform their curriculum as they shared and interpreted their stories. Other schools used Narrative Pedagogy as another way to enhance course content. Diekelmann (2001) described the focus of the Narrative Pedagogy Project:

Increasing understanding is a central commitment of this study; specifically, the ways that Narrative Pedagogy arises out of the interpretation of common experiences illuminate how extant practices in nursing education open up and close down on the possibility of reforming contemporary education. (p. 55)

As of June 2011, three schools continue to self-identify as “pilot schools” (personal communication, June 22, 2011, P. Ironside).

### **Narrative Pedagogy Challenges Assumptions**

Since Narrative Pedagogy challenges the assumptions of conventional pedagogy, the entire structure of outcomes-based education is questioned. It must be pointed out that the Diekelmanns do not advocate the elimination of conventional pedagogies; they suggest that conventional methods might have a place in nursing education, but teachers must understand the limitations of these methods (Diekelmann & Diekelmann, 2009, p. xix). Unlike in a conventional pedagogy classroom, teachers in a Narrative Pedagogy classroom do not have a pre-determined set of questions with the anticipated “correct” response. Thinking is encouraged and is considered to be a “private and individual, as well as community, practice of scholarship” (Ironside, 2003b, p. 512). Narrative Pedagogy encourages students to think about thinking, which is also called metacognition (Pesut & Herman, 1992). Students who engage in metacognitive activities are more likely

to find richer, deeper and more complex meaning in everyday events, whether in the classroom or in the clinical setting. For the teacher, Diekelmann and Diekelmann (2009) suggest that “Narrative Pedagogy offers a mindfulness to teachers to be *learners* as teachers, rather than teachers as learners” (p. 438).

Because the focus of Narrative Pedagogy is on creating spaces for conversations between teachers and students, it “. . . illuminates what is and is not going well and what matters and is sustaining” (Ironsides, 2001, p. 84). Narrative Pedagogy has uses that go beyond the classroom; it may also be used to reform the curriculum or to refocus attention on specific aspects of teaching and learning (Diekelmann, 2001). However, since Narrative Pedagogy explicates schooling, learning, and teaching for a specific school, it is “site-specific and cannot be imported to another school, but the processes of thinking and the evolution of the new pedagogies is [*sic*] generalizable” (Diekelmann, 2001, p. 58). One goal for students is to “persistently explore the meanings and significance of practice and to make visible the underlying assumptions embedded in practice and education” (Ironsides, 2003b, p. 513).

### **Narrative Pedagogy Applied In Education**

Narrative Pedagogy has a history of usefulness in nursing education. In the U.S., Narrative Pedagogy can be found in nursing undergraduate (Andrews et al., 2008; Diekelmann, 2001; Evans & Bendel, 2004; Ironsides, 2006b; Scheckel & Ironsides, 2006; Young & Diekelmann, 2002) and graduate programs (Diekelmann, 2001; Ironsides, 2003a; Ironsides, 2006b; Swenson & Sims, 2000; Young & Diekelmann, 2002). Narrative Pedagogy can be found in learning environments around the world: Australia (McAllister et al., 2009), Hong Kong (Chan, 2008), Japan (Kawashima, 2005), and New Zealand

(Crawley, 2009). By creating an environment where stories (narratives) are shared, new ways of schooling, learning and teaching have been uncovered.

Ironside (2005a) argues that without context, fact-based knowledge is limited in its usefulness and applicability. The type of thinking that is encouraged in Narrative Pedagogy allows for the creation of knowledge that is useful and applicable. In their research, Scheckel and Ironside (2006) discovered that the use of specific teaching methods along with Narrative Pedagogy results in interpretive thinking. They describe interpretive thinking to include “analytic thinking, [which is] predominant in the critical thinking movement, as well as thinking that is reflective, embodied, and pluralistic” (Scheckel & Ironside, 2006, p. 163). Their conclusions point to a new way of helping students and teachers uncover the complex ways of thinking that are needed in today’s healthcare settings.

### **Narrative Pedagogy as Signature Pedagogy for Nursing**

Shulman (2005) describes the concept of signature pedagogies as the “types of teaching that organize the fundamental ways in which future practitioners are educated for their new professions” (p. 52); in other words, signature pedagogies are the traditional teaching methods used within specific academic disciplines. Ironside (2006a) posits that conventional pedagogy has been the signature pedagogy for nursing education and proposes that Narrative Pedagogy become the new signature pedagogy for nursing education because it was developed from nursing research for nursing education. Conventional pedagogy methods use an outcomes- or competency-based approach to education and have been used broadly in undergraduate and graduate nursing programs throughout the United States (Ironside, 2001). Scheckel and Ironside (2006) encourage

nursing education to move beyond the singular use of conventional pedagogy to include multiple pedagogies in the classroom so that nursing education's level of effectiveness might be broadened.

In the Carnegie report on nursing education, Benner et al. (2010) suggest that situated coaching become a new signature pedagogy for nursing. They describe situated coaching as settings in which students can learn by example from an expert nurse, especially in the clinical setting (p. 30). Situated coaching provides an important opportunity for students to learn from nurses, patients, and families. Benner et al. (2010) also suggest that nursing has multiple signature pedagogies: “unfolding case studies, narrative accounts of clinical experiences, or simulation of cliniclike [*sic*] situations would bring into the nursing school *classroom* the kinds of teaching strategies . . . that are the signature pedagogies of clinical nursing education” (p. 36). Nursing education is in a unique position to take advantage of many creative possibilities for learning.

### **The Narrative**

In addition to creating spaces for conversations between teachers and students, Narrative Pedagogy may also include the interpretation of stories in the learning environment. Nehls (1995) suggests “Narrative Pedagogy embraces a new root metaphor – the narrative . . . people attempt to make sense of phenomena by formulating a story” (p. 205). Applying this understanding to the classroom, this narrative interpretation provides a deeper understanding of course content. The value of the narrative as a teaching and learning tool has been discovered not only in nursing, but also in medicine, law, history, philosophy, anthropology, sociology and religious studies (Charon, 2001).

Quinnell, Russell, Thompson, Marshall, and Cowley (2010) suggest various roles that narratives might play, depending on the academic discipline:

For example, in Law there is detailed attention to language and process. In this context narratives can have a particular validity in themselves as evidence of scholarship. In Engineering, narratives are just stories that need substantiation with measurable “facts”. . . Where the educational research is better organized, as in Medicine, this is less of a problem, because there is more language and more factual evidence to link scholarly teaching practice with measures of student learning. (p. 23)

Use of the narrative as a teaching and learning method helps students make connections between theory and the subjective feelings that often develop during clinical and classroom learning (Heinrich, 1992). Creating these connections facilitates deeper learning and understanding for students.

Creating, sharing, and interpreting narratives results in new understandings and new ways of thinking (Dahlberg, Ekebergh, & Ironside, 2003). It is through the creation of stories that people attempt to make sense out of their lived experiences (Nehls, 1995). Stories engage us in the telling; they are compelling and can be transformative. The sensitive listener learns from stories and remembers because of the story. However, as Swenson and Sims (2003) point out, “the uninterpreted story provides only an interesting anecdote . . . the interpreted story is the foundation of new knowledge in the field” (p. 161). In other words, uninterpreted stories are just stories, but interpreted stories open up possibilities for thinking in new ways. Through interpretation of the narrative, students and teachers discover a common experience, that they are more alike than they are different (Ironside, 2001).

## **Theoretical Underpinnings of Narrative Pedagogy**

Nancy Diekelmann, a leader in nursing education research, developed Narrative Pedagogy as she conducted research in nursing education using Heideggerian hermeneutic phenomenology. Heideggerian hermeneutic phenomenology is a qualitative research method based on the work of philosopher Martin Heidegger. Hermeneutics is a specific method of interpretation of texts often used in religious studies (Wiklund, Lindholm, & Lindstrom, 2002). According to Speziale and Carpenter (2007), hermeneutic phenomenology examines “the nature of understanding a particular phenomenon and the scientific interpretation of phenomena appearing in text or written word” (p. 88). Patricia Benner was the first to use Heideggerian hermeneutic phenomenology in nursing research. Heideggerian hermeneutics “seeks to reveal the frequently taken for granted shared practices and common meanings embedded in our day-to-day lived experiences” (Diekelmann, 1992, p. 73). Narrative Pedagogy seeks to make visible the taken-for-granted assumptions of schooling, learning, and teaching. The interpretation of the written word allows for the discovery of assumptions.

Heidegger (1962) proposed that humans are always attempting to find meaning in their lived experiences. According to Seaton (2005), “the purpose of hermeneutic phenomenology is to achieve understanding of phenomena through interpretation” (pp. 204-205). The ultimate purpose of interpretation is to uncover or reveal meanings that otherwise remain hidden (Seaton, 2005, p. 205). Diekelmann and Diekelmann (2009) offer that “the task of hermeneutic phenomenological thinking is to ponder the silence residing in such putative obstacles in order to arrive at a richer and more appropriate way of asking after the showing of a phenomenon” (p. 35). In other words, using a



hermeneutic phenomenological approach requires listening to what is said as much as to what is not said.

Rapport and Wainwright (2006) understand Heidegger to say that “we are always already in the world in association with others, not as observing beings but as beings inseparable from that which is observed and from a world of being” (p. 229). Dinkins (2005) observes that hermeneutics “is not a *method* at all but a mode of understanding” (p. 115). Narrative Pedagogy offers a method for teaching and learning as well as a way of inviting teachers and students to co-discover new meanings on the way to becoming new nurses, midwives, and other providers of health care.

### **The Language of Narrative Pedagogy**

To understand Narrative Pedagogy is to understand the *language* of Narrative Pedagogy. Two terms that have been explicated by Narrative Pedagogy scholars and researchers include “converging conversations” and “concernful practices”.

**Converging Conversations.** Converging conversations is not simply a dialogue; it is about creating space where many perspectives can be heard (Ironside, 2003b). It is using hermeneutic phenomenology to identify themes and patterns discovered in conversations with the purpose of hearing what is being said without closing down the telling. Diekelmann (2001) describes converging conversations in this way:

Converging conversations seek to disclose what is hidden, remains unspoken, unthought, and concealed in contemporary understanding of learning. It occurs through a questioning that is situated, open, and on the border between what is concealed and revealed. Converging conversations are always questioning – but not as a mere cross-examination – rather, converging conversations are a way to keep open the possibility for anything to emerge. (p. 69)

Converging conversations deliberately creates safe places where teachers and students can dialogue about what is going well and what is not going well in the academic setting.

**Concernful Practices.** After more than 15 years of longitudinal, hermeneutic research, the Concernful Practices of Schooling, Learning, and Teaching showed up as a pattern, the highest level of hermeneutic analysis (Dahlberg, Ekebergh, & Ironside, 2003; Ironside, 2003b). See Figure 1.3 for the ten Concernful Practices as identified by Diekelmann.

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Presencing        | • Attending and Being open                 |
| Assembling        | • Constructing and Cultivating             |
| Gathering         | • Welcoming and Calling forth              |
| Caring            | • Engendering of community                 |
| Listening         | • Knowing and Connecting                   |
| Interpreting      | • Unlearning and Becoming                  |
| Inviting          | • Waiting and Letting Be                   |
| Questioning       | • Sense and Making meanings visible        |
| Retrieving Places | • Keeping open a future of possibilities   |
| Preserving        | • Reading Writing Thinking-saying Dialogue |

Figure 1.3: Concernful Practices (Diekelmann & Diekelmann, 2009)

Diekelmann and Diekelmann (2009) connect the Concernful Practices with Schooling, Learning and Teaching in the following way:

Schooling as attending: presencing, assembling and gathering  
 Learning as listening: caring, listening and interpreting  
 Teaching as co-responding: inviting, questioning, retrieving places and preserving  
 (Diekelmann & Diekelmann, 2009)

The Concernful Practices offer a new language for teachers, students and clinicians as they make meaning of the educational experience. Diekelmann and Diekelmann (2009) caution, though, that “concernful practices are not meant to be categories in the sense of prescriptions but are meant to show the *possibilities* that abide (dwell) in encountering as

it takes place” (p. 342). These practices provide alternatives to the conventional language of behavioral (outcomes-based) models with emphasis on skill mastery and knowledge acquisition that are pervasive within nursing education (Andrews et al., 2001).

### **The Narrative Pedagogy Classroom**

Narrative Pedagogy is a site-specific approach to teaching, learning and schooling (Diekelmann, 2001). Based on a synthesis of the literature, Narrative Pedagogy is considered site-specific for two reasons:

- Narrative Pedagogy challenges the assumptions inherent in conventional pedagogy. These assumptions vary from school to school
- One of the goals of Narrative Pedagogy is to create spaces for teachers and learners to engage in conversations about what is going well and what is not going well. These conversations will differ from one educational setting to another.

Even though “the solutions produced are not generalizable to other schools of nursing, the processes of Narrative Pedagogy are transferable and can be enacted in any school” (Andrews et al., 2001, p. 254). Narrative Pedagogy is committed to de-centering the power of the teacher which means that students have a voice in how the course is taught; students participate in how and what content is covered. Teachers assume the role of consultants, not only lecturers; students may be given an opportunity to decide what text books are used (Swenson & Sims, 2000). Stories and paradigm cases become tools for learning in the classroom. Deconstructing and interpreting these stories and cases results in meaning-making which ultimately leads to deeper learning that would not have been possible otherwise (Swenson & Sims, 2000).

Just as Narrative Pedagogy shows up differently in various U.S. classrooms, its appearance varies in other countries. For example, in an academic nursing setting in Japan, Kawashima (2005) described how Narrative Pedagogy is used help students return to more reflective practices. The entire Japanese nursing curriculum underwent major changes in 1996 that resulted in students having the same number of clinical contact hours but fewer direct clinical experiences; they were no longer allowed to have as much hands-on experience in the clinical setting. Narrative Pedagogy enabled faculty to assist students to “reflect on the meanings of clinical experiences [in order to] create an avenue to synthesize theoretical knowledge gained from on-campus learning and clinical practice” (Kawashima, 2005, p. 169). By creating spaces for dialogue between students and teachers, new understandings for students and teachers were discovered.

In another example of how Narrative Pedagogy appears in a country other than the U.S., a teacher in Hong Kong describes how she listened to students’ comments and “tried to make sense of their meanings of caring” (Chan, 2008, p.262). Her teaching methods included “online discussions, face-to-face story sharing, a response letter to a selected peer’s story, and an aesthetic expression of their meanings of caring through the arts” (p. 262). In this setting, reflective self-awareness was enhanced resulting in more intentional caring practices. By giving students a voice, decentering the teacher’s power, and encouraging dialogue among and between students and teacher, Narrative Pedagogy provides an environment of reciprocity in schooling, learning, and teaching.

### **Outcomes of Narrative Pedagogy in Learning**

Narrative Pedagogy and other interpretive pedagogies “promote a kind of thinking that prepares students to use evidence thoughtfully and to develop skills of judgment

necessary for complex situations” (Vandermause & Townsend, 2010, p. 428). Gazarian (2010) describes an initiative using digital narratives created by students in a senior-level clinical decision-making course. The author argues that it is important for educators to develop ways to develop more than critical thinking skills. The author suggests that Narrative Pedagogy in the form of digital story-telling enhanced her students’ ability to develop clinical thinking strategies. Beard and Morote (2010) report findings from a pilot study which found that course learning objectives were met using Narrative Pedagogy and podcasts. In a pilot study that examined cognitive and ethical maturity between two groups of nursing students, Evans and Bendel (2004) found that the students who took a course that used Narrative Pedagogy as a strategy demonstrated slightly better critical thinking skills than those in the control group.

### **Understanding Narrative Pedagogy**

In the literature on Narrative Pedagogy, at least two ways of interpreting Narrative Pedagogy can be found. Many (Beard & Morote, 2010; Brown et al., 2008; Chan, 2008; Forneris & Peden-McAlpine, 2006; Rogge, 2001; Walsh, 2011) understand Narrative Pedagogy as a strategy – the telling and interpreting of narratives. A few (Diekelmann & Diekelmann, 2009; Ironside, 2004) understand Narrative Pedagogy to be both strategy and a philosophy of teaching and learning. Each understanding offers an opportunity for extending knowledge in nursing.

### **Narrative Pedagogy as a Strategy**

Walsh (2011) suggests that “the concept of narrative pedagogy originated with the tradition of learning from stories” (Walsh, 2011, p. 216). An important task for teachers and students requires developing “a shared understanding of the meaning of a

(patient/nursing) story” (Walsh, 2011, p. 217). Ironside (2003a) writes about a course in which the students and teacher wrote stories of caring for another person; the interpretation of the stories allowed for a deeper understanding of “caring practices, in general, and nursing practice, specifically” (p. 123).

Beard and Morote (2010) conducted research to determine if course objectives were met when combining podcasts and Narrative Pedagogy. The authors required students to read a chapter in the text, listen to a podcast, and take a pre-test. A story was read in class and students received a copy of the story. “Following the story, students were asked to share their interpretations and discuss their feelings” (Beard & Morote, 2010, p. 186). In other words, the authors understood Narrative Pedagogy to be the reading and interpretation of stories.

Rogge (2001) describes how Narrative Pedagogy and Socratic questioning are used in a graduate level pathophysiology course. She sees limitations to the use of traditional approaches to teaching, specifically the use of lecture, in such a content-heavy course. Narrative Pedagogy, as interpretation of narratives, along with Socratic questioning, became useful strategies to supplement lecture in her pathophysiology course.

Brown et al. (2008) understand Narrative Pedagogy as an “adjunct to course content” (p. 283) as they seek to enhance student understanding by adding narratives from art, film, and literature for interpretation by students. They believe that “the depictions of illness, disease, and caring found in fiction, poetry, drama, film, and paintings are far more powerful and sensitive than the explanations contained in standard nursing textbooks” (Brown et al., 2008, p. 283).

Chan (2008) describes how stories were used to enhance learning in a nursing course (caring concepts) in Hong Kong. She defines Narrative Pedagogy as “a teaching strategy that promotes thinking about the meanings of caring that students are learning and of the significance of those meanings to students’ nursing practice” (Chan, 2008, p. 261). In other words, Chan understands Narrative Pedagogy to be a teaching *strategy* and not a philosophical approach to teaching and learning.

Burke and Williams (2011) describe how their school (one of the Narrative Pedagogy pilot schools) used stories and Diekelmann’s Concernful Practices (see above) to engender caring. They created a special day called “Commitment to Care Celebration”; a time when faculty and students assembled to share stories of caring. In this way, they were able to return their focus to the primary notion of caring.

Fornieris and Peden-McAlpine (2006) understand Narrative Pedagogy as the sharing and interpretation of narratives. They go on to say that “Narrative [P]edagogy facilitates a critical dialogue (i.e., encouraging students to challenge perceptions, asking questions beyond expository or declarative knowledge) and makes visible the nature of thinking to broaden perspectives and reframe thoughts and insights” (p. 5). The authors describe contextual learning, a learning intervention that they propose to enhance reflective thinking in nursing education. They suggest that narratives provide the “major underpinning” (p. 1) for contextual learning and go on to equate storytelling with Narrative Pedagogy (p. 12).

Kirkpatrick and Brown (2004) describe how they use students’ interpretations of stories from film and literature in their course on geriatric nursing. Stories from the literature and film provide a “catalyst for the discussion of topics that are often difficult

to discuss” (p. 186). Kirkpatrick and Brown believe that students gain cognitively, affectively, interpersonally, and personally: “Cognitively, stories assist in improving learning and problem solving; affectively, they help instill hope; interpersonally, they serve as a socialization tool, helping to establish trust and promote bonding; lastly, they help foster personal growth” (p. 184). They suggest that using stories in this way helps students develop reflective and critical thinking skills.

### **Narrative Pedagogy as a Philosophy**

Perhaps because teachers tend to think of philosophy as something “obtuse and abstract” (Csokasy, 2009, p. 117), teachers find it easier to think and write about strategies or methods of teaching. Chapnick (2009) suggests that teachers who develop their own philosophy of teaching and learning find personal and professional reward for doing so. Csokasy (2009) cautions that failing to develop a philosophy of teaching and learning risks an inability to change one’s approach to teaching and learning.

The Concernful Practices of Narrative Pedagogy invite teachers and students to think and dialogue about what does and does not work well in nursing education (Ironside, 2003b). Diekelmann and Diekelmann (2009) say that the Concernful Practices are not a taxonomy or a manual on how to enact schooling, learning, and teaching but they offer a new language for understanding the educational experience. Andrews et al. (2001) suggest that Narrative Pedagogy can be found when teachers and students challenge the “taken-for-granted assumptions of conventional pedagogies” (p. 253). Young (2004) points out that *narrative* in Narrative Pedagogy refers to more than just using stories as a teaching and learning strategy:

Teachers or students relate and listen to stories as a learning strategy.  
Rather, the emphasis is on making persons mindful of the common,



everyday experiences that teachers, students, and nurse clinicians undergo that are often taken for granted, overlooked, assumed, unthought of, or thought of as unique to one group or another. (p. 125)

Narrative Pedagogy as a philosophy of education provides an opportunity to create new understandings for teachers and students as they experience teaching and learning.

### **Research with Narrative Pedagogy**

Ironside (2003a) challenges nursing education researchers to engage in substantive research examining conventional and innovative pedagogies that find their way into learning environments. She suggests that researchers reconsider conventional thinking that “perpetuates the dichotomy between evaluating conventional pedagogy using quantitative approaches and the alternative using qualitative approaches” (p. 123). This section offers a review of the literature of some of the research on Narrative Pedagogy as a strategy.

From a mixed methods study, Ironside (2003a) describes the findings examining Narrative Pedagogy in a classroom learning environment. The study examined three things: “how to implement an alternative pedagogy to develop new partnerships among teachers and students, how implementation is experienced by the teacher and students, and how Narrative Pedagogy influenced students’ perceptions of the classroom learning climate” (p. 122). The findings suggest a disconnect between student responses on the questionnaire (analyzed using quantitative methods) and student interviews (analyzed using qualitative methods). Ironside (2003a) suggests further work be done to establish validity for the College Classroom Environment Scale (CCES). She further suggests that the qualitative portion of the study can guide further development of this tool “by

providing descriptions of how the learning environment was experienced by teachers and students in practical and utilitarian ways” (p. 125).

Evans and Bendel (2004) describe their “classic, quasi-experimental, nonequivalent control group design” (p. 190) comparing cognitive and ethical development in a group of students enrolled in a class using Narrative Pedagogy. The students self-selected to take the elective course that “explored humanities literature as a foundation for understanding the human experience of health and illness, engaging in scholarly inquiry, and developing nursing knowledge” (p. 191). Although the study did not find a large effect, the authors concluded that students in the Narrative Pedagogy group showed improved critical thinking skills compared to the control group.

Chan (2008) reports on her qualitative study that used content analysis to examine how “students would translate their formal knowledge of caring into knowledge of experience in their everyday caring practice” (p. 262) after taking a course using Narrative Pedagogy. The author found that because of the learning and thinking that was emphasized in the course, “students’ experiences were used to fuel their growth in caring rather than merely for cognitive gain” (p. 266).

Poorman, Mastorovich, and Webb (2008) offer findings from their unique study that used Narrative Pedagogy as a research method. In this study, they used hermeneutic phenomenology to examine the narratives of teachers as they shared ways that they “helped or hindered the student’s success” (p. 272). “The most commonly expressed pattern was *attending*. The pattern was expressed in how teachers were present to [*sic*] and accompanied students as they struggled” (p. 273). The authors suggest that positive

experiences between students and teachers enhance development of new partnerships as students “continue growing in the profession” (p. 277).

Beard and Morote (2010) report their findings of a quantitative study using a pre- and post-test design to determine if learning objectives were met in a class using Narrative Pedagogy and podcasts. Using a paired-samples *t* test, they found that “learning happens when Narrative Pedagogy is used” (p. 187).

Ewing and Hayden-Miles (2011) cite the result of research conducted by Capone (2010) involving Narrative Pedagogy and dental hygiene students. Capone concluded that even though Narrative Pedagogy was useful with all learning styles, it was less effective with the dental hygiene students because, as active learners, they simply did not like to write stories.

These are just a few of the studies that have been conducted in the last decade examining Narrative Pedagogy. As nursing education scholars continue to heed the call from NLN and others (Ironsides, 2001) to develop pedagogies for nursing based in sound research, more studies from both quantitative and qualitative paradigms must find their way into the nursing literature. Ironsides (2001) proposes that teachers of nursing must do more than assume that the “theoretic work from higher education is generalizable to nursing situations” (p. 73); nursing education must conduct their own research. This requires a willingness on the part of teachers to make changes in their approach to teaching and learning; these changes are not always easy, nor are they always welcome. How can teachers be encouraged to try something new?

## **Preparing Teachers to Try Something New**

Even though teachers express interest and readiness to implement alternative pedagogies such as Narrative Pedagogy and PBL, they may be uncertain about how to make those changes (Schaeffer & Zygmunt, 2003). Some aspects of change theory should be considered when thinking about how to prepare teachers to try something new. Porter-O'Grady (2001) suggests that several factors drive the need for change in nursing education, including: 1) a hospital system that will no longer be the foundation for students' learning experience; 2) the loss of the 20<sup>th</sup> century model of nursing "doing for others" (p. 183); and 3) the necessity for 21<sup>st</sup> century graduates to be self-driven learners. "The question is no longer when will the educational framework for nursing learning change but how fast?" (Porter-O'Grady, 2001, p. 184). Nursing education must move beyond simply understanding that a change must occur. Change can be difficult, even for the most motivated teacher: "Change is inherently difficult because the process starts with the need to let go of old, familiar, and comfortable ways" (Utley, 2011, p. 301). However, DeYoung (2009) suggests that even when teachers who have used the same method for years and see no reason to change their approach can make changes. Teachers will be more likely to make changes if they are convinced of the need to do so and if they have a safe environment in which to try something new.

### **Diffusion of Innovation**

Rogers' Diffusion of Innovation theory will be helpful in identifying which teachers might be most receptive to trying something new. Rogers (2003) describes five categories of adopters: innovators (venturesome); early adopters (respect); early majority (deliberate); late majority (skeptical); and laggards (traditional). Typically, the innovators

would be the first to adopt an innovation and would be more able to deal with uncertainties that come with new methods; whereas, the laggards would be the last to adopt the innovation. Laggards will be more likely to accept the new method after they have had a chance to see successful implementation by another (Utley, 2011). Keeping this in mind, there is a greater likelihood of successful implementation of something new when Roger's Diffusion of Innovation theory is understood and applied (Utley, 2011).

### **Barriers to Change**

*The Curriculum.* Before examining willingness on the part of teachers to make changes in their approach to teaching and learning, it might be helpful to consider the curriculum; does the current curriculum in nursing education need change? As Finkelman and Kenner (2007) examine the implications of the 1999 to 2004 IOM reports on nursing education, they point out that any substantive changes to the nursing curriculum might take years to accomplish – time which nursing does not have. They warn that “there can be no sacred areas of content that cannot be touched” (Finkelman & Kenner, 2007, p. 21) and further state that content cannot be added to the curriculum because students already feel overwhelmed by the content to be learned. They list some possible barriers to change that teachers must consider when attempting to “re-form” the content:

- Repeated content (e.g., students have taken pathophysiology, yet this is repeated in adult health content such as cardiac disease or diabetes),
- Thinking that everything must be covered in class instead of expecting students to come to class prepared,
- Faculty adding content that is not officially approved or monitored,
- Inadequate review of textbooks when reading assignments are made (students cannot distinguish “nice to know” from “need to know,” making reading assignments too long),
- Too little expectation that students know and apply information from previous courses,
- Little or ineffective use of simulation,
- Ignoring adult principles of education,

- Limited use of online methods to cover content that can then be applied in the classroom, seminars, or practica, or used as standalone [*sic*] courses, and
- Lack of innovative methods for integrating online materials. (Finkelman & Kenner, 2007, p. 21)

**Teachers.** Young (2004) suggests that increased resistance, on the part of teachers, may occur when teachers understand the call for change to come because “something is wrong, unsatisfactory, or lacking and must be amended” (p. 124). Bonwell and Eisen (1991) offer this list of barriers for teachers making changes to the way they teach:

The powerful influence of educational tradition; faculty self-perceptions and self-definition of roles; the discomfort and anxiety that change creates; The limited incentives for faculty to change; . . . the risk to faculty that students will not participate, use higher-order thinking, or learn sufficient content; and that faculty members will feel a loss of control, lack necessary skills, or be criticized for teaching in unorthodox ways. (pp. v-vi)

According to DeYoung (2009), being an effective teacher involves: “knowledge of educational theory and research, a willingness to learn new roles and teaching methods, and the ability to reflect on one’s own performance” (p. 3).

When teachers decide to try something new, some teachers may find it easier to change their practices slowly. Teachers must persistently reflect on what is possible given the realities of the course and the school (Ironside, 2004). It is through self-reflection and critique that change can occur. Sims and Swenson (2001) agree and offer seven questions that teachers should use to guide their self-reflection:

1. What models of teaching and learning drive your work?
2. What do you think teaching is? What do you think teachers do?
3. What do you think learning is? What do you think learners do?
4. How do you see students as learners?
5. How important is control of content to you as a teacher?

6. What goals do you have for students in your classroom and clinical settings?
7. How do you evaluate new ways of doing things? How do you decide if a teaching innovation will work (or not) for you? (p. 6)

Schaeffer and Zygmunt (2003) found that barriers to implementing student-centered pedagogies include large class size, the type of course being taught, expected learning outcomes, and mandates of the curriculum. Hoke and Robbins' (2005) review of the literature found additional barriers to faculty implementation of student-centered or active learning approaches. Among those barriers are "student expectations, faculty time constraints, and a nursing educational focus on content" (p. 349). Concerns of poor student course evaluations are another barrier to implementing new pedagogies. Most course evaluations focus on how well students believe that the course objectives were met; Ironside (2003a) suggests that what is more important is how *well taught* they were.

Sims and Swenson suggest that teachers need to be able to recognize aspects of their teaching that may be "toxic". Toxic in this sense means actions that make teaching and learning harder and less satisfying, and that fail to let learning happen" (Sims & Swenson, 2001, p. 3). Students' *and* teachers' fear of the unknown offers a potential barrier to implementing something new in the learning environment (Sims & Swenson, 2001).

***Students.*** Just as teachers may resist using new methods of teaching, students may also be reluctant to embrace new approaches. Sims and Swenson (2001) suggest four assumptions that students have about learning:

1. The teacher is the main source and disseminator of knowledge. After teachers, the book is always right.
2. Learning equals memorizing the content.
3. Wondering and following your curious nature just wastes time.
4. All good work is fiercely individual. (p. 9)

They offer that some students may actually prefer lecture. It is a method that students are familiar with since it is the predominant teaching method in higher education. Before new strategies and approaches to teaching and learning can be implemented, curriculum, teacher, and student barriers must be recognized and addressed.

### **Facilitating Change**

Administrators must create an atmosphere that invites new ways of thinking and approaching teaching and learning. Utley (2011) suggests that success in changing teaching and structures, including the curriculum, within the academic setting “hinge[s] on the ability of the institution and all of its players to accept change” (p. 237). Kanter’s Theory of Structural Empowerment names several conditions that are needed in order for individuals to feel empowered by their institution to be a change agent:

First, individuals will have access to information that describes the context and history of the situation. Second, individuals will have access to resources necessary to achieve goals such as services and equipment. In addition, individuals in empowering institutions tend to receive support for exploring, monitoring, and achieving goals. And finally, empowered individuals have the opportunity to learn and develop their knowledge and skills. (Utley, 2011, pp. 307-308)

Schaeffer and Zygmunt (2003) suggest that faculty mentors might be beneficial to teachers who want to try something new. Finding opportunities for teachers to share with other teachers about effective approaches to teaching is another way to encourage those who might be reluctant to change their approach to teaching. Trying something new in the learning environment requires courage and stamina on the part of the teacher. The potential for success is greater when new methods are not tried in isolation. Having a support system in place enhances successful implementation of new approaches to teaching and learning; that support system might consist of administrators or fellow



teachers. Sims and Swenson (2001) point out that teachers must not be expected to enact new approaches in isolation. When other teachers observe the enaction of a new pedagogy on a first-hand basis, trust in the method will be increased (Sims & Swenson, 2001).

As educators attempt to find ways to improve learning outcomes, consideration must be given to the composition of an effective learning environment. Conversations about nursing education abound, but these conversations often focus on method and system, theory and practice, art and science while failing to examine the experience of teaching and how that may impact student learning. Nursing education must make certain to minimize the inevitable distractions from our main focus: ensuring that we graduate the best, safest, and most competent students from nursing programs.

### **Summary of Chapter I**

More and more, teachers in nursing are being encouraged to think creatively as they design and enact their art and science. In the last few decades, the traditional Tylerian approach, or behavioral model, has been challenged as not meeting the needs of the current teachers and learners in nursing education (Diekelmann, 1993; Ironside, 2001; Swenson & Sims, 2000). As traditional strategies are challenged, alternative approaches such as Narrative Pedagogy must be considered legitimate approaches to schooling, learning, and teaching. But any conventional or alternative pedagogy must be based in quantitative and qualitative research methods.

Nursing educators must recognize that the large body of knowledge and the diversity of health care delivery call for teaching methods other than those that have been relied on for decades. During nursing's infancy, technology was rudimentary and the type

of care that patients expected and needed was relatively uncomplicated. The nurse providing the care was female and usually single. Most schools of nursing were hospital-based, which placed the focus of education (that which must be learned) on performing tasks, rather than on critical thinking and the use of clinical reasoning skills. In the last few decades, nursing education has moved from hospital-based to college- and university-based environments (Diekelmann, 1995) but the curricula tend to continue to reflect the old hospital-based teaching method. The behavioral model with its focus on objectives and learning outcomes was the primary method used in this type of education (NLN, 2004). This model no longer meets the needs of the current learners and teachers in nursing education (Diekelmann, 1993; Ironside, 2001; NLN, 2004; Swenson & Sims, 2000).

Enacting the traditional, behavioral approach to teaching and learning must be re-examined and re-formed in order to enhance learning outcomes and reduce the level of frustration of students and teachers. New methods that encourage clinical reasoning and not memorization of facts will be far more useful to the nurses of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Alternative pedagogies, including Narrative Pedagogy, will provide these methods of empowerment for the learner and the teacher in the learning environments of the future. Findings from the recent Carnegie Foundation study on nursing education calls for four shifts that must occur within programs of nursing as well as by individual nurse educators. The study suggests the following shifts in focus:

1. From a focus on decontextualized knowledge to an emphasis on teaching for a sense of salience, situated cognition, and action in clinical situations
2. From a sharp separation of classroom and clinical teaching to integrative teachings in all settings

3. From an emphasis on critical thinking to an emphasis on clinical reasoning and multiple ways of thinking that include critical thinking
4. From an emphasis on socialization and role taking to an emphasis on formation<sup>6</sup>. (Benner et al., 2010, p. 212)

The purposes of this chapter's literature review were to explore Narrative Pedagogy as an alternative approach to nursing education; identify reasons that change is needed in the way nursing education is enacted; examine some of the potential barriers for change; and search for ways in which Narrative Pedagogy can enhance relationships between and among students and teachers, which ultimately lead to better learning outcomes in important areas such as clinical reasoning and critical thinking. Since, as Sims and Swenson (2001) suggest, "most teaching is invisible both to students and to other teachers" (p. 8), more research must be done in understanding the *meaning* of student and teacher experiences in the classroom. Understanding these meanings will aid in the elimination of taken-for-granted assumptions that are prevalent in nursing education today. It is only as these taken-for-granted assumptions are eliminated that true, learning-centered teaching and learning can occur.

Most of the current literature examines Narrative Pedagogy as a strategy in the nursing learning environment; it does not explore teachers' experience with Narrative Pedagogy. Smythe, Ironside, Sims, Swenson, and Spence (2008) remind us of the intent of Heideggerian phenomenology:

The quest of Heideggerian phenomenology is not to provide answers, for that shuts down and closes thinking. It is rather to invite readers to make their own journey, to be exposed to the thinking of the authors and to listen for the call on their own thinking . . . Every person reading the research report will take away their own thoughts, already connecting their

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<sup>6</sup> Benner et al. (2010) define formation as "shaping of the habits and dispositions for use of knowledge and skilled-know-how" (p.88). They suggest that it happens not only in the classroom, but whenever and wherever direct patient care is provided. "Teaching that stops short of effective formation at best leaves the learner with only abstract knowledge not yet accessible in practice situations" (Benner et al., 2010, p. 88).

past experiences with future possibilities of the ‘thisness’ of their own situation. (p. 1393)

By describing teachers’ experience with Narrative Pedagogy, this study will invite others to consider new possibilities for themselves. It also invites the reader to re-think or re-understand their own experiences in the classroom. This study will benefit nursing education by contributing to the research on alternative approaches to teaching.

## Chapter II: Study Methodology & Methods

We must let ourselves be admitted into questions that seek what no inventiveness can find.

- Martin Heidegger, (1968/2008). *What Calls for Thinking?* p. 374

This chapter examines hermeneutic phenomenology as a philosophy and describes my method for this research. van Manen points out the importance of distinguishing between research *methodology* and research *method*. Research *methodology* includes “the philosophic framework [and] the fundamental assumptions” used in human science research while research *method* refers to a specific mode or path used to get us to the “‘clearing’ where something could be shown, revealed, or clarified in its essential nature” (van Manen, 1990, pp. 27, 29). Ironside (2005b) suggests that it is “how methods shape and are shaped by researchers’ understanding of phenomena” (p. xii) that is of importance. Methodology refers to the philosophical underpinnings while method describes the “how to”. This chapter will focus on both the *methodology* and the *method* used in this study.

### **Methodology**

Leonard (1994) traces the origins of hermeneutic studies to Greek philosophers who used the term to “suggest the idea of bringing to understanding, particularly where this process involves language” (p. 55). Nineteenth-century German philosophers used the hermeneutic approach of interpretation of texts to understand the human experience (Koch, 1996). The “goal of a hermeneutic, or interpretive, account is to understand everyday skills, practices, and experiences” (Leonard, 1994, p. 56). However, hermeneutic phenomenology goes beyond simply describing a phenomenon; phenomenology seeks to discover meanings for humans in their lived experience. The

hermeneutic process involves an interpretation of the text or the experience being examined. The adequacy of an interpretive account hinges on “the degree to which it resolves the breakdown [in human affairs] and opens up new possibilities for engaging the problem” (Leonard, 1994, p. 60). In other words, the aim of hermeneutic phenomenology is to reveal previously unnoticed possibilities.

To better understand the current state of phenomenology, Munhall (2007b) describes two generations of phenomenologists. The first generation includes the German and French philosophers such as Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and others; the second generation consists of phenomenologists such as Giorgi, Colaizzi, van Kaam, van Manen, and others (Munhall, 2007b, p. 159). Early phenomenologists Husserl and Heidegger focused on developing or explaining their philosophy and did not provide specific rules or procedures to use (Earle, 2010). Smythe et al. (2008) argue that hermeneutic research “is a journey of ‘thinking’ rather than a specific, pre-determined process by which ‘findings’ can be pinned down” (p. 1390).

Many (Cohen, 1987; Inwood, 1995; Koch, 1996) acknowledge Edmund Husserl to be the developer of phenomenology. Husserl’s phenomenology focuses on analyzing the object as it appears through the human consciousness (Beck, 2006); his approach is also called empirical phenomenology. Husserl focused on the “epistemological question of the relationship between the knower and the object of the study [while] Heidegger, [Husserl’s student], moved to the ontological question of the nature of reality and ‘Being’ in the world” (Lavery, 2003, p. 14). Or, as Annells (1996) puts it, Husserl focused on the distinctions between fact and essence while Heidegger’s focus was on the distinctions between real and unreal (p. 706).

Hermeneutic phenomenology concerns itself with describing a phenomenon and the meaning of the phenomenon (Benner, 1994a). To further differentiate between phenomenology and hermeneutics, van Manen (1990) draws this distinction: “phenomenology describes how one orients to lived experience, [and] hermeneutics describes how one interprets the ‘texts’ of life” (p. 4). Hermeneutic phenomenology offers an approach for studying human concerns and conditions that does not require the decontextualization often found in strictly empirical studies (Benner, 1985).

Quantitative researchers expect methodology and method to be clearly explained as a part of the documentation of any research. These must be explained in such detail that another researcher might be able to replicate the study. However, Benner (1994a) suggests that “interpretive phenomenology cannot be reduced to a set of procedures and techniques, but it nevertheless has a stringent set of disciplines in a scholarly tradition associated with giving the best possible account of the text presented” (p. xvii). In other words, even though the steps in hermeneutic (or interpretive) phenomenological inquiry cannot be described with the same level of detail, scholarly methodological underpinnings can be described for the reader.

The recent increase in the number of qualitative studies by nursing researchers benefits nursing by providing an understanding of the “human side of nursing, which has not been served well by the positivist paradigm<sup>7</sup>” (McConnell-Henry, Chapman, & Francis, 2009, p. 2). The aim of human or behavioral science is to explain the meaning of phenomena that are distinctly human experiences (van Manen, 1990). Smythe et al. (2008) state the aim of hermeneutic phenomenology in terms of an invitation:

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<sup>7</sup> Positivist paradigm is also referred to as empiricism, experimental, and Paradigm I (Tripp-Reimer & Kelley, 2006). Positivists believe that “when reality [can] be held static, observations made, and experiments performed, science [is] done and the truth revealed” (Munhall, 2007a, p. 48).

The quest of Heideggerian phenomenology is not to provide answers, for that shuts down and closes thinking. It is rather to invite readers to make their own journey, to be exposed to the thinking of the authors and to listen for the call on [*sic*] their own thinking. (p. 1393)

This study seeks to invite the reader to create new thinking and new possibilities as they consider other nurse educators' experiences with Narrative Pedagogy. By using a hermeneutic phenomenological approach for this study, it becomes possible to create an understanding of the experience through the interpretation of transcripts and thereby create new meaning of these experiences.

“Inquiry, as a kind of seeking, must be guided beforehand by what is sought” (Heidegger, 1962, p. 25). In other words, the type of question determines the approach to the study. Even though Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology and its language might be considered “daunting and exclusive” (McConnell-Henry et al., 2009, p. 2), nevertheless this approach to understanding experience has application for nursing education researchers as we attempt to make meaning of teaching and learning.

Phenomenology does not create theory nor does it problem-solve; it allows us to draw meaning from the everyday:

*Phenomenological questions are meaning questions* [original italics]. They ask for the meaning and significance of certain phenomena . . . . in some sense, meaning questions can never be closed down, they will always remain the subject matter of the conversational relations of lived life and they will need to be appropriated, in a personal way, by anyone who hopes to benefit from such insight. (van Manen, 1990, p. 23)

Meaning questions call for the use of interpretive methods. The question for this study is related to meaning; therefore, I have chosen to use hermeneutic phenomenology.



## Method

Diekelmann (2001) raises concerns about describing a specific hermeneutic phenomenology method, yet she acknowledges the risk in not doing so: “failing to describe the method in a sequential manner implies a lack of rigor or thoughtlessness that does not reflect the scholarliness or the meticulousness of hermeneutical research” (p. 55). van Manen (1990) acknowledges that phenomenology has no method, but has a rich tradition that determines a researcher’s approach (p.30). However, he provides a six-step approach for conducting a hermeneutic phenomenological study. With hesitation, Diekelmann also provides her method (Diekelmann, 2001; Diekelmann & Allen, 1989).

Various components of van Manen’s (1990) and Diekelmann’s (2001) approaches were used in this study. van Manen’s six steps summarize my approach to this work<sup>8</sup>: 1) naming the phenomenon of interest; 2) investigating the phenomenon as it appears in real life; 3) characterizing the phenomenon by identifying the major themes connected with it; 4) entering the hermeneutic circle of writing and re-writing the phenomenon; 5) “maintaining a strong and oriented pedagogical relation to the phenomenon; and 6) balancing the research context by considering parts and whole” (van Manen, 1990, pp. 30-31). van Manen’s caution against developing a detailed, step-by-step description of the interpretation process prior to the completion of an actual study, and yet providing the steps, is really a caution about over-specifying the parts of the process: “a certain openness is required in human science research that allows for choosing directions and exploring techniques, procedures and sources that are not always foreseeable at the outset of a research project” (van Manen, 1990, p. 162). This was true in my study too; while I

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<sup>8</sup> My steps will be described in greater detail later in this chapter.

had clearly described steps to the research process, there were times when the work of interpreting the texts took me beyond those steps.

The process in hermeneutic phenomenology is iterative, especially in the interpretive phase of the work. “Interviews, observation, and the interpretive process begin simultaneously with the ongoing recruitment process” (Crist & Tanner, 2003, p. 203). Diekelmann (2001) cautions against calling hermeneutic phenomenology a method: “doing so suggests a linearity and structure that belies the circular, seamless, fluid nature of this reflexive, reflective approach to inquiry” (p. 55).

The purpose of hermeneutic phenomenology lies within the philosophical underpinnings of the method. Hermeneutic phenomenology invites the researcher and reader to think about phenomena in new, previously unnoticed ways:

Thinking reveals itself in the ‘ah ha’ of words jumping off a page, in conversation that gives insight, in writing where sentences seem to fall onto the page of their own demanding. Thinking is everything. The researcher is as-thinker, and so too is the reader who is called to think about ‘this’ and not so much about ‘that’. (Smythe et al., 2008, p. 1390)

### **The Purpose**

The purpose of this study is to describe the experience of nurse educators who invite Narrative Pedagogy into their learning environment so that readers might see new possibilities for themselves as they engage in teaching and learning with students.

### **Protection of Human Subjects**

The Belmont Report developed by the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects in Biomedical and Behavioral Research provides ethical guidelines for protecting human participants. The three ethical principles addressed in the Belmont

Report are respect for persons, beneficence, and justice. I maintained these ethical principles throughout this study as follows:

- IRB (Institutional Review Board) approval was obtained from Indiana University (see Appendix C)
- This was an exempt study so an Information Study Guide was given to each participant (see Appendix B)
- Confidentiality for participants was ensured in the following manner:
  - Transcribed texts from recorded interviews were de-identified for person and place.
  - Audio-recordings were permanently destroyed following transcription and verification of accuracy.
  - Interviews took place in settings agreed to by the participant and the researcher.

## **Recruitment**

Through my interest in Narrative Pedagogy and while attending various conferences, I have come into contact with teachers experienced with Narrative Pedagogy. I used these contacts to find participants for this study. In order to ensure like-mindedness in understanding of Narrative Pedagogy, I sought participants from one of the Narrative Pedagogy Project schools<sup>9</sup> as well as those who studied Narrative Pedagogy with Nancy Diekelmann. I identified participants through purposive snowball sampling – a method whereby the current participant identifies additional teachers who use Narrative Pedagogy.

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<sup>9</sup> The Narrative Pedagogy Project is described in Chapter I.

In hermeneutic phenomenology, sample size may be limited somewhat by the size of the text that is generated (Benner, 1994b). As Benner (1994b) points out, “a sample size is projected at the beginning of the study, but this is often adjusted depending on the quality of the text and the way that the lines of inquiry are reshaped by the participants” (p. 107). I interviewed eight teachers who have experience with Narrative Pedagogy in the learning environment. Interviewing terminated when nothing new showed up.

For inclusion in this study, I considered any teacher who invited Narrative Pedagogy into their teaching and learning environment; no one who has not experienced Narrative Pedagogy in their teaching was considered for participation in this study. A teacher who returned to conventional pedagogies after experiencing Narrative Pedagogy was welcome to participate, but no one fitting this description was found.

### **The Participants**

Eight teachers from three countries participated in this hermeneutic phenomenological study. The countries represented in this study are the United States, Canada, and New Zealand. All of the teachers are actively involved in the education of future clinicians for clinical practice and they teach in a variety of settings, from public to private, large to small classes, clinical courses to classroom settings to online courses, and undergraduate to graduate level courses. Because they learned of NP as it was being identified by Diekelmann, some of the teachers in this study have more stories to share of their experiences as they have taught along-side of Narrative Pedagogy. At least three of the participants teach in a Narrative Pedagogy-centered curriculum; one of their schools was completing its first semester of the program when the teacher and I had our conversation about her experience with Narrative Pedagogy. Three of the participants

experienced Narrative Pedagogy during their graduate studies as Diekelmann was developing it; two as doctoral students, one as a master's student. One participant learned about Narrative Pedagogy from Diekelmann and participants in the Heideggerian Hermeneutic Phenomenology Institute that started at the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Nursing and has more recently been hosted by Indiana University-Indianapolis School of Nursing. Another participant learned about Narrative Pedagogy as she and her school participated in Diekelmann's Narrative Pedagogy Pilot Schools project. The teachers in this study range in experience with Narrative Pedagogy from one semester to over twenty years. The variety of experiences of these participants adds depth to the stories that each shared during this study.

**Jody.** I met Jody during coursework for the PhD and discovered her connection with NP and Diekelmann during informal conversations. Jody agreed to be the first participant in my study, which we thought would aid me as I prepared to talk with others who were less familiar to me. Even though I had experience interviewing participants, I was happy to have my first conversation for my dissertation study with someone that I knew personally. Our conversation occurred by phone since she and I live in different states. We considered rescheduling the interview because Jody had a bad cold and was coughing a lot, but decided that it would be best to go ahead with it because of our complicated schedules.

Jody learned about Narrative Pedagogy as a graduate student studying with Nancy Diekelmann as Diekelmann was conducting her research that led to the identification and naming of Narrative Pedagogy. She teaches in a large, public university in the United States and has been inviting this approach into her teaching and learning environments

for several years. Currently, she teaches primarily online, asynchronous courses for graduate and undergraduate nursing students. Jody earned her PhD in nursing a few years ago.

**Angela.** I met Angela at a conference on hermeneutic methods a year before beginning my research. As I searched for participants, many phone calls and emails resulted in no response. However, my contact with Angela resulted in a cheery “I’d love to talk with you about Narrative Pedagogy”. Since she and I live in different states, we agreed that a phone call would be the best way of connecting. Our conversation lasted 53 minutes and took place in the morning. After I turned off the recorder and thanked Angela for participating, she told me how enlightening and helpful she found our conversation to be.

As a graduate student studying with Nancy Diekelmann, Angela had an opportunity to be a part of Diekelmann’s hermeneutic phenomenologic studies that led to the naming of NP. She teaches in a university in the United States and has experienced this approach both as a student (as it was being developed) and as a teacher. Angela teaches in a BSN program. By her own admission, she is reaching the end of her teaching career.

**Kristi.** Kristi and I met several years ago at a conference on hermeneutic methods. I invited Kristi to participate in my study and she readily agreed. Our conversation occurred by phone in the afternoon; I was in my home office and Kristi was at home, her preferred location for the interview. Initially, Kristi was very slow, thoughtful, and deliberate in her responses giving me the impression that she was reluctant to respond to my prompts and questions. However, as she responded to the

question “Do you invite Narrative Pedagogy into those classrooms now?” she became quite animated and engaged. The conversation lasted just over an hour and after I turned off the recorder Kristi commented on how fast the hour had gone.

Kristi teaches in a public university. She was a graduate student studying with Nancy Diekelmann when this approach was being developed. She has experienced NP both as a student and as a teacher. She has taught graduate and undergraduate nursing students.

**Carolyn.** The curriculum at Carolyn’s school is an NP-based curriculum. All teachers at Carolyn’s school are expected to invite NP into their teaching and learning environments; Carolyn other teachers in her school as they invite this new approach into their teaching and learning environments. Hers is a medium-sized, public university in the United States. She learned of NP from Nancy Diekelmann as she was conducting her research and naming it. Currently, Carolyn teaches introductory nursing courses in a generic BSN program. Our conversation took place by phone at the end of a very busy day. She often hosts visitors curious about an NP-centered curriculum and she does what she can to continue to introduce others to this new way of being.

**Lisa.** Lisa teaches in a private college in the United States that offers LPN, ASN, and BSN degrees. She learned about NP as a part of her doctoral work and has been inviting it into her teaching and learning environments for two years. At the time of our conversation, Lisa is completing the course-work toward a PhD in nursing education. She has been a full time nurse educator for about five years. No one else at Lisa’s school invites NP into their teaching, but her school’s curriculum uses a “learner-centered”

approach to teaching and learning. Lisa and I spoke using Skype, an audio and video internet service. We were both in our home offices.

**Stacy.** Stacy learned about this way of teaching about a year ago when she was hired to teach in a newly formed program. This new program is completely NP-centered curriculum; there are no traditional courses at this university's nursing program. The school hired Drs. Swenson and Sims as consultants as they formed the program. Stacy teaches at a public university that offers only an accelerated BSN program. Stacy's university is located in a non-US, English-speaking country. She is a master's-prepared educator. We used Skype, an audio and video internet service, for our conversation. Both of us were in our home offices. An expert in NP suggested that I speak with Stacy about her experiences. Because of Stacy's inexperience with it and also the unique nature of her school's educational approach, Stacy offered a perspective that was quite different from others in this study. Stacy was enthusiastic during our conversation but also free to talk about some of the difficulties and questions that they have in implementing an NP-centered curriculum.

**Emma.** Emma teaches full time in a public university in an English-speaking country other than the US. The program at her school is a narrative-centered curriculum. In preparation for beginning the narrative-centered curriculum, they consulted with Nancy and John Diekelmann one year and the following year with Melinda Swenson and Sherry Sims. Emma learned of this new way of teaching as she worked with these Narrative Pedagogy experts. Emma recently completed her PhD. Her teaching experience has been in two English-speaking countries other than the US. I learned to know Emma through my connections within the NP community. We used Skype to conduct the



interview. Prior to our conversation, we had an opportunity to learn to know each other as we both attended an international Narrative Pedagogy conference.

**Monica.** Monica learned about NP more than ten years ago when she began participating in the Heideggerian Hermeneutic Institute. Nancy Diekelmann was still doing research and naming it at that time. Monica has been a teacher for many years and currently teaches at a large, public university in undergraduate and doctoral programs. She supervises doctoral students and serves on dissertation committees. I met Monica at an NP conference where she presented some of her research. Despite many years of conducting research using hermeneutic phenomenology, she told me that this was the first time that she has been a participant in research. Our conversation took place via Skype, our mutually agreed upon method of communication. Due to some technical difficulties, Monica was only able to enable the audio portion of Skype but she was able to both see and hear me.

### **A Glossary and the Language**

*Use of Language in this Work.* Word choice or the way in which language shows up in this work is quite deliberate. In considering how language and thinking work together, Gadamer (1975/1982) says:

The experience is not wordless to begin with and then an object of reflection by being named, by being subsumed under the universality of the word. Rather, it is part of experience itself that it seeks and finds words that express it. We seek the right word, ie [*sic*] the word that really belongs to the object, so that in it the object comes into language. (p. 377).

Gadamer is not referring to the subjective/objective nature of things, but rather stating that it is in the word itself in which meaning is found. Gadamer tells of a certain “African language that has two hundred different words for ‘camel’, according to the particular

circumstances and relationships in which a camel stands in regard to the desert-dwellers” (p. 395). In other words, only subtle differences in the ways in which words are used might appear, but these distinctions can make a difference to the keen observer.

***Narrative Pedagogy vs. NP.*** Because the focus of this dissertation is on teachers’ experience with Narrative Pedagogy, the term “Narrative Pedagogy” appears frequently. In some instances, “NP” is used instead of “Narrative Pedagogy”. This risks objectifying Narrative Pedagogy, but it is done in an attempt to be less redundant and allow for smoother reading of the text.

***Interview vs. Conversation.*** In the literature for phenomenological studies, *interviews* are commonly used to describe the method of data collection. An *interview* is often understood to be a time of questioning and answering during which the researcher guides the participant through a series of questions designed to get to the experience of the phenomenon of interest. The focus for this study was not so much in asking the participant questions as it was in allowing experiences to come forth and be expressed in whatever manner the participant chose. The word *conversation* is used intentionally in this study in an attempt to stay true to the idea that the participant, not the researcher, determines the direction of the discourse. Gadamer (1975/1982) says “the openness of the question is not boundless. It is limited by the horizon of the question” (p. 327). This adds to the argument that questioning (the kind that usually occurs in *interviews*) closes down possibilities of new directions before they have an opportunity to show themselves. Conversations have “a spirit of their own” (Gadamer, 1975/1982, p. 345).

***Use vs. Invite.*** In this study, teachers *invite* Narrative Pedagogy to be a part of their teaching and learning activities. This is different from the idea that teachers *use*

Narrative Pedagogy. According to *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* (1975), *use* means that something is employed for some purpose; *invite* means to request formally or urge politely. *Invitation* seems to be more egalitarian and open than *use*. Also, *use* is the term generally connected with strategy or method. Since Narrative Pedagogy is understood to be more than strategy or method, the more open term of *invite* is used throughout this work.

***Education vs. Learning.*** Knowles et al. (2005) draw this distinction between *education* and *learning*: “Education emphasizes the educator, whereas learning emphasizes the person in whom the change occurs or is expected to occur” (p. 16). Even though Knowles et al. takes a behaviorist stance in describing learning and the stance in this work is a constructivist perspective, the point that Knowles et al. make is a valid one – *education* directs focus toward the teacher; *learning* directs attention toward the learner. Within this work, the term *education* will usually be used in the following contexts: when the focus is on staying true to what and how another person has used the word (whether the person is a participant in this study or the word appears in citations from the literature) and when the focus is on the educator or the process of education.

***Teaching vs. Learning.*** Content (what is taught), teaching, and learning should not be viewed as separately occurring phenomena (Lusted, 1986). Even though this is true, for the most part, teaching and learning will be examined separately in Chapter III. It is important to remain mindful that doing this risks privileging one over the other. This work takes the following stance on the terms *teaching* and *learning*: *teaching* is something that is done for another person; it is understood to be a gifting of something that the giver knows; teaching implies a relationship and an action; *learning* is something

that you do for yourself; it involves construction of new ways of knowing or new ideas, learning implies an action.

### **Evaluating Goodness**

The criteria used to determine the trustworthiness or rigor of qualitative studies differs from those used in quantitative studies. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that the criteria used to determine goodness should be informed by the paradigm from which they originate. In other words, if quantitative methods are used, it is appropriate to use internal and external validity, reliability and objectivity in determining rigor; qualitative research is judged worthy by different criteria. However, not everyone agrees with this way of thinking. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) offer four positions frequently taken in the argument over what criteria should be used in determining goodness in qualitative studies; these positions, along with Denzin's and Lincoln's labels, are summarized below:

- The same criteria should be applied to qualitative research as used to evaluate quantitative research. This is a *positivist* perspective.
- A set of criteria unique to qualitative research needs to be developed. This is a *postpositivist* perspective.
- The appropriateness of any predetermined criteria for judging qualitative research is questionable. This is a *postmodernism* perspective.
- An entirely new set of criteria, separate from both qualitative and quantitative paradigm, should be developed. This is a *poststructuralism* perspective. (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, pp. 479-480)

Rolfe (2006) suggests that the fourth perspective has generated the largest amount of debate. This paper assumes the second perspective – qualitative research should be assessed using criteria different from those used in critiquing quantitative research.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) propose four criteria for determining trustworthiness in qualitative studies: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (p. 300).

Koch (1996) suggests that it is up to the researcher to determine the criteria of goodness

that will be used for their specific study, but ultimately the reader will decide if the study is believable. To support my claim of goodness in this study, I used Lincoln and Guba's (1985) classic criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

**Credibility.** Beck (2009) suggests that a study is credible if the data are believable and the reader has confidence in the truth of the findings. Credibility is also accomplished by providing faithful descriptions and interpretations of participants' experiences. I maintained credibility in several ways:

- Recruited nursing educators experienced with Narrative Pedagogy.
- Maintained my own personal engagement with Narrative Pedagogy in my teaching.
- Engaged with the hermeneutic circle<sup>10</sup> of critiquing, writing, and re-writing interpretations.

**Transferability.** According to Koch (1996), transferability occurs when the original context has been "described adequately so that a judgement of transferability can be made by readers" (p. 179). It is not the responsibility of the researcher to provide an index of transferability, but rather the researcher must "provide the *data base* that makes transferability judgments possible on the part of potential appliers" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 316). I met this criterion by providing a thick description of the teaching environment of the participants while maintaining the confidentiality of the teacher. A thick description "specif[ies] everything that a reader may need to know in order to

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<sup>10</sup> The hermeneutic circle has been described as metaphor (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007), as interpretive process that humans are always engaged in (Diekelmann & Ironside, 2006), and as a way of communication between teacher and students (Ewing & Hayden-Miles, 2011). Gadamer (1975/1982) describes it as an iterative process that requires the interpreter to examine the text as one and as parts. As such, the hermeneutic circle is understood to be part of a process that occurs within the researcher as the text is interpreted. A more thorough explication is found later in this chapter.

understand the findings (findings are *not* part of the thick description)” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 125).

***Dependability.*** Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest the audit trail as a method for showing dependability. An audit trail involves maintaining adequate records such that another researcher might arrive at the same or similar conclusions. I maintained an audit trail throughout this study. My audit trail includes my research journal, process notes, and notes/minutes from debriefing sessions with my naïve peer de-briefer, research team, and my research chair.

***Confirmability.*** Sandelowski (1986) suggests that confirmability is “achieved when auditability, truth value and applicability are established” (p. 33). In other words, when each of these three criteria is met, the fourth criterion of confirmability will be established. Dialogue with my naïve peer de-briefer<sup>11</sup> and maintaining an audit trail ensured that this criterion was met.

## **The Interviews**

Following recruitment, I interviewed the participant. Permission to audio record the interview using a digital voice recorder was obtained prior to each interview. The IRB classified this as an exempt study. An Information Study Sheet was given to each participant; a statement about audio-recording the interview was included in the study sheet (see Appendix B). Because humans gain understanding as inquiry through dialogue (Dinkins, 2005, p. 117), the interviews conducted in this research were conducted as dialogue between the researcher and participant.

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<sup>11</sup> A naïve peer de-briefer is someone who possesses these qualities: lacks familiarity with the phenomenon of interest, lacks familiarity with the research method, is able to read with a critical eye, and is capable of asking pertinent and challenging questions.

***The Setting.*** Ideally, interviews would have been conducted in a face-to-face setting, but due to accessibility issues, all interviews were conducted through video-conferencing or telephone. By using video-conferencing and telephone interviews, I was able to access participants whom I would otherwise be unable to access because of distance or scheduling conflicts. For example, participants from New Zealand and Canada would not have participated had telephone and video-conferencing not been an option.

Two interviews were conducted using video-conferencing. To remain consistent with the face-to-face interviews, only the audio portion of the call was recorded and interpreted. Audio recordings were stored digitally on a password-protected storage device to which only I had access. Once I transcribed the interviews and verified the accuracy, the recordings were permanently deleted.

***The Questioning.*** Framing the first question asked in a phenomenological study sets the stage for the entire interview. “A question places that which is questioned within a particular perspective. The emergence of the question opens up, as it were, the being of the object. Hence the logos that sets out this opened-up being is already an answer” (Gadamer, 1975/1982, p. 326). In other words, response to the question is guided by the framing of the question. Gadamer (1975/1982) also highlights Socrates’ observation that *asking* is much more difficult than *answering* the question. The Interview Guide (see Appendix D) provided some possible conversation-starters that I used in the interview. The guide was just that, a guide; it did not provide a “script” for directing the interview. As additional items came up during the interview, the participant was invited to take the interview where she chose to go.

Field notes provide a context for the interviews. These notes often include “vocal intonations, physical expressions, and gestures that might not be audible in the recorded interview” (Crist & Tanner, 2003, p. 203) but may impact the interpretation of the text. I recorded these field notes immediately following the interview and they became a part of the transcribed text. Since all but two of the interviews were by telephone, only vocal intonations and pauses were noted. However, additional items in the field notes included: interruptions that resulted in the participant losing the train of thought (this happened twice); background information that I learned about the participant from previous contact that might not have come out in the interview; and the time of day and length of time for the interview.

### **Interpretation**

“The meaning of phenomenological description as a method lies in *interpretation*” (Heidegger, 1962, p. 61). In hermeneutic phenomenological research, the object of the study is the text (Allen & Jensen, 1990); the text becomes the data to be interpreted. The texts must be “studied and interpreted in order to discover the hidden or obscured meaning” (Leonard, 1994, p. 58). As humans living and experiencing life, we are unaware of everyday experiences and “it is often through breakdown that the researcher achieves flashes of insight into the lived world, although it is important to note that the taken-for-granted, everyday lived world can never be made completely explicit” (Leonard, 1994, p. 59). van Manen (1990) reminds us that the focus of phenomenology is to uncover the meaning of lived experience which is usually “hidden or veiled” (p. 27). An important part of the process of interpretation, or describing the meaning of the experience, involves returning to the literature, including philosophic texts (Diekelmann,



2001). Gadamer (1975/1982) suggests that the circle of understanding must always be increasing because “when it is placed in ever larger contexts the understanding of the individual element is always affected” (p. 167). The aim of interpretation is to make explicit the everyday experience and to describe and communicate it for interpretation by others.

Interpretation is transformative. It illuminates, throws light on experience. It brings out, and refines . . . the meanings that can be sifted from a text . . . So conceived, meaning is not in a text, nor does interpretation precede experience, or its representation. Meaning, interpretation, and representation are deeply intertwined in one another. (Denzin, 1994, p. 504)

Meaning and interpretation are intertwined, but they are also personal. “No single correct interpretation exists” (Ironside, 2001, p. 74) but it is up to the reader to determine their own correct interpretation.

### **Researcher as Instrument**

Munhall (2007b) points out that “the researcher is the most important ‘instrument’” (p. 180) in a phenomenological investigation. The concept of “researcher as instrument” rests with the idea that the “distinctive function of the researcher’s knowledge, perspective, and subjectivity in data acquisition” (Barrett, 2007, p. 418) positions her to engage in observations and interpretations required for this work. Lincoln and Guba (1985) put forth the idea of researcher as instrument:

Because of the understanding that all instruments interact with respondents and objects but that only the human instrument is capable of grasping and evaluating the meaning of that differential interaction; because the intrusion of instruments intervenes in the mutual shaping of other elements and that shaping can be appreciate and evaluated only by a human. (pp. 39-40)

Humans are uniquely capable of being the instrument due to our ability to be responsive, adaptable, have a holistic understanding, expand our knowledge base, immediately process the data which then allows us to clarify and summarize without delay, and finally, our ability to seek understanding of unusual or unexpected responses (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, pp. 193-194). Phenomenology is an existential investigation (Munhall, 2007b) and therefore requires humans to engage in the process of analysis.

Upon further reflection of researcher as instrument, consider the role of the researcher with the interview as the primary method of “data collection” in a phenomenological study. Dinkins (2005) points out that the original understanding of interview included “a viewing of *each other*, a looking into each other in which we hope to gain a glimpse of something otherwise beyond our ken” (p. 116). Using a Heideggerian understanding, both researcher and participant must reveal themselves to the other which involves a stance of listening and reflecting. Munhall (2007b) reminds the researcher that “listening is an art. Try to hear just what is being said. . . . Let there be pauses and silence. Silence is important” (p. 185).

Since the researcher is the instrument in hermeneutic studies, questions about the researcher’s ability to maintain an objective stance may arise. Grounded theory and empirical phenomenology use bracketing in an attempt to prevent the researcher imposing their assumptions and beliefs into the study. Researchers from these paradigms define bracketing as the naming or setting aside assumptions and preconceived notions about the phenomenon of interest. However, Diekelmann and Ironside (2006) point out that “hermeneutic researchers do not attempt to isolate or ‘bracket’ their presuppositions but rather to make them explicit” (p. 261). Gadamer (1975/1982) directs us “to be aware

of one's own bias, so that the text may present itself in all its newness and thus be able to assert its own truth against one's own fore-meanings" (p. 238). Heidegger (1962) proposes that humans are always already interpreting the world and because of this, "we cannot separate ourselves from our involvement in a world of meaning" (Johnson, 2000, p. 700).

The premise for this study is that it is not only impossible to "bracket" one's previous notions or understandings; it is also not helpful to do so. I did not "bracket" my beliefs or assumptions because I believe that as humans we cannot set aside our previous experiences. Our past and present provide the lens through which we interpret our experiences. Rather than claim that naming my assumptions and pre-understandings protects the reader, I embrace, acknowledge and am always mindful of my assumptions. Before the study began and throughout, I have kept a journal that includes my assumptions and my thinking so that I might be aware of my pre-judgments.

Swenson (1996) points out that since the investigator is the primary instrument, "the investigator is obligated to describe his or her qualifications for carrying out the proposed study" (p. 189). To that end, I provide the following information. I am a doctoral student who has spent the past four years studying Narrative Pedagogy and the past three years studying hermeneutic phenomenology. As a part of my doctoral work, I have participated in three research groups with expert phenomenologists and other doctoral students. I was an observer participant in a Narrative Pedagogy class; the teachers of this class were experts in Narrative Pedagogy. I have conducted interviews and have practiced constructing stories out of text. I have taught nursing for twelve years,

the first eight years as adjunct faculty and the last four in a full-time, tenure-track position.

Because of my interest in Narrative Pedagogy, I have invited Narrative Pedagogy into the courses that I teach. I believe that while teaching can be exhausting work, with the right approach it can be invigorating as well. I expect that a deeper understanding of the meaning teachers ascribe to the experience of inviting Narrative Pedagogy into their teaching may facilitate Narrative Pedagogy's presence in more learning environments. I believe that when teachers invite Narrative Pedagogy into the classroom, the experiences within the classroom become more engaging for teachers and for students. Ultimately, this results in graduates prepared to perform safely in clinical practice settings and demonstrate clinical reasoning skills. While this study examines conventional pedagogies and Narrative Pedagogy, it is less a critique of each than an understanding that each has its place in nursing education. "Although interpretive pedagogies can be contrasted with conventional pedagogy, each exists within and alongside the other" (Diekelmann, 2001, p. 54).

### **The Hermeneutic Circle**

The hermeneutic circle creates an opportunity for understanding and interpreting the text. Diekelmann and Ironside (2006) point out that humans are self-interpreting beings and as such "are always already within this interpretive (hermeneutic) circle of understanding" (p. 261). Allen and Jensen (1990) suggest that the hermeneutic circle "strives to uncover and explicate practical understanding of the phenomenon" (p. 244). Ajjawi and Higgs (2007) understand "the hermeneutic circle [as] a metaphor for understanding and interpretation, which is viewed as a movement between parts (data)

and whole (evolving understanding of the phenomenon), each giving meaning to the other such that understanding is circular and iterative” (pp. 622-623). “Fundamentally, understanding is always a movement in this kind of circle, which is why the repeated return from the whole to the parts, and vice versa, is essential” (Gadamer, 1975/1982, p. 167). In other words, one must move continuously between the texts generated from the interviews and the larger body of literature in order to gain understanding of the phenomenon of interest. I used the hermeneutic circle, including the forward arc of projection and the return arc of uncovering, throughout this study as part of a constant dialogical process of interpreting and evaluating the texts.

### **The Research Group**

Participants in my research group included teachers of nursing who are expert phenomenologists, doctoral students, and a naïve peer de-briefer. The people that comprise my research group read my interpretations, contributed other views, challenged my interpretations, and raised other possibilities. Ewing and Hayden-Miles (2011) point out that it is through the interpretation of “the parts in relation to the whole of the context and the whole to the parts, [that] a circle of understanding comes about” (p. 211). As part of the to-and-fro of analysis, I returned frequently to the philosophical and pedagogical literature to validate or challenge my interpretations.

### **Steps of Interpretation**

Benner (1994b) challenges the phenomenological researcher to maintain an ethical stance of “respect for the voice and experience described in the text” (p. 101). She goes on to suggest that the researcher keep this question in mind as the text is interpreted: “What do I now know or see that I did not expect or understand before I began reading

the text?” (p.101) and even more importantly posits that if a researcher’s “own views have not been challenged, extended, or turned around, the quality of the account is questioned and the danger of just reading in preconceptions must be considered” (p. 101).

My interpretation began and continued throughout the first interview; in this way, I was able to “pursue lines of questioning that [were] generated by the study itself” (Benner, 1994, p. 107). To engage more deeply with the text, I transcribed each interview. I used MAXQDA-10<sup>12</sup> in the analysis of the interviews. Each interview resulted in the creation of texts that I interpreted using the following steps:

1. After transcribing and verifying the accuracy of the text, I read the text thoroughly in order to become familiar with it. This was important because it allowed for an understanding of the text as a whole before I began to understand it as parts. During the second reading, I highlighted and underlined the text looking for things that drew me in. This was the first level of analysis.
2. Next, I wrote multiple shorter narratives for each interview. As with any story, my stories contain a beginning, middle, and end; they are comprised of direct quotes from the text that are rearranged to make a coherent story. This was the second level of analysis. Benner (1994) instructs the researcher to carefully construct the interpretation such that it “illuminate[s] the world of the participants, articulating taken-for-granted meanings, practices, habits, skills, and concerns” (p. xviii). The researcher can be sure of an accurate interpretation when the participant says “You have put into words what I have always known, but did not have the words

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<sup>12</sup> MAXQDA-10 is a computer software program developed specifically as a tool to aid in text analysis for a variety of qualitative research methods. MAXQDA-10 can also be used in some quantitative and mixed-methods approaches.

to express” (Benner, 1994, p. xviii). Each story aimed at “capturing the individual’s point of view” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 5); this was accomplished by using the participant’s own words to construct each story. Care and attention was given to the ordering and structuring of the text because “the organization of text affects its meaning” (Kavanagh, 2005, p. 71).

3. The next level of interpretation involved titling or looking for *themes* (grounded theory, in particular, refers to this activity as “coding”). Titling the story was another way of making meaning from the story. Even though titles may help in organizing and finding themes, Smythe (2011) cautions that “one needs to be mindful that the initial title may not be what the story is really about” (p. 43). Titles for the stories in this study were chosen carefully. I avoided psychological and theoretical titles by using the gerund form of the verb or by using *in vivo* labeling (i.e., taking a direct quote from the text). van Manen (1990) describes themes as “the experiential structures that make up that experience” (p. 79). He also cautions against understanding themes as “conceptual formulations or categorical statements. After all, it is lived experience that we are attempting to describe, and lived experience cannot be captured in conceptual abstractions” (p. 79). For this study, themes were not ““the same thing’ said again and again, but rather an understanding [that] we have seen something that matters significantly, something that we wish to point the reader towards” (Smythe et al., 2008, p. 1392). See Appendix G for a listing of the titles gathered from the stories, which were created from all of the conversations. Even the titles of stories not included in this interpretation can be found in Appendix G.

4. As I conducted more interviews and performed more interpretations, I performed the highest level of interpretation, which involved looking for overarching patterns. Diekelmann (2001) states that patterns “are present in all the interviews and express the relationship among the themes” (p. 56). In other words, the stories for the patterns show the patterns.
5. Participants in the research group and my naïve peer de-briefer read the stories and made comments on the stories and interpretations throughout the study.
6. Throughout the interpretation process, I read broadly in nursing education literature and philosophical texts to aid in my interpretations (Diekelmann, 2001).
7. I wrote my final interpretation following an iterative process involving the transcribed texts, field notes, and suggestions from participants in my research group. Although I wrote the final interpretation, it is the reader who eventually provides their own interpretation (Diekelmann & Ironside, 2006). Hermeneutics assumes that there is not simply one correct interpretation:

Though an underlying assumption of hermeneutical analysis is that no single correct interpretation exists, the team’s continuous examination of the whole and the parts of the texts with constant reference to the participants ensures that interpretations are focused and reflected in the text. (Diekelmann & Ironside, 2006, p. 261).

### **The Results and Significance for Nursing Education**

The result of the text interpretation is a better understanding of the experience of Narrative Pedagogy. This study invites the reader to think about new possibilities for their teaching practice.

Understanding the experience of teachers with Narrative Pedagogy may facilitate broader use of Narrative Pedagogy in the educational environment, even though this



approach remains fairly unknown in nursing education. Many teachers of nursing find it difficult to use new approaches in their teaching; exploring the teacher's experience with Narrative Pedagogy may aid in broader dissemination of this innovative way to think about and approach learning in nursing education. By "reveal[ing] hidden interpretations and bring[ing] them to light" (Diekelmann, 2001, p. 57), other nurse educators may discover the value of inviting Narrative Pedagogy into their classrooms.

## **Summary of Chapter II**

In this chapter, I have discussed key factors related to conducting this study. Those factors include the distinctions between methodology and method; the philosophical underpinnings of hermeneutic phenomenology; the purpose and steps of this study; the criteria with which the study will show goodness and trustworthiness; and the significance of this study to nursing education. In Chapter III, I will discuss my findings from this study.

### Chapter III: Findings & Discussion

One can choose listening as a call to attention or continue to reduce schooling to the indifference of information transfer and/or socialization. ~Diekelmann & Diekelmann, 2009. *Schooling Learning Teaching*. p. 213.

This chapter reports the findings of the study examining nurse educators' experience with Narrative Pedagogy. In discussing these findings, I acknowledge that the process of analysis and discovery is ongoing for me, the researcher, as well as for the reader. As Denzin and Lincoln (1994) describe this process: "analysis, evaluation, and interpretation are neither terminal nor mechanical. They are always ongoing, emergent, unpredictable, and unfinished. They are done through the process of writing, itself an interpretive, personal, and political act. They are like a dance" (p. 479).

#### **Background**

Lee Shulman (2010) in his "Foreward" to the Carnegie study on Nursing Education points out that nursing is a hybrid profession consisting of aspects of several other professions, while "creating a singular identity of its own" (p. IX). Shulman identifies nurses using several phrases: "patient advocate" from the legal profession; "nurse as teacher" from the education profession; and "nurse as minister" from the clergy (Benner et al., 2010). He goes on to observe that "when I think about the preparation of nurses, I see key elements of preparing lawyers and teachers, engineers and ministers, physicians and psychotherapists, social workers and institutional managers" (p. X). Given this hybrid nature of nursing, it is not surprising that teachers continue to struggle with the best ways to teach nursing students.

Since the ultimate goal of nursing education is to graduate competent and safe nurses and because Narrative Pedagogy offers a new way of approaching or thinking

about teaching, it might provide one possibility for teaching nurses for today and for tomorrow. Expert in Narrative Pedagogy, Melinda Swenson, states:

Narrative Pedagogy is an interpretive approach to Teaching and Learning that arises from the lived experience of teachers, clinicians, patients, and students. The purpose of the Narrative Centered Curriculum is to encourage reflective thinking, to link theory and best practice, engage students and teachers in the active process of learning, and to build community in the classroom. (Personal communication, March 11, 2012).

Benner et al. (2010) suggest that nursing practice will only increase in complexity; therefore, nursing graduates must “leave their formal programs prepared to be lifelong students, with the disposition and skills to be reflective practitioners and expert learners” (p. 4). Narrative Pedagogy is well-positioned to respond to this need by inviting new ways of thinking about nursing and about teaching and learning.

This hermeneutic phenomenological study examined the experiences of teachers who invite Narrative Pedagogy into their learning environment. During the circular process of interpreting the conversations, many notions and sub-themes were uncovered. Continued interpretation found two themes: 1) Students and Teachers Gathering in Learning and 2) Inclining Toward Inviting Narrative Pedagogy Into Teaching. Narrative Pedagogy as *Bridge* emerged as the over-arching pattern.

This chapter describes the over-arching pattern, the two themes, the ten sub-themes, and multiple notions within the sub-themes

### **Organization of the Interpretations**

*The Stories.* The process of interpretation included writing stories and descriptions from each of the conversations<sup>13</sup> with the eight participants. In an attempt to

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<sup>13</sup> See Ch. I for explication of use of language in this manuscript.

make clear where the stories or descriptions appear, they are italicized and separated from the text in block quotes.

*The Analysis.* One pattern (Narrative Pedagogy as *Bridge*) and two themes (Students and Teachers Gathering in Learning, and Inclining Toward Inviting Narrative Pedagogy Into Teaching) emerged in this study. Sub-themes are identified in this chapter as bold-font text, left-justified. Within some sub-themes, notions appeared. Notions are indented with bolded- and italicized- font followed by a period.

### **Over-Arching Pattern: Narrative Pedagogy as *Bridge***

In analyzing the texts that resulted from this study, the over-arching pattern that shows up is the metaphor of the *Bridge*. Bridges serve a variety of purposes but always the bridge crosses over something allowing movement over that something that is otherwise preventing access of one side to another. This present study understands Narrative Pedagogy as *Bridge* that connects the banks and that Narrative Pedagogy *bridges* over what flows below. In this work, when the “bridge” appears as metaphor for Narrative Pedagogy, it will appear as *Bridge* (capital B and italicized *Bridge*). When “bridge” is used as a verb indicating an *action* related to Narrative Pedagogy, it will be italicized but not capitalized.

Narrative Pedagogy is the *Bridge* over and between many things: NP may be the *Bridge* over barriers and assumptions to teaching and learning; NP may be the *Bridge* that makes learning visible; NP may be the *Bridge* that enables teachers to develop a philosophy of teaching; or NP may *bridge* teaching and learning as teachers and students gather in learning.

Just as with physical bridges, what is found beneath or what is covered over by the bridge varies with time and location. Regardless of what the bridge bridges, the thing beneath acts as a barrier, preventing the gathering of the banks. As “the bridge *gathers* the earth as landscape around the stream” (Heidegger, 1971/1975, p. 152), so teachers and students (in a Narrative Pedagogy classroom) gather around learning and teachers incline toward inviting Narrative Pedagogy into teaching.

The structure of higher education often hinders the type of conversations opened up by Narrative Pedagogy that brings teachers and students together in the common experience of learning. Palmer (2007) posits that teachers create distance between themselves and students in an attempt to decrease the teacher’s perceived vulnerability. In addition, despite the academy’s claim “to value multiple modes of knowing, it honors only one – an ‘objective’ way of knowing that takes us into the ‘real’ world by taking us ‘out of ourselves’” (Palmer, 2007, p. 18). For the teachers in this study, Narrative Pedagogy *bridges* many of the barriers that have been put in place by tradition and the academy.

Explication of the pattern of Narrative Pedagogy as *Bridge* continues throughout this chapter.

### **Theme 1: Students and Teachers Gathering in Learning**

Diekelmann and Diekelmann (2009) suggest that gathering shows up as welcoming and calling forth. They write that “gathering as welcoming and calling forth is more than creating welcoming, safe, fair, and respectful learning environments” (Diekelmann & Diekelmann, 2009, p. 352); gathering creates spaces and invites

conversations between students and teachers “that call forth thinking-saying<sup>14</sup> and learning” (p. 352).

One of the student participants in Diekelmann’s study said, “Words matter and so do all the little things that make people feel at home with each other” (Diekelmann & Diekelmann, 2009, p. 350). In other words, *language matters* as teachers and students gather in teaching and learning. The environment for learning and the type of activities that are found in the gathering, “shape how students attend and are open to learning in the situations in which they come together with teachers” (Diekelmann & Diekelmann, 2009, p. 344). Fink (2003) offers a taxonomy of significant learning consisting of six elements. Caring, one of those elements, refers to a new learning experience “which may be reflected in the form of new feelings, interests, or values . . . . when students care about something, they then have the *energy* [italics in original] they need for learning more about it and making it a part of their lives” (p. 32). When teachers create a welcoming learning environment, students are more likely to bring the type of *caring* that Fink describes into their learning environment (Utley, 2011). Narrative Pedagogy is the *Bridge* between learning (on one bank) and students and teachers (on the other bank).

Narrative Pedagogy creates spaces for converging conversations<sup>15</sup> that allow teachers and students to gather in learning. Converging conversations let possibilities show themselves (Diekelmann, 2001). Teachers in this study gathered students in a

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<sup>14</sup> In their book *Schooling Learning Teaching*, Diekelmann and Diekelmann (2009) hyphenate dissimilar words “in order to indicate meanings that would otherwise not occur. For example, ‘thinking-saying’ is intended to express thinking as inextricably connected to language. . . . In hermeneutic phenomenology, thinking is constitutively a language experience; thinking and saying belong to each other and co-found each other” (p. xxv). In other words, thinking and saying are used in this way to indicate the relatedness of the two.

<sup>15</sup> See Ch. I.

learning environment that invited NP. The *gathering* of this first theme showed up in the following ways:

- Gathering in Learning: the Concernful Practices of Narrative Pedagogy
- Gathering in Learning: Narrative Pedagogy as a Strategy
- Gathering in Learning: Teachers and Students as Co-Learners
- Gathering in Learning: Making Teaching and Learning Visible
- Gathering in Learning: Facilitators and Barriers to Learning
- Gathering in Learning: Learning that is Other-Than-for-Cognitive-Gain

This study found that Narrative Pedagogy as *Bridge* gathers teachers and students in learning. Narrative Pedagogy does not seek to create “an ideal, romantic, or nostalgic classroom or curriculum, but [to] gather teachers and students into converging conversations wherein many perspectives can be considered” (Ironside, 2003b, p. 510).

### ***Gathering in Learning: the Concernful Practices of Narrative Pedagogy***

The Concernful Practices offer a new language for teachers, students, and clinicians as they make meaning of the educational experience (Ironside, 2003b). The Concernful Practices of Narrative Pedagogy are one way that this approach reveals itself in teaching and learning. According to Diekelmann and Diekelmann (2009), “Concernful Practices are not entities set forth as objects opposite a subject; concernful practices let themselves be available as possibility” (p. 339). In other words, Concernful Practices invite a way of being for students and teachers that allows for possibilities to appear. Ironside (2003b) clarifies this by saying the Concernful Practices direct attention to “*how* nursing practice is being learned [which] is as important as *what* is being learned” (p. 510).

Interpretations of the conversations with the eight participants provide the substance of this chapter. These interpretations revealed many stories and descriptive

narratives related to the themes and sub-themes. Angela<sup>16</sup>, one of the participants, tells how Narrative Pedagogy is more than just a strategy that she uses in her classroom.

Angela teaches a leadership course for seniors (a large class) and a med/surg course for juniors (a smaller class). Angela provides this description of how NP shows up as gathering students in learning:

*Narrative Pedagogy is more than just the story-telling or the narrative. It's about connecting. It's all of those Concernful Practices that Nancy [Diekelmann] talks about. The gathering – you gather your students in a whole different way. . . I use one of my stories for one of the first classes and I read a situation that happened to me. We take it apart; we take the part of every person in my narrative. It's much more than just a teaching strategy. It creates that connecting and [struggling for words] . . . it's palpable, hard to describe, but it's palpable. Nancy always said "You recognize it but you can't always describe it."*

Angela provides an example of how she gathers students in one of the first classes. By sharing one of her stories, she invites students to do the same as they gather for learning. Angela describes taking “the part of every person in my narrative” and in this way provides an opportunity for connecting students to the different participants of the story, with each other, and with herself.

Narrative Pedagogy as a strategy involves the use and the interpretation of narratives as a way of understanding the phenomenon of interest. Even though Angela describes how NP shows up as a strategy, she goes on to say that it is more than only strategy. Narrative Pedagogy gathers students to learning by creating connections that would otherwise remain hidden. Angela believes that this way of teaching gathers “students in a whole different way” and that this creates a connecting between students and teachers that is “hard to describe, but it's palpable.”

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<sup>16</sup> All names are pseudonyms.



Emma is a bit more specific when she describes how teachers at her school invite and gather students:

*The relationship between students and teachers is a lot more open than in the traditional classroom. Because of the smaller groups and discussions, there are more opportunities for students and teachers to interact and get to know each other. Teachers at our school have much more of an open door policy; teachers make themselves available to students. Students who have concerns or complaints do not need to be silent; they come and tell us about their concerns.*

Emma observes that “teachers make themselves available to students” and believes that it is because of the type of environment created when NP is present. Emma points to the type of relationship that exists in this type of setting. She suggests that “smaller groups” and the discussions as reasons for some of the access that students and teachers have with each other. Later, Emma and others call attention to ways in which students and teachers gathering in learning can occur whether in large or small group settings.

Angela and Emma use language other than the traditional outcomes-based language as they describe gathering with students in learning. For example, Angela says “the gathering – you gather your students in a whole different way” rather than a more traditional way of saying the same thing, which might be “students are expected to be in class on time.” Andrews et al. (2001) point out that the Concernful Practices of Narrative Pedagogy “provide[s] a language other than the conventional language of outcomes education that emphasizes skill mastery and knowledge acquisition” (p. 253). Because of its roots in behaviorism<sup>17</sup>, nursing education falls into using language connected with outcomes education, words such as competencies, goals, and objectives. By finding another way of talking about what happens in the classroom, laboratory, or clinical experience, new possibilities of learning can show themselves. During our conversation,

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<sup>17</sup> See Ch. I for explication of learning theories.

Angela said that finding new ways of learning for students makes teaching fun and challenging for her.

Just as Angela's and Emma's earlier narratives described gathering in learning, Emma also tells this story of students, teachers, and staff gathering in learning on the school's very first narrative day:

*After planning the curriculum for a year, the teachers were all kind of nervous, but very excited about what was going to happen with this new approach. On our very first narrative day, all of the teachers and students gathered in the large lecture theater. For that first narrative session, we invited everyone to talk about getting pregnant, just any story about themselves or a friend or a family member initially finding out that they are pregnant. This was the first time that the group was together; I think we were about 70 in the actual session. Teachers and students shared their narratives. I was amazed. I thought that maybe we would have just a few people who wanted to share their stories, but everybody wanted to share. We had story after story after story; it was just incredible. Some of the stories were so joyous, but others were so sad and the tissues were traveling up and down the rows in the lecture theater.*

Emma recounts a way of connecting between students and teachers and connecting with the topic that wouldn't have happened had someone lectured.

Emma's school transitioned from a traditional curriculum to a Narrative Pedagogy-centered curriculum. In making that transition, Emma and the other teachers at her school spent a lot of time thinking about how they would introduce the new Narrative Pedagogy-centered curriculum to the students at the beginning of that first school year. They decided to gather everyone (students and teachers) at the beginning of the school year in the main lecture hall and everyone would be invited to share stories focusing on a common experience (around the meaning of being pregnant). This provided an opportunity to create a community for understanding common experience. Narrative

Pedagogy, as *Bridge*, enabled the gathering of the school in developing a community understanding of a shared phenomenon – the experience of getting pregnant.

Gathering as welcoming and calling forth shows up in this next story in the ways that Emma welcomes students throughout the entire year and also as students respond to Emma’s invitation for gathering. Emma encountered a student in the market on the weekend. Because of previous problems between her and the student, Emma expected the student to avoid her, but she did not. She came bounding up to Emma, excited to see her; Emma tells this story of what happened:

*This is something I will never forget. It was fairly early in the first year that we were using Narrative Pedagogy in the curriculum. The students at the end of the semester had this **enormous** melt-down and huge complaints. The feed-back was terrible about the course. That was a really bad day and I thought “Oh no, what have we done? What have we started?” We had to work through all of those student responses.*

*At the end of that year, after all of that terrible feed-back, there was one student who had been most vocal and found the whole approach most difficult. I bumped into the student in the market on the weekend. She came bounding up to me and gave me a big hug and said “Oh, don’t worry about the rest of the class. Honestly, I can’t thank you enough. It’s just been great, the whole year. I thought it was so awful in the beginning and I hated it.” This would have been the last student that I would have expected would have had anything positive to say, but she said, “Oh, don’t worry, the class is just going through a difficult time. It’s the end of the year. They’ll come round. This way of learning has been so valuable and I can’t thank you enough.” That was a huge surprise.*

In this story, the student gathered Emma in caring. It is likely that this would not have occurred had Emma not created a welcoming and caring setting. But this time, the student initiated the conversation. If this student had not felt welcomed by Emma, she would not have felt safe in engaging Emma in conversation. Initially, when the students and Emma came together in learning, the students were frustrated and even a bit hostile. Eventually, this student “came round” and became the encourager for Emma – “don’t worry... This

way of learning has been so valuable and I can't thank you enough." Early in the transition to an NP-centered curriculum, this student was quite vocal about how much she disliked and did not trust this way of learning. But she came to understand how helpful the NP-centered curriculum was for her and for her learning; surprises can present themselves in amazing ways.

Before the school decided to adopt the NP-centered curriculum, they invited experts to work with them on developing the curriculum. They worked very hard to develop a good, solid plan of study for the students. They anticipated difficulty transitioning to the new way of teaching and learning, but were unprepared for the level of dissatisfaction that students and even some teachers expressed. Most of the teachers had a shared understanding in presenting the new approach, but many of the students took a while to come on board and share the teachers' positive perspective. When the students did come around, Emma was surprised at which student was the first to change her ideas about how it was going with the new curriculum. Usually, it is the teacher who assumes the role of encourager, but this time, the student encouraged the teacher. This time it was the student who requested the continuation of the Narrative Pedagogy-centered curriculum. The new pedagogies, including Narrative Pedagogy, seek to "improve[e] relationships between teachers and students" (Ironsides, 2003b, p. 510). The Concernful Practices of Narrative Pedagogy gather teachers and students in learning.

***Learning.*** Teachers in this study sought to find ways to invite students to think about learning. In this descriptive narrative, Emma thinks about the ways she learned best when she was a student. As she talks about this, she brings up at least two points: how did she learn best and what is learning?

*When I think about the best kind of learning and the way that I learned, so much more learning happened when there was a discussion. The teachers who stood out for me were the ones who didn't stand up and lecture but actually realized that they could make you think by the questions that they asked and the discussions that we had with other students. My teachers that taught this way caused me to come to think about something in a different way.*

Emma reflects on the way that *she* learned and what was most meaningful for her when she was a student. She did not experience NP as a student; she learned under conventional approaches. Conventional pedagogies use a variety of techniques including lecture, but they can also use case studies and other application-based methods such as story-telling, discussion, and reflection. Emma reflects on her own experience as a student and what offered her the “best kind of learning.” She clearly thinks about *how* she learned best. She believes that she learned best when teachers engaged students in questioning and dialogue. She says that she came “to think about something in a different way” when teachers dropped the lecturing. This led her to the idea that a different type of learning occurs when lecture is thrown aside.

Another issue raised by Emma’s descriptive narrative was: what is learning? Definitions of what comprises learning<sup>18</sup> range from a behaviorist understanding of learning as a change in behavior to a constructivist definition of learning as an active process whereby learners build on previous learning (Driscoll, 2005). This dissertation takes the constructivist understanding that learning is an active process in which learners construct knowledge as they attempt to make sense of their experiences. For teachers in this study, the focus was not on dispensing information, but rather in gathering with students in learning.

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<sup>18</sup> See Ch. I for more complete coverage of learning theory.

To better understand students' awareness of their learning, Brownlee, Purdie, and Boulton-Lewis (2003) conducted a qualitative study involving students who are preparing to become teachers. They examined these students' level of understanding of their learning, exploring what constitutes learning, and how one might know when learning has occurred. They found that the students had the following understandings:

Definitions of learning: changing as a person; a process of making meaning; changing behavior; and acquisition.

Descriptions of learning outcomes [i.e., when one knows they have learned something]: changed views; being open to further learning; being able to understand; being able to explain; changed behavior; and being able to recall and apply. (Brownlee et al., 2003, pp. 116-117)

Emma and these students share similar understanding of what constitutes learning. The students describe learning as “a process of making meaning”; Emma says that she came “to think about something in a different way.” The students use some language from behaviorism (for example: learning is a change in behavior) and constructivism (for example: learning is a process of making meaning). The teacher-education students in the Brownlee et al. study have most likely studied within an outcomes-based (i.e., behaviorist) educational model, so this is language with which they are familiar.

The kind of learning that Carolyn describes in this next narrative differs from an outcomes-based model and she does not offer a theoretical understanding. Carolyn thinks about the kind of learning that students develop when this approach finds a place in the learning environment:

*They [students] make new connections all of the time. By creating these narratives, we can help them create connections and help them think in different ways. They come out of this foundations class knowing about the nursing process even though they have never seen or taken care of a patient.*

Even though Carolyn says nothing about a theoretical understanding of how learning occurs for students, she believes that they are able to create connections that allow them to “think in different ways.” In her experience, students begin to understand the nursing process, “even though they have never . . . taken care of a patient.” Understanding nursing process ranks high on the list of attributes that teachers expect of graduates. It is not surprising, then, that Carolyn latches on to an approach to teaching and learning that encourages the development of these skills. She observes that when students create narratives (NP as a strategy), they can create new ways of thinking that would have otherwise been hidden from them.

***Leaping In and Leaping Ahead.*** In Stacy’s description in this next narrative, she acknowledges the tension that many of the teachers in this study experience. At times, teachers in this study have difficulty finding the balance between controlling the learning so much that it stifles learning, and providing no structure, which leaves students totally responsible for their own learning. Stacy describes one of her goals as she gathers students in learning: how to help students make the transition from what they learn in the classroom to what they learn in the clinical setting.

*As a teacher, you want to be able to be maternalistic or paternalistic. You want to direct your students because you know which way they should be going, but you also want them to be able to discover that for themselves . . . It’s not just that I want to push them off the edge of the cliff and watch them fly, but I also want them to recognize that I’m not going to let them just fall and crack their heads, I’m going to catch them. But, I want them to be able to make that discovery for themselves. This is what will make them good critical thinkers. This is the kind of thinking that will help them when they encounter a difficult situation in a clinical setting. Having these skills will enable them to work through that difficult situation no matter where they are. I try to keep that thought in mind – that I am going to throw them off the edge of the cliff, but I’m not going to let them land on their head. I keep telling them that so that they know I am not going to let them crash.*

Stacy understands that since NP invites a different way of gathering in learning, it can be uncomfortable and somewhat frightening for everyone. It requires trust from students that the teacher will be by their side and guide them as they learn a new profession.

This descriptive narrative can be interpreted in terms of philosophy (Heidegger's notion of leaping in and leaping ahead) and learning theory (Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development). In *Being and Time*, Heidegger (1962) describes two possibilities that solicitude<sup>19</sup> can take:

It can *leap in* for him. This kind of solicitude takes over for the Other that with which he is to concern himself. The Other is thus thrown out of his own position; he steps back so that afterwards, when the matter has been attended to, he can either take it over as something finished and at his disposal, or disburden himself of it completely . . . . In contrast to this, there is also the possibility . . . for the Other [to] *leap ahead* of him . . . not in order to take away his 'care' but rather to give it back to him authentically as such for the first time. [This] pertains essentially to authentic care – that is, to the existence of the Other, not to a “*what*” with which he is concerned. (pp. 158-159)

In other words, to *leap in* means to take over (or take charge) of the item of concern for the other. And, to *leap ahead* does not refer to taking charge of the task, but rather refers to solicitude of the “Other” (i.e., person). For example, a situation in which a teacher might *leap in* would be when a student asks the teacher a knowledge question and the teacher provides the “one, right answer.” Given this same example, when *leaping ahead*, the teacher might help the student find resources to discover their own “right answers.” When considering Heidegger's *leaping in* and *leaping ahead* concepts, Stacy and other teachers in this study should be mindful of whether the teacher exhibits solicitude for the task or solicitude for the “Other.” *Leaping in* shows solicitude for the task; *leaping ahead*

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<sup>19</sup> Heidegger's original word (*Fürsorge*) is not easily translated into English. It is generally translated as “solicitude”. Solicitude is a type of “care” that is “distinct from specific attitudes such as willing, wishing, striving, or knowing” (Inwood, 2000). Only *Dasein* can have solicitude (Heidegger, 1962).



shows solicitude for the student, which is consistent with the approach taken in an NP-centered learning environment.

An alternative way to understand what Stacy describes uses Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development. Stacy acknowledges the dilemma of finding the balance between providing just enough, but not too much, information – the balance between frustration and self-discovery. Vygotsky (1978) refers to this area of balance as the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)<sup>20</sup>. Stacy and other NP teachers create this ZPD by developing a learning environment within which the student will be challenged with increasingly complex and difficult problems to find solutions or answers to these problems. Scaffolding is an important part of the ZPD and it occurs when a more experienced learner (or the teacher) “controls” the tasks to be learned allowing the learner to focus only on the task at hand (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976). Scaffolding aids in teaching and should be created within the ZPD.

***Creating a Learner-Directed Environment.*** While the Zone of Proximal Development finds its way into many NP-centered learning environments, teachers must be mindful of other ways of gathering with students in learning. As teachers consider how to gather with students, Sims and Swenson (2001) suggest that teachers need to “change the way that they teach so that learners can change the way they learn” (p. 3); they advocate for a learning-centered approach, which places learning as the focus rather than learner or teacher. The learner-directed approach, advocated by most teachers in this study, shifts more responsibility for teaching and learning toward the student.

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<sup>20</sup> See Ch. I for explanation of ZPD.

Teachers in this study would find Knowles' principles of adult learning theory (andragogy)<sup>21</sup> valuable as they consider gathering with students in learning, especially his principle of "prior experience of the learner." Knowles' third principle of adult learning (prior experience of the learner) shows up in this next narrative. Carolyn provides this description of how students' previous experiences are valued when NP is invited into this classroom:

*Almost all of the students come with the skills or practices of being a nurse already and the stories highlight that for them. After de-briefing a story, they will say "I never thought that everything that I've ever done in my life is helpful. I've had these skills for a very long time and never knew it." That's a powerful thing. Usually when students come in to class, we tell them they don't know much and now we're going to tell them everything they need to know. But Narrative Pedagogy helps them see that they already know a lot.*

Carolyn recognizes that students come with previously developed skills and that some of these skills are essential to the *practice* of nursing. She believes that traditional ways of teaching and learning often give students the message that all of their previous experiences are irrelevant as they study nursing. But Carolyn shows how this way of being with students honors and invites the sharing of those past experiences. Those experiences provide a solid foundation upon which to create new learnings. Encouraging students to "share and discuss personal experiences related to the subject matter also validates the importance of the student's previous knowledge" (Utley, 2011, p. 33). Narrative Pedagogy is the *Bridge* connecting teachers and students with previous life experiences as teachers and students gather to create new learning. Carolyn's narrative reveals constructivism and principles of andragogy as students build on previous experiences and seek to make sense of them. Narrative Pedagogy in Carolyn's class does

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<sup>21</sup> See Ch. I, p. 11.

not focus on dispensing information but rather on helping students make sense of their experiences.

The Concernful Practices of Narrative Pedagogy (or, Narrative Pedagogy as comportment<sup>22</sup>) *bridges* learning (on one bank) and students and teachers (on the other bank). Beneath the *Bridge* flows:

- Conventional education language
- Traditional ways of thinking about learning, especially behaviorism that understands learning to be anything that results in changed behavior
- Traditional focus of teachers as dispensers of information
- Messages from teachers to students:
  - “You know nothing.”
  - “Previous experiences mean nothing.”
  - “I [the teacher] know everything.”

### **Gathering in Learning: Narrative Pedagogy as a Strategy**

As the teachers in this study talked about their experience with Narrative Pedagogy, they described two ways of understanding NP. For some, NP is comportment – how they are with students; for others, NP is a strategy to be implemented in almost any setting where teaching and learning co-occur. Because NP is site-specific (Diekelmann, 2001), how it shows up, even as a strategy, will vary from school to school. During further elaboration about her school’s very first narrative day, Emma tells this story of how NP showed up as a strategy:

*After the stories were shared, we divided into groups with a teacher in each group. This time we were interpreting all of the narratives. At the*

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<sup>22</sup> Comportment in this dissertation refers to a way of being-with, but it is more than just what I do. In this text, it is the way in which teachers gather and invite students into learning. NP as comportment might be considered a paradigm or even a philosophy of teaching.

*end of lunch time, more of the stories kept coming out. The students were thinking about things, asking about things, and discussing things which if we had gone and given a lecture about early pregnancy, none of that stuff would have come out. By the end of the day, we were exhausted but everybody was absolutely buzzing about what had happened. The teachers absolutely loved it; they said "This is so exciting compared to how we usually do it." There was so much satisfaction as a teacher and having had a session like that would have never happened if you had gone and given a lecture.*

Much planning went into this first narrative day and those who organized the day were anxious about how students and fellow teachers would experience the event. They were concerned that participants would resist sharing their narratives. They feared it would be perceived as wasted time, time that could have been better spent in the classroom or in a lecture hall. However, the overwhelming response from all of the participants was that through the experience of the sharing of narratives, teachers and students gathered in learning in a way that would not have occurred in a lecture hall. Emma and the other teachers discovered that interpreting the narratives takes teachers and students to the next step of developing new knowledge (Swenson & Sims, 2003).

***The Narrative.*** The narrative as a story has found its way into learning spaces for quite some time. Story-telling is an ancient practice that has recently found its way back into formal learning environments. Swenson and Sims (2000) provide this description of narratives:

Narratives may be stories about client's lives, about preceptors or other providers, about the learning situation, or about encounters between teachers and learners. Narratives also may be stories of clinical experiences of students and preceptors. (p. 112)

The act of hearing (or listening to) the narrative places certain demands or duties upon the hearer. A narrative conveys "what truth it knows through a constant interplay among form, content, and the experiences incurred in reading it" (Charon & Montello, 2002, p.

x). Teachers in this study would share Charon and Montello's (2002) perspective that every narrative in the telling has its own truth and its own value. (For example, see these stories that appear earlier in this section: Angela's description of gathering students; Emma's story about her school's first narrative day; and Carolyn's description about creating new connections with narratives).

Narrative Pedagogy as a strategy means that teachers and students write, read/share, and interpret narratives (stories). In describing the differences between a Narrative Pedagogy-centered classroom and a conventional classroom, Carolyn makes two observations: teachers at her school do not lecture and students' previous experiences are valued, with those learnings being connected to new concepts within nursing.

*If you were a student in our Narrative Pedagogy classroom, the thing that you would notice that's different is that you would not see a faculty member standing up there delivering content. Your past experience would be valued which means that sometimes the student is the teacher and the teacher is the student.*

*When we first started doing this, I was concerned with do they [students] have enough experience to really talk about it, especially with the younger students. What I found out through their stories was that I didn't have to worry about that. Their stories were amazing; they have had experiences that I couldn't even imagine having. For example, in one class, something about diabetes came up and one of the students said "I'm just not getting it; I just don't understand how this insulin works." And another student raised his hand and said, "I have an insulin pump. Would you like me to show it to you?"*

By sharing and interpreting narratives developed from personal experiences, it allows students to create connections, or *Bridges*, which enhance learning. These *Bridges* take us someplace – to learning. A bridge has two ends – neither of which is explicitly the beginning or the end. The narrative in NP connects experiences, meanings, and new knowledge. This new knowledge does not explicitly begin or end with the narrative, but

the narrative (as *Bridge*) makes the new knowledge apparent. Narrative Pedagogy is the *Bridge* between story (narrative) and new ways of understanding.

**Silence.** An important aspect of narrative telling is the interpretation of the narrative. Many of the participants describe a reflective silence that often follows the reading of narratives. Dwelling or being in the silence can be difficult for some. But, silence allows for the coming forth of ideas: “silence gives us a chance to reflect on what we have said and heard, and silence itself can be a sort of speech, emerging from the deepest parts of ourselves, of others, of the world” (Palmer, 2007, p. 80). Palmer (2007) describes paradoxical tensions that he builds into his teaching and learning spaces. One of these tensions is “the space should welcome both silence and speech” (p. 80). He acknowledges discomfort and sometimes even panic that can exist when the sounds of silence in the classroom appear for longer than just a few seconds. Stacy understands this tension well.

*You can see how much I talk. I don't allow anyone to get in anything. It's a real struggle for me. I am learning to get comfortable with the silence. I try to just sit there and just allow for that uncomfortable silence to just simmer allowing the students to direct the conversation.*

Stacy knows that she tends to *leap in* and fill in the silence, but she tries to hold back because she knows that new understandings often appear when students direct the learning. Max van Manen (1991) draws attention to the power of silence. He offers three aspects of silence that might be helpful for Stacy and others to consider:

- The silence that “speaks.” This is the tact of the “silent conversation” where chatter would be misplaced, or where intrusive questions may only disturb or hurt. . . . Tact knows the power of stillness, how to remain silent.
- The granting of silence. . . . It is the silence of patiently waiting, being there, while sustaining an expectant, open, and trusting atmosphere.

- The silence of the listening ear. This is a wholehearted attentiveness to what occupies the thoughts and feelings. . . . Tactful silence does not mean that one systematically refuses to speak, but that one realizes that there are moments when it is more important to hold back . . . comments (van Manen, 1991, pp. 177-178).

All three of van Manen's silences share the quality of creating a space where others are given an opportunity to find their voice. Many teachers share Stacy's struggle with holding back from *leaping in*. Allowing for the kind of speaking, waiting, listening silence required in the classroom comes only with deliberate action (or "inaction" – even "inaction" is a type of action). Stacy is working toward gaining comfort in the silence as she and students gather in learning.

***Problem-Based Learning and Narrative Pedagogy: a Comparison.*** As a student in New Zealand, Emma learned with conventional pedagogy, which was primarily lecture-based. Then, while living in the United Kingdom, Emma learned to teach using Problem-Based Learning (PBL). Upon returning to New Zealand, she considered leaving teaching because she could not see herself teaching by lecture. In PBL, she discovered what she believed to be a better way of teaching because it was consistent with how she believed that she learned best. She felt that PBL provided an opportunity for students to learn and apply that new knowledge. After all, PBL was developed for use in medical education by teachers who wanted graduates from their school to be able to "manipulate data, recognize and define problems, and evaluate their solutions" (Neufeld & Barrows, 1974, p. 1040). These are some of the qualities that Emma hoped for her students. After returning to New Zealand, Emma learned about NP and she felt that she found an even better way to teach and learn.

*After having tutored in the Problem-Based Learning system, I saw how things could be different and when I returned to this country, I discovered*

*that teaching was done quite traditionally with the teacher lecturing to the class. But, our dean brought Nancy and John Diekelmann one year and Melinda Swenson and Sherry Sims the following year to run workshops about Narrative Pedagogy at my university. For me, it was like the light just went on. It brought together what I had felt about education and my experience with Problem-Based Learning and also thinking that PBL wasn't quite right. PBL was just too problem-oriented. Learning about Narrative Pedagogy was like "OH!" This bore the potential for new ways of doing things. Narrative Pedagogy was really a series of "happy accidents."*

Emma really liked PBL but felt that it "wasn't quite right" because it focused primarily on the problem. While focus on specific problems can be useful, it is not what Emma believes provides the best approach to learning. She would rather gather with students in learning through writing, sharing, and interpretation of narratives. NP as a strategy has much in common with PBL. Both NP and PBL emphasize self-directed and integrated learning; they are both inductive. However, while NP and PBL might be used in the same teaching and learning environment, PBL and NP have a different focus. NP as a strategy focuses on learning through the sharing and interpretation of narratives; PBL focuses on a problem to be solved.

In PBL, to solve the problem, content from different courses/subject-matter/disciplines must be consulted. PBL might be considered a backward design in that the starting point is with the problem (or the goal) and then one works "back to search for connections between the goal and the given information" (Woods, 1994, p. 3-5).

Swenson and Sims (2000) describe PBL as an "inductive and prospective approach to clinical problem-solving" (p. 110). PBL begins with a specific observation or a problem and requires that the student create a solution that leads to formation of general concepts. PBL and NP encourage meaning-making out of real life experiences through a student-centered learning approach. Distinguishing further between the two, in PBL, learning is



student-driven, teacher facilitated; in NP, learning is a shared responsibility between teacher and students.

Narrative Pedagogy (as a strategy) is the *Bridge* for students and teachers as they gather in learning. Narrative Pedagogy *bridges* over:

- Conventional teaching strategies, especially lecture
- Teachers' need to fill the silence
- Learning that is passive and individual

### ***Gathering in Learning: Teachers and Students as Co-Learners***

When teachers and students gather in learning, new possibilities appear. The approach that teachers use and the type of questions that teachers ask can invite co-learning or it can close down those possibilities. Diekelmann and Diekelmann (2009) tell the story of Terrence, a teacher who makes a distinction between asking “How are we to think AIDS?” and “What is the major side effect for patients with AIDS in taking drugs X and Y?” (p. 258). In the first question, opportunity for thinking presents itself by not closing down or limiting the possibilities for responses. The second type of question seeks “causal, analytic, and reductive thinking” (p. 258). While that type of questioning might sometimes have a place in learning, it risks closing down the thinking before it can begin by seeking specific responses to the question. When teachers question in ways that open possibilities for conversation, opportunities for co-learning – teachers and students engaging in learning *together* – are created.

Many of the teachers in this study described themselves as co-learners with students and provided descriptions of how this showed up. Lisa describes gathering with students as co-learners.

*Narrative Pedagogy is different in the sense that it is an exchange of information between the teacher and the student. With Narrative Pedagogy, the teacher learns as well as the student; it's about how both the teacher and student are learning together and how they are growing together. It's more than just a learning community that you are forming and it's more than the teacher thinking: "Okay, what is it that this student needs to know?" Narrative Pedagogy meets the student where they are but goes beyond that.*

Lisa points out that, when NP is present, teachers and learners work together in learning. She stresses that learning becomes an “exchange” of information rather than the traditional dispensing of information that usually occurs in the classroom. Lisa invites students to suggest what they think they need to know; she tries to *leap ahead* rather than *leap in* by giving them the tools that they might need for learning.

This type of learning calls for a different way of questioning; questioning that opens up rather than closes down thinking. When questioning in ways that open conversation, responses from students are unpredictable so teachers need to be prepared for learning as questioning. Carolyn describes learning as questioning in this next story:

*I'll give you an example of the kind of thinking that goes on all of the time with narrative thinking. I always tell the students that they have to remain open about everything because as soon as you shut down and get so confident that you know what you are doing is the time that you are going to shut down all of these little symptoms that may come up that show you that you are wrong. So, you have to keep thinking, "What else could it be?" Never forget that question.*

*One time the topic was about the impaired nurse and the story is: your co-worker comes to work with alcohol on her breath and she is disheveled. It clearly goes into describing someone who has had [consumed] alcohol and has problems at home. The question I pose is "How will you meet your moral and ethical obligations to your patients and your co-worker?" That generates a lot of talk and then one of the students says, "You know, Dr. Miller keeps telling us to challenge our assumptions and ask other questions. But we have all assumed that this is alcohol. What if it's not? What else could it be? We have not yet answered the question 'What else could it be?' What if it's not alcohol we are smelling? Don't diabetics get a smell on their breath? What if that's what it is?" I'm thinking, "Oh, yes! That's exactly right!"*

What Carolyn describes is the ability of students to synthesize and think critically about a situation that is new to them, a situation for which they have not been given the one correct answer. Carolyn could have started class with the traditional lecture about the dangers of impaired nursing, the signs and symptoms of the impaired nurse, and what to do if you suspect a colleague is impaired. But, by beginning with a narrative and then inviting students to have a conversation about the narrative, Carolyn invited a different way of thinking about the impaired nurse. In fact, when a student surprised Carolyn by bringing a new thought of what else it might be, Carolyn and the students became co-learners. NP allows teachers and students to pay attention differently; Narrative Pedagogy *bridges* over previous understandings, taking students and teachers to new learnings and new possibilities.

Narrative Pedagogy creates learning environments that are egalitarian and invites teachers and students as co-learners (Diekelmann, 2001). Some of the teachers in this study are quite deliberate in the language that they use, e.g., “co-learner.” Stacy teaches in a nursing school that uses an NP-centered curriculum. Stacy is clear that the approach used in teaching and learning at her school is much different than what can be found in other schools. One difference is that the teachers understand themselves to be co-learners with students. In this description, Stacy clearly articulates her co-learner status in her NP classroom.

*When I think about the difference between a traditional classroom and my Narrative Pedagogy classroom, a key thing is that it is driven by the students. . . . What’s different in our classroom is that I’m a co-learner; I consider myself just as much of a student, or co-learner, if you will, as the other students.*

During the conversation between Stacy and me, Stacy chose her words carefully as she referred to herself and the students as “co-learners.” She wanted to be certain that it was clear to everyone (including herself) that she and the students had a shared experience with learning. By referring to herself as co-learner, she attempts to re-direct the focus of Stacy-as-teacher, the director of learning, to Stacy-as-co-learner. She refers to the students as co-learners, frequently catching herself and correcting her words as she talks.

Stacy’s mindfulness of the importance of language came through in the conversation as she hesitated or corrected herself with the words she used. Her attention to word choice falls in line with Swenson’s and Sims’ (2010) perspective: “Although it seems counterintuitive, the words we choose to use, either deliberately or by habit, actually may change the way we think” (p. 392). Gadamer (1975/1982) points out that “language is the middle ground in which understanding and agreement concerning the object takes place between two people” (p. 346). With her thoughtful use of the term “co-learner”, Stacy seems to be trying to re-frame her thinking.

Upon reflecting on the nursing curriculum revolution of the 1980’s and 1990’s, Tanner (1990) highlights some of the things that stood out for her. She suggests that “primacy of the teacher-student relationship” was one of those elements. The curriculum revolution provided an opportunity for transforming what happened in the learning environment through addressing the relationship between teachers and students:

Learning new ways of relating to students both constitutes a transformation in world view and facilitates this transformation. For example, once a faculty member begins to shift to a more egalitarian relationship in which a student’s life work experiences are valued, then some aspects of the behavioral model become untenable; it is no longer possible to embrace the notion of specifying all important objectives ahead of time. Nothing could be more challenging to the traditional paradigm,

specifically the teacher student relationship, than the notion of teachers as learners. (p. 298)

Many of the teachers in this study appreciate this transformation in relationships with students. For example, see Carolyn's story of valuing students' past experiences.

Narrative Pedagogy (as co-learning) is the *Bridge* so that teachers and students can gather in learning. Narrative Pedagogy *bridges* over:

- Questioning that closes down thinking
- Students learning in isolation
- Previous understanding of how learning happens
- Only teachers (not students) as directors of learning
- Traditional ways of thinking about ways of learning.

### ***Gathering in Learning: Making Teaching and Learning Visible***

Some suggest that teaching and learning are invisible to both students and teachers (Sims & Swenson, 2001; Diekelmann & Diekelmann, 2009). This invisible nature provides opportunities as well as challenges for those whose task it is to learn and to teach. Diekelmann and Diekelmann (2009) add to this understanding when they say "Human beings understand that they cannot master uncertainty. Understanding that learning is invisible, teachers act as if it is visible through their observational claims made for the efficacy of empirical observations" (p. 17). In other words, teachers act as though it is possible to measure learning (make it visible) by the way in which learning is tested using empiric methods, such as testing.

When something becomes unfamiliar, we begin to think about and understand it in new ways. Sims and Swenson (2001) state that much is to be gained in schooling,

learning, and teaching when methods are made unfamiliar and thereby making them more visible:

Assumptions [about teaching and learning] are, by their very nature, unquestioned or taken-for-granted truths. Heidegger's notions of things being "ready to hand" helps explain this. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger makes the argument that we use our everyday tools without having to think about their purposes. To examine the purpose of a tool, we must make it "unready to hand"—that is, we have to see it in a different light, or make it unfamiliar in order to question it. (p. 6).

By naming the assumptions, learning and teaching will be made visible as students and teachers gather in learning.

Lisa understands the value of making learning and teaching visible as she describes the importance of un-concealing her teaching. She believes that making learning visible aids students as she gathers with them in learning:

*I may give the impression that a community of learning might sound kind of "Polly Anna-ish" that everything is perfect and students are going to come and really want to learn. That's not always reality. . . Students can be unwilling to learn new ways of learning. For example, when you do a narrative in the classroom, some students want to know "Okay, where are you going with this? What am I supposed to know for the test? I'm not following you. Why does this matter to me?" I talk almost weekly in my class about why we are doing what we do in class. I'm very blatant about the learning process. I think that when you use Narrative Pedagogy, you need to be very explicit about what you are doing. . . . I think it is very important for us to be transparent to our students in what we are doing.*

*I had a bit of a problem the first semester that I changed my style of teaching and I didn't realize it until the end of the semester. I discovered that I hadn't made it clear to the students how I was teaching, what I was doing in the classroom. So, you need to be very transparent when you are using different methods of teaching and different learning philosophies.*

As Lisa discovered when things did not go so well in her first semester of inviting NP into the learning environment, it is important "to be very transparent when you are using different methods of teaching." She did not notice right away that things were not going

very well. She was so busy thinking about *doing* (teaching) that her focus turned away from learning. Lisa believes that being “blatant” enhances students’ learning experiences.

Lisa cautions that students are not always ready to be involved in the work of learning and that they are sometimes unhappy to have new ways of learning offered to them. At times it seems that they would rather just be told what they need to know for the test. Teachers may interpret this to be defiance or laziness on the part of the student. But perhaps students have never learned to think in this way and need to be offered an opportunity to see how new ways might provide a different type of learning/understanding. Lisa understands this. She learned it by experience when things did not go so well when she first invited this approach into the classroom.

As Lisa continues to think about being transparent or un-concealing teaching and learning, she observes that it is important to be clear to students how they might enhance their own learning:

*This is especially true when they are coming directly from high school where they are used to getting a list of things that they have to memorize. They are not used to being self-directed; they just don't understand how to do that.*

Lisa believes that this need for being explicit is because “they are not used to being self-directed; they just don’t understand how to do that.” Lisa’s observation agrees with what Knowles et al. (2005) write, “[high school graduates] have been conditioned to be dependent on teachers to teach them” (p. 117). They go on to suggest that students might experience a sort of “culture shock” when they first experience a learning-centered environment and may need some assistance learning how to be a student in that type of setting. Lisa follows Knowles et al.’s suggestions for aiding student transitions to adult learning by clearly articulating the differences between being teacher-directed and being

self-directed<sup>23</sup> in their learning. Lisa experienced difficulty when she began using this new approach, then she realized that part of the problem was that she failed to make her ways of teaching visible to the students. NP teachers must chip away at traditional ways of thinking about learning and teaching by making teaching and learning visible to students and teachers. (For example, see Lisa's earlier narrative about being blatant and Jody's upcoming description about how her class is different from other classes).

Narrative Pedagogy is not for everyone. Not all are comfortable with the ambiguity that may occur with this way of teaching. Stacy's school has an NP-centered curriculum; it is a new program and they have yet to graduate their first cohort. The conversation with Stacy for this study occurred at the end of the first semester of the program and she described the process of accepting students into the program as quite rigorous.

Since Stacy's is a learner-directed program, the teachers and administrators felt it was important to make clear the expectations for students, especially in regards to learning. To that end, applicants to the program read articles about NP, participated in interviews, wrote essays about their life experiences, and described the environments in which they believed they learned best. Despite making explicit the learning and teaching methods for the program, once they were in the program, not all of the students found this type of learning helpful. Stacy tells of one student that dropped out before the end of the first semester even though this student initially seemed to be one of the best equipped for success in the program.

*Since this program has such a unique approach to teaching and learning, we had a very stringent interview process for entry into the program. Students had to prepare a statement as to what their understanding of*

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<sup>23</sup> See section on self-directed learning later in this chapter.



*Narrative Pedagogy is. We thought that if they had to do that, they would have to understand Narrative Pedagogy enough so that there would be no surprises. Unfortunately, there were still surprises. . . .*

*We accepted 31 students into the first cohort of students, but unfortunately, one student has decided to not continue with the program. In the beginning, she seemed to be our strongest student; she has a master's degree in anthropology from an Ivy League school and she had Narrative Pedagogy down pat. But, she felt that she wanted more structure in her learning.*

Even when there is full disclosure and understanding appears to be complete, not everyone chooses or is able to participate in the type of learning environment that this pedagogy creates. Several things stand out in this story and it raises many questions. For example, does increased structure promote learning; do some students learn better with more structure; does this story raise questions about hidden assumptions in learning and teaching? While these are all worthwhile issues, the focus here is on the ways that NP makes learning and teaching visible. One way this is done is by making visible the hidden assumptions in learning and teaching.

**Assumptions.** Forneris and Peden-McAlpine (2006) suggest reflection as another way to reveal underlying assumptions. They suggest that this type of reflection occurs as a dialogue that is “an interactive process of evaluating perspectives and assumptions within context, in order to achieve situational understanding” (p. 2-3). This way of revealing or discovering assumptions requires intentionality and perseverance; identifying assumptions is not accomplished easily.

New ways of thinking and learning found in NP settings requires challenging the traditional assumptions students have of learning and teaching. According to Sims and Swenson (2001), some of the traditional assumptions that students have include:

1. The teacher is the main source and disseminator of knowledge. After teachers, the book is always right.

2. Learning equals memorizing the content.
3. Wondering and following your curious nature just wastes time.
4. All good work is fiercely individual (p. 10).

Even though teachers in this study have the language to talk about Narrative Pedagogy, some found it easy to slip back into conventional pedagogy language when talking about their experiences with NP. Jody provides an example of this as she describes her expectations of students in her classroom:

*My class is not about me telling you the things you need to know. My class is about you coming prepared, having read whatever is assigned and then we discuss this in context to make these topics (whatever the reading was about) contextually relevant, we make them come alive. We talk about people with these conditions in order for it to have relevance to you. If you haven't done the pre-work, if you haven't done the readings, class will be meaningless, you won't know what to listen for, and you won't know how to make sense of it. My class is very application-based; there is a lot of synthesis and a lot of application. The knowledge acquisition piece is assumed. Students have to have that but that's not where I'm spending my time teaching.*

While Jody is well-intentioned in making certain that students understand her assumptions, she falls into conventional pedagogy language. The use of conventional pedagogy language is neither good nor bad; its presence simply demonstrates how embedded this way of thinking and talking about learning and teaching is in our schools.

Whether in a traditional classroom or in a classroom where NP is present, “preparing for class is a taken-for-granted assumption . . . for both students and teachers” (Diekelmann, 2000, p. 291). Jody acknowledges this assumption and makes this explicit when she talks with students about the differences they will find in her class. By making explicit her expectations and naming assumptions in teaching and learning, she attempts to empower students as they take more responsibility for their own learning, but some of

the language (i.e., application-based, synthesis, knowledge acquisition) that she uses keeps her in the language of outcomes-based education.

A hidden assumption in higher education is that teachers and students have a shared understanding of the expectations for the learning environment, but this is not the case (Sims & Swenson, 2001). One way that teachers attempt to name these assumptions in both conventional and NP settings is by creating course syllabi. Johnson (2009) suggests that syllabi are *agreements* between teachers and students. Parkes and Harris (2002) take a bit more formal stance when they propose three purposes of the syllabus:

1. The syllabus as contract between teachers and students (it names the expected “behaviors of both parties” (p. 55))
2. The syllabus as a permanent record (it provides details about the course)
3. The syllabus as a learning tool (it suggests to students how to prepare for class and offers the types of campus resources that might be available to enhance learning).

Since students have access to the syllabus from the beginning of the course, teachers assume that students understand what experiences and learning opportunities will occur during the course. Even though the syllabus is reviewed with students at the beginning of the course, students and teachers may not have the same understanding of what will happen in the class. Narrative Pedagogy as converging conversations gathers students and teachers in common understanding so that even when misunderstandings about expectations occur, students feel safe asking questions. Narrative Pedagogy *bridges* over misunderstandings so that teachers and students can gather in learning.

Jody understands that making teaching and learning visible for students helps to uncover hidden assumptions.

*If you are visiting my class, you would instantly notice a difference from a traditional classroom. In order to get students to understand, I almost always have to spend the first class explaining how class is going to be because it is so different from what they typically experience.*

Just as Lisa did, Jody must make explicit for students the differences that they will find in her classroom. The importance of students understanding the expectations for learning in Jody's classroom is so great that she "almost always [has] to spend the first class explaining"; Lisa describes this as "being blatant." Jody talks with students about how they might think about preparing for class in order to get the most out of learning together. Jody hopes that students become self-directed and that they assume responsibility for more of their own learning. Narrative Pedagogy by its very nature empowers students to take charge of their learning by sharing the power that teachers have traditionally maintained (Diekelmann, 1992).

Jody and Lisa clearly point to the importance of making sure that students understand how learning occurs. Lisa also points out that students' previous ways of learning, especially in high school, may no longer be sufficient as they engage in new levels of learning in college. In other words, the ways of studying and learning used in high school will not provide the sort of deeper learning that nurses must engage in to be safe providers of care for patients.

The type of learning required to be a safe practitioner goes beyond the learning that students engage in when they memorize information in order to pass tests (Benner, et al., 2010). In many conventional settings, passing the course is accomplished by memorizing much of the content without truly learning it (Felder & Brent, 2005). The

amount of content that students must learn is fast out-pacing students' capacity to memorize and especially to learn (Diekelmann, 2002; Ironside, 2005a). Adding to the argument against simply memorizing facts, the Institute of Medicine (2011) suggests that "There simply are not enough hours in the day or years in an undergraduate program to continue compressing all available information into the curriculum" (p. 191). All of this shows the need for continued development and application of new approaches to learning and teaching. Students in higher education programs would benefit from a shift in focus from a content-centered paradigm to a learning-centered paradigm (Fink, 2003).

Making teaching and learning visible with Narrative Pedagogy is the *Bridge* connecting students and teachers with learning. Narrative Pedagogy *bridges* over:

- Invisibility of teaching and learning
- Hidden assumptions of teaching and learning
- Misunderstanding of expectations
- Memorization

### ***Gathering in Learning: Facilitators and Barriers to Learning***

***Facilitators to Learning.*** When teachers and students gather in learning, the type of learning environment impacts learning outcomes: "a learning environment that supports student growth and questioning is likely to reduce the incidence of problems [with students]" (Johnson, 2009, p. 33). Many of the teachers described ways in which NP facilitated learning; indeed, many of the narratives have offered examples of this. Angela describes the safe learning environment that she and her students co-create. She believes that this approach gathers students in an environment where learning is facilitated and some of the barriers to learning are removed.

*What's in it for me is that I feel much closer to my students because it takes barriers away. They trust me. It creates a safe place for learning. A learning environment can't be hostile, it can't be punitive. When you use Narrative Pedagogy, all of that is gone. It puts all of us on the same playing field in which even the students' perspectives are equally valued; we recognize and acknowledge that with each other when we're in our dialogues. So what Narrative Pedagogy does for me is that it makes teaching fun and it challenges my thinking. It focuses us on what is important or meaningful.*

Angela expresses her opinion that taking away barriers and finding ways to encourage trust makes her “feel much closer to my students”; they remove the distractions that keep the focus away from what is important and meaningful.

Angela would understand the type of learning environment that Johnson (2009) describes: “Faculty members who treat students with respect, provide honest and frequent communication about progress toward course goals and objectives, and are fair and considerate in evaluating performance are less likely to encounter student challenges” (p. 33). For Angela, one of the elements of creating a safe learning environment involves developing a place where “students’ perspectives are equally valued.” She believes that this enhances learning for the students. For Angela, NP keeps teaching fun and challenging because she is constantly being challenged to think in new ways. Narrative Pedagogy is the *Bridge* to new ways of thinking about creating a positive learning environment as teachers and students gather in learning.

***Barriers to Learning.*** In this descriptive narrative, Monica tells of teaching a course on test-taking strategies for students who are struggling in a nursing course. She describes how she invited students to tell a story about a time that they discovered they had an up-coming test. Initially, students resisted writing and sharing their stories, but Monica has found a way to create an environment where students feel safe in reading

their stories. Monica models for students what it is like to read and share her story. Once Monica reads her story, students begin to feel safe enough to read theirs for the class:

*By the end of the course, the students talked about how less afraid they were; they were still somewhat afraid, but the fear was so much less and having to think about the test constantly was so much less. I really think the stories were the precipitating factor for changing the way they thought about the class. . . . I think it [Narrative Pedagogy] has really engendered community for this class.*

Students do not choose to be in this course; they are required to enroll in the course in order to stay in the nursing program. Whether true or not, these students feel they have been labeled the “slow” ones. As the teacher, Monica has many barriers to overcome as she and students gather in learning: students are fearful of tests; they are in the class because they are mandated to be there (i.e., they may not want to be there); and they are stigmatized for being in the class.

Narrative Pedagogy is only one of many approaches that Monica uses in this course to try to help students become more successful in test-taking for all of their courses. She invites NP into the class in an attempt to create a sense of community in the class. She wants to help students understand that they are working together to deal with their issues with test-taking. This approach allows both Monica and the students to develop a sense of community and new ways of thinking about testing and test-taking.

Palmer (2007) suggests some inherent barriers which exist within academia between students, teachers, and learning: “A grading system that separates teachers from students . . . competition that makes students and teachers alike wary of their peers, and a bureaucracy that puts faculty and administration at odds” (p. 36). Implied in Monica’s story is the idea that fear interferes with learning or at least with test-taking; fear is a barrier to learning (Sprinkle, Hunt, Simonds, & Comadena, 2006). When NP is present,

the perspectives of both teacher and students are honored and respected; this type of mutuality in the learning environment creates an atmosphere of trust. Creating this type of environment makes fear, a barrier to learning, less likely to be found (Sprinkle et al., 2006). Narrative Pedagogy provides the *Bridge* over barriers to learning and facilitates learning as teachers and students gather in learning.

### ***Gathering in Learning: Learning that is Other-Than-for-Cognitive-Gain***

A type of learning that is other-than-for-cognitive-gain is caring. Lisa teaches in a private school of nursing that uses a learner-centered approach to teaching. Lisa talks about how NP *bridges* the phenomenon of caring for teachers, students, and staff as they gather in the ceremony of the blessing of the hands at Blessing-Rieman College.

*I read recently about the blessing of hands at Blessing-Rieman College. They brought everybody in, teachers, students, and staff. They talked in small groups about caring and what it means to be cared for. At the end, they had the blessing of hands. . . .*

*I think what spoke so much to me was the way that the caring aspect was brought in; that's what we [nurses] are doing with people. We are caring for everybody, no matter what part of nursing you go into, caring is the common thread throughout every single program. Caring is not something tested on NCLEX; we don't test for caring but it's something that all of our students are learning.*

As she reflects on a ceremony at Blessing-Rieman College, Lisa focuses on the phenomenon of caring. She describes how a shared experience, the blessing of hands ceremony and activities surrounding it, gathers students, teachers, and staff as they explore the meaning of caring. Lisa points out that caring is not tested on registration exams, but caring is a key element of nursing that is expected of all graduates. Tanner (1990) describes caring as that which “allows the nurse, or the teacher, to understand and to act on the concerns and issues of their clientele” (p. 297). The phenomenon of caring



belongs in the affective domain<sup>24</sup> which comprises “attitudes, beliefs and values, and feelings and emotions” (Scheckel, 2009, p. 164). Lisa believes that NP gathers students and teachers in learning about caring, a type of learning that is other-than-for-cognitive-gain.

Diekelmann (1993) suggests that “the danger in the view of ‘learning-as-cognitive-gain’ is that what matters . . . becomes lost as students are schooled to enter practice with a corresponding view of applying content (rules) to practice” (p. 246). In other words, by focusing attention on measuring learning that shows up only as cognitive gain, other kinds of learning important for graduates of nursing to embody are ignored. Utley (2011) suggests that “educators typically emphasize [the] cognitive and psychomotor domains of learning that are easily measured. However, learning in the affective domain is equally important because it impacts the student’s philosophy, values, and manner of interaction with clients and families” (p. 163). Additionally, affective learning impacts students’ socialization into nursing practice (Utley, 2011, p. 163). Lisa understands this as she describes the way in which one school uses Narrative Pedagogy as the *Bridge* bringing teachers and students together with the phenomenon of caring – a type of learning that is other-than-for-cognitive gain.

***Reflective Learning.*** Narrative Pedagogy shows up in multiple ways in the learning environment (Diekelmann, 2001). Reflective learning might show up in an NP classroom or clinical setting as other-than-for-cognitive-gain learning. Kristi believes that

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<sup>24</sup> Bloom is credited with describing three domains of learning: cognitive, affective, and psychomotor (Driscoll, 2005). Even though Bloom’s taxonomies and Narrative Pedagogy are from different paradigms, the language from Bloom’s work finds its way into everyday language within schools of nursing and will be used in this dissertation.

through writing, reading, thinking, and reflecting, students gain a new depth of understanding.

*The students write a reflective paper every week and they read them out loud. When they read these papers aloud, it means that they are thinking about it again and then reflecting on it verbally. It's part of the learning process and I think students really enjoy it because it's practical and it's reality for them. These are experiences and we learn from experiences.*

Kristi gathers students into learning by asking them to write reflection papers about what they have learned in class that week. She understands by experience that this type of reflective writing engages students at a deep level. “Deep learning can only be made known as it comes to the surface. Reflection enables that process through the ability to construct, deconstruct, and reconstruct an experience, which involves learned skill” (Sherwood & Horton-Deutsch, 2012, p. 10). Utley (2011) says that reflective writing does more than simply record knowledge, it allows the writer to “explore what is known and not known, so that a clearer understanding is reached” (p. 197).

Forneris and Peden-McAlpine (2006) provide the following way of thinking about how dialogue, reflection, and reading out loud contribute to the deeper level of learning into which Kristi wants to guide her students:

Dialogue in the form of critical questioning (e.g., verbalizing and questioning sources of knowledge, past experience, assumptions, biases, plans for action), is key to operationalizing critical thinking in practice. . . . Thinking out loud fosters questioning that makes comparisons or interrelates different types of information, and/or outline conclusions. . . . Dialogue then becomes a critical conversation. Critical conversations help students integrate their prior learning and practical experiences. They move from telling what they know to why they know. Dialogue opens the door for students to integrate multiple perspectives into their thinking. . . . The outcome is a process of critical thinking that achieves situational understanding. (p. 15)

As Kristi gathers students in reflection and dialogue, integration of multiple perspectives resulting in situational understanding can be achieved. Because of the complex nature of the clinical setting, nursing graduates must embody this reflective way of thinking in order to be safe clinicians.

A goal of nursing education is to create practitioners who are able to think clinically, which ultimately results in safer clinicians. In the Carnegie study on nursing education, Benner et al. (2010) listed the ability to reason clinically as one of the four essential shifts that nursing education must make: Nurse educators should “shift from an emphasis on critical thinking to an emphasis on clinical reasoning and multiple ways of thinking that include critical thinking” (p. 84). They suggest that by developing clinical reasoning skills, graduates will be better able to make adjustments in their thinking and action as the clinical situation changes. Critical thinking skills are still needed, but so are clinical, “creative, scientific, and formal criterial reasoning” (Benner et al., 2010, p. 85).

Reflective learning is “learning from experience by considering what we know, believe, and value within the context of a particular event in our work” (Sherwood & Horton-Deutsch, 2012, p. 17). Sherwood and Horton-Deutsch (2012) suggest that critical reflection, another type of reflection, leads to a deeper way of “solving problems that arise in practice” (p. 15). Kuiper and Pesut (2004) differentiate between reflective thinking and critical thinking. They define reflective thinking as “careful consideration and examination of issues of concern related to an experience” (p. 384) and define critical thinking as “probing challenges to promote reasoning with a questioning, critical attitude” (p. 382). Teachers in this study want students to participate in activities that lead

to the development of reflective thinking. Kristi recounts an assignment that she does with students that invites reflective thinking:

*Students write a journey paper at the end of the course about their journey in the course, their experience learning in the course, and what stood out to them. . . . It's a reflection on their experience of learning in the course and it is ungraded. They respond to prompts such as: what stands out to you and what surprised you? They might think about "when I first started taking this course I was expecting this, but then this happened" or "what worried me about this course was . . . ." They share this 3 page paper with the others in their group. If it is a clinical course, they bring it with them to the last day of clinical and read the paper out loud. I write one too; I share my experiences teaching and learning in the course.*

The journey paper assignment asks students to think about and reflect on the learning that they experienced during the course. And, since they share the paper with everyone in the course, the thinking and dialogue become a shared community experience.

According to Kuiper and Pesut (2004), "the research that has measured the critical thinking skills of interpretation, analysis, inference, explanation and evaluation using various models has not been able to predict the outcome of their development from various levels of nursing education" (p. 383). In other words, predicting what will enhance development of critical thinking, and more importantly clinical reasoning, remains elusive. Graduates of all of the schools represented by teachers in this study must be able to pass registration exams before they are allowed entry into practice. Therefore, schools must continue to find ways of assessing learning in all three domains – affective, cognitive, and psychomotor.

***Self-Directed Learning.*** Benner et al. (2010) suggest another type of learning that is other-than-for-cognitive-gain: self-directed learning. They observe that, given the complex nature of healthcare, nursing graduates must be prepared to "enter practice ready to continue learning, often through self-directed learning that can be adapted to any site

of practice, from school nursing to intensive care nursing” (p. 1). Many of the teachers in this study said that students needed to be self-directed learners. Emma observes that students in her school need different qualities to be successful:

*Students in our program need to be more motivated and self-directed in their own learning; we don't just provide it for them.*

Lisa describes ways that NP invites different ways of thinking for students:

*Narrative Pedagogy creates a different way of thinking because they [students] have to think more about being self-directed in their knowledge acquisition. . . It's about the student being self-directed, learning from each other, and learning how and who to ask for help.*

Stacy agrees with Emma and Lisa as she describes the qualities of students who are expected to be successful at her school:

*This is a very self-directed program; you have to be very self-disciplined and self-motivated as a student to be successful in this program.*

While Emma's and Stacy's schools have an NP-centered curriculum, Lisa's does not. But all of these teachers observe that this approach invites students to be self-directed in their learning. To be successful, students must be “motivated and self-directed,” but they are not left on their own to discover how to develop these qualities. Emma, Stacy, and Lisa attempt to aid students as they find their way into self-directed learning. They do this by modeling ways of learning for students and by creating environments in which reflective thinking and learning are valued. To enhance self-directed learning, teachers must be less controlling and more facilitating (Utley, 2011). For adult learners, the locus of control for learning lies with the learner (Knowles et al., 2005, p. 176); even so, teachers must remain involved in students' self-directed learning (Ramsey & Clark, 2009).

Lisa expresses the same concern that many teachers have: finding the best ways to let students learn. She feels that NP helps with that concern. Heidegger (1968/2008)

reminds us that “teaching is more difficult than learning because what teaching calls for is this: to let learn” (p. 380). Since she discovered NP, Lisa has felt that it creates better ways to let learning happen.

*I went through this transformation when I started in nursing education from being one of those people that puts everything on a PowerPoint to finding ways to help my students learn what they needed to learn; it wasn't just about me telling them what they needed to know. It's been quite a journey in the past two years since I've learned about Narrative Pedagogy.*

Lisa knows that there is more to teaching than dispensing information to students. While lecture and visual presentations (such as PowerPoint) can be helpful for students at times, Lisa looks for ways to engage students beyond learning as dispensing of information. Ultimately, Lisa wants to help them become self-directed and lifelong learners.

***Lifelong Learning.*** Lifelong learning is another type of learning that is other-than-for-cognitive gain. The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) and the American Medical Association (AMA), in their joint report on lifelong learning, link lifelong learning and continuing education, identifying them as “essential elements to healthcare reform” (AACN, 2010, p. 15). The report also states that “it is expected that basic health professional education produces an accountable professional with learning skills internalized as a core value leading to optimal knowledge management, self-appraisal, information retrieval, and critical appraisal” (pp. 18-19). The ultimate goal is that graduates will prioritize and embrace life-long learning that continues throughout their careers.

Lisa recognizes the value of lifelong learning for students. In this description, Lisa thinks about why she invites NP into her learning environments.

*I hope that they [students] are gaining a lifelong learning kind of philosophy by learning things this way. Narrative Pedagogy draws on the stories, draws on our past experiences in clinicals, and draws from our textbooks. Then we talk about it and grow from there. Students look at the information in a different way when you teach them that way. . . . Narrative Pedagogy concerns itself with giving students the tools and connections that they can carry throughout life with them; it creates a stance of nurse as a lifelong learner.*

Brown et al. (2009) describe a mixed-methods study examining nurse educators' approach to teaching and learning that found over half of the participants expected students to gain lifelong learning skills. Recognition of the need for lifelong learning is essential for nursing graduates as they seek to enter the rapidly changing world of health care (Utley, 2011). Teachers in this study want to help students achieve these attributes as they gather with students in learning.

***Assessing Learning to Reveal Learning.*** How do teachers know when students are participating in learning other-than-for-cognitive-gain? Diekelmann (1993) observes that these types of questions “dominate nursing education” (p. 246). When Emma and the teachers at her school decided to create an NP-centered curriculum, they understood that surprises would develop along the way. Emma tells the following story about the time a teacher came to her expressing the fear she and her students shared about whether or not they were learning all that they needed to learn:

*At first, the students were really excited and there were all sorts of discussions among them. But, as time went on and we got closer to exam time, students started to feel really anxious. We had a narrative session and divided into groups. This one teacher had a really difficult group. She started the group with “How did you get along with your learning this week?” The students went round one by one and each one was in tears saying things like: “I can’t do this, this is too much,” “you’ve got to tell me how much to learn,” “this is just a waste of time,” and so on. This teacher . . . came out of that group and said to me “I just can’t do this anymore. These students are not learning. How am I going to feel when they all fail the exam because they will, they haven’t been learning the*

*right stuff. They've been discussing all sorts of other things, but they haven't been doing the proper learning." I was concerned for both the teacher and the students and I thought, "Oh, what have we done? Is this really worth doing?"*

Emma raises at least three issues in this story:

1. Fear that students are not learning enough.
2. How to assess learning that is other-than-for-cognitive-gain?
3. How do we really know when students are learning?

Emma finds ways of moving beyond these concerns of students “not learning enough” or “not learning the right content.” She knows that the students in her program must be able to pass registration exams before they will be allowed into professional practice. The teacher and students fear that they are not learning with the depth needed to be safe, competent health care providers. Many authors (Ironsides, 2004; Benner et al., 2010; IOM, 2011) acknowledge that the volume of what graduates must know to enter safely into practice outpaces the ability to learn during their time in college. This story reveals the teacher’s, students’, and Emma’s concern: Will an NP-based curriculum really prepare students for professional practice? Narrative Pedagogy scholars share Emma’s concern. This question will be addressed in Chapter IV.

Another question that Emma’s story raises is “How do we know if students are learning?” Utley (2011) suggests that teachers should consider using a variety of methods to assess learning because “as participants in a caring, practice-based profession, ANEs [Academic Nurse Educators] rely heavily on the ability to develop the student’s cognitive, affective, and psychomotor learning” (p. 78). Standardized, NCLEX-RN style tests are most effective in assessing learning for cognitive gain, so other assessments are needed to determine learning in the other domains of affective and psychomotor (Utley,



2011). Wiggins and McTighe (2006) distinguish between assessing learning to make certain that students understand and assessing learning in order to assign a grade.

Teachers, including Emma, who teach in an NP-centered learning environment, should consider both of these reasons when deciding *how* to assess learning; each type of learning assessment requires a separate approach.

Beyond the standardized testing approach, a variety of Classroom Assessment Techniques (CAT) have been described and are available for use in the classroom (Angelo & Cross, 1993; Wiggins & McTighe, 2006). The wide variety of CAT designs allows for:

1. Individualization of implementation.
2. Teacher determines the area for assessment.
3. Choosing an assessment compatible with the time available to conduct the assessment.

These assessment strategies serve the dual purpose of informing the teacher of student learning and the development of metacognitive skills in students by inviting them to think about and reflect on what they are learning (Utley, 2011). Thinking about what they are learning was very important to the teachers in this study as they gathered with students in learning. Teachers in an NP-centered learning environment might use a variety of CATs as they invite students to reflect on their learning:

- Minute paper and muddiest point – at the end of class, students have a couple of minutes to respond to: what was your most significant learning; what questions remain; and what was the least clear (i.e., the muddiest point)
- Goals listing and ranking – students list and then rank what they hope to gain from the class/course
- RSQC2 – think about the last class. **R**ecall the most important words/phrases; **S**ummarize what someone should know that happened;

write any **Q**uestion(s) that remain after the last class; write an evaluative **C**omment; and **C**onnect the main points of last class with the major goals of the course

- Reflection paper – students write a brief paper (i.e., usually a few sentences long) reflecting on how well they are accomplishing specific course goals or standards. (Selected and Adapted from Angelo & Cross, 1993)

Reflective learning activities may be a learning strategy but Emma describes how they are also used as a *learning assessment* in her NP-centered curriculum. Students in Emma’s classroom engage in reflective learning activities as one way of assessing learning.

*Students write a lot of reflection papers where they reflect on their learning and clinical practice. Those reflections show how they are meeting specific practice standards. . . . We really want to work on the way we assess learning because the assessments that we do are the same as found in traditional settings. But, when you have the exit exams and exams are what students have to pass in order to register, that is the way we will test. There is a tension because the kind of learning that you get from a narrative or from a Narrative Pedagogical approach isn’t easily examinable.*

Emma’s school is in a country where the system requires exit exams, not only at the end of the program, but also upon completion of each course in the curriculum. The exit exams are multiple-choice-type questions and Emma states that “a Narrative Pedagogical approach isn’t easily examinable.” Even though this might be the prevailing thought among students, and to a certain extent among teachers, teachers who invite NP into their learning environments must keep asking the question: for what are we testing?

Narrative Pedagogy gathers students and teachers in learning in all domains.

Narrative Pedagogy is the *Bridge* for students and teachers with learning. Narrative Pedagogy *bridges* over:

- Valuing only learning for cognitive-gain

- Assessing only learning as cognitive-gain
- The understanding that learners are empty vessels waiting to have knowledge poured into them by the teacher.

## **Theme 2: Inclining Toward Inviting**

### **Narrative Pedagogy into Teaching**

A second theme that emerged in this study of teacher's experience with Narrative Pedagogy is Inclining Toward Inviting Narrative Pedagogy Into Teaching. Heidegger (1968/2008) developed his idea of inclining toward something in his essay "What Calls for Thinking?" where he points out that, as humans, we incline toward something only when it inclines toward us:

For we are capable of doing only what we are inclined to do. And, again, we truly incline toward something only when it in turn inclines toward us, toward our essential being, by appealing to our essential being as what holds us there. . . . What keeps us in our essential being holds us only so long, however, as we for our part keep holding on to what holds us. And we keep holding on to it by not letting it out of our memory. (p. 369)

Heidegger's idea of inclining does not psychologize or take a spiritual understanding.

This notion of inclining should be understood within the context of Heidegger's quest for understanding *beings* (as entities – *Seiendes*, a noun), *Being* (that it exists – *sein*, a verb) (Collins & Selina, 2006), and humans who are capable of thinking and inclining. "Only when we are so inclined toward what in itself is to be thought about, only then are we capable of thinking" (Heidegger, 1968/2008, p. 370). In other words, it is only when teachers think about teaching with Narrative Pedagogy that they are able to incline toward inviting Narrative Pedagogy into their teaching environments. The commonly held understandings of "incline" aid in this discussion: as "*intransitive verb*: to lean, tend, or become drawn toward an opinion or course of conduct; to deviate from a line,

direction, or course; as *transitive verb*: to have influence on” (www.merriam-webster.com).

The teachers in this study have a variety of ways in which they describe how Narrative Pedagogy inclines toward them and how they incline toward inviting Narrative Pedagogy into teaching. Some of the phrases that participants used addressing the theme of inclining are “It’s who I am”; “my innate use of Narrative Pedagogy that was deeply rooted”; “It’s consistent with what I value and believe about teaching and learning”; and “Narrative Pedagogy keeps pulling me back.” After hermeneutic analysis of the conversations, several sub-themes were constructed:

- Inclining Toward a Philosophy of Teaching Hermeneutically
- Inclining Toward a Method of Teaching
- Inclining Toward Teaching with Narrative Pedagogy
- Inclining Toward Preserving Narrative Pedagogy

This section examines each of these sub-themes within the context of “Inclining Toward Inviting Narrative Pedagogy Into Teaching” while continuing to explicate the pattern of Narrative Pedagogy as *Bridge*.

### **Inclining Toward a Philosophy of Teaching Hermeneutically**

During the conversations for this study, many of the teachers referred to their philosophy of teaching. At times, they described developing a philosophy of teaching as a process (Lisa: “what my philosophy of nursing education was coming to be”) and as an individual philosophy that may or may not align with the school’s philosophy of education (Emma: “Once Narrative Pedagogy is in your philosophy as a teacher, then it’s who you are”). Diekelmann and Diekelmann (2009) suggest that “hermeneutic phenomenology and Narrative Pedagogy belong to each other” (p. 297). In this way, they propose that developing a philosophy of teaching hermeneutically might more

appropriately be referred to as enacting hermeneutic phenomenology enabling Narrative Pedagogy:

The enacting of hermeneutic phenomenology calls forth Narrative Pedagogy, a research-based nursing pedagogy. . . . The enacting of hermeneutic phenomenology lets schooling learning teaching as a co-occurring phenomenon show itself such that it can be called forth as a unitary theme. . . . *Inseparable from its method, Narrative Pedagogy can only show itself as enabled when it is enacted as hermeneutic phenomenology.* The pathway of this method, often referred to as philosophical or phenomenological hermeneutics should not be conflated with the restrictive scientific sense of method as mere research design and data analysis. (Diekelmann & Diekelmann, 2009, p. 297)

Staying true to the language used by participants, the phrase “philosophy of teaching hermeneutically”, rather than “enacting hermeneutic phenomenology enabling Narrative Pedagogy” will be used in this work. Teaching hermeneutically, in this instance, means teaching reflectively and interpretively<sup>25</sup>.

As teachers consider what pedagogical approach they will invite into their teaching environment, they must consider their philosophy of teaching. “A philosophy statement raises questions, describes beliefs, and explores basic issues faced by nurse educators as they explore the relationship of human beings to their world” (Csokasy, 2009, p. 105). Developing a philosophy of teaching may seem unimportant to many teachers, but, as Csokasy (2009) points out, when no philosophy of education exists, “tradition and past practice continue to be the prevailing forces driving the educational process” (p. 116). In other words, when teachers have no philosophy of teaching, teaching remains unchanged – teachers continue to teach using the same methods they have always used.

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<sup>25</sup> See Ch. I and Appendix H.

Emma has been teaching in an NP-centered curriculum for a number of years. Prior to inviting this approach into her teaching and learning environments, she experienced two different pedagogies. As a student, she learned within a conventional system; as a teacher, her first teaching position was in a system where she used Problem-based Learning (PBL). Then she discovered NP and found a method of teaching that works for her. As Emma reflects on the question “Could you ever walk away from Narrative Pedagogy?” she realizes that she no longer has the option of “walking away” or of “not walking away”; Emma inclines toward Narrative Pedagogy because Narrative Pedagogy inclines toward her:

*Could I ever walk away from Narrative Pedagogy? That’s an interesting question! Once Narrative Pedagogy is in your philosophy as a teacher, then it’s who you are, isn’t it? Even if I worked in another university or institution where it wasn’t a part of their philosophy, it would always be a part of mine. I think that will always be how I am as a teacher. Even if changes are made to the Narrative Pedagogy-centered curriculum itself, I think that the philosophy of Narrative Pedagogy will be sustained; at least I hope so.*

Emma says “Once Narrative Pedagogy is in your philosophy as a teacher, then it’s who you are.” She points to the individual nature of developing a philosophy of teaching. Schaefer and Zygmunt (2003) point out that “philosophies [of teaching] are not universal; each faculty member has a personal belief system that provides the basis for a professional belief system” (p. 243). Emma recognizes that developing a philosophy of teaching and learning is a personal thing that doesn’t change easily, even when leaving one institution to teach in a different institution. In fact, Emma thinks that it might be possible to teach at a school whose philosophy is different from the teacher’s personal philosophy – “Even if I worked in another university or institution where it wasn’t a part of their philosophy, it would always be a part of mine.” She also points out that once this

pedagogy becomes a part of your philosophy as a teacher, “then it’s who you are.” This describes the idea of inclining – being drawn toward.

When developing a philosophy of teaching, some authors (Haw, 2006; Utley, 2011) suggest that consideration should be given to the theory of learning<sup>26</sup> that most closely matches the philosophy of the individual teacher (Haw, 2006). Another aspect that teachers should consider in developing their philosophy of teaching concerns the qualities that the teacher believes students should embody. Teachers need a “philosophical framework that allows” the development of those qualities (Peters, 2000).

Lisa has been teaching nursing full time for about five years and has been inviting NP into her learning environments for only the last two years. Her philosophy developed out of her experience with teaching and research about teaching and learning that she did as a part of her doctoral studies. She learned of this pedagogy as a part of her doctoral studies and almost immediately felt the pull, or felt inclined toward Narrative Pedagogy:

*When I started reading about Narrative Pedagogy, it seemed to correlate with what my philosophy of nursing education was coming to be. I think that I was using it before I knew what it was and I think that others at my school use it and they don’t realize it yet. I think that the Concernful Practices of Narrative Pedagogy is who I am. I have a personality that is very open to students, their suggestions, and what they are thinking. I’m not someone that says “Hey, I’m the teacher; you need to listen to what I say.” That’s just not my personality. I have a more democratic style, I don’t know if that’s the right word or not. The kind of relationship that I have with students is more of an equal-exchange relationship. It’s not about me being the all-knowing professor; it’s about us having a relationship and me helping you learn in the best way that you can.*

Lisa describes developing a philosophy of teaching and learning as being a process. She talks about some of her own attributes that correlate with the Concernful Practices of Narrative Pedagogy making it possible for her to incline toward Narrative Pedagogy.

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<sup>26</sup> See Chapter I for explication of theories of learning.

As she discovered NP as both strategy and comporment with students, Lisa realized that it “correlate[s] with what my philosophy of nursing education was *coming* to be.” In saying this, she recognizes the evolving nature of the early stages of developing a philosophy of teaching and learning. Because this approach offers a new way of thinking about teaching, Narrative Pedagogy as reflective practice is the *Bridge* enabling teachers as they develop a philosophy of teaching.

Lisa inclines toward Narrative Pedagogy because it inclines toward her. Since she is relatively new to teaching, Lisa began teaching without a clearly developed philosophy of teaching; her philosophy of teaching continues to evolve. Having a clearly defined philosophy of teaching allows the teacher to choose a pedagogical approach congruent with their philosophy of teaching and learning. Teachers often teach using the methods that they experienced as a student, without making a deliberate decision about how they will engage in teaching and learning (Benner et al., 2010).

Haw (2006) suggests that significant disagreement in teachers of nursing exists between “those who support the industrial-age teacher-centric educational paradigm versus those supporting the learner-centric active learning educational paradigm” (p. 57). Perhaps Emma and some of her co-teachers experience this difference in world-view as she tells of her surprise that other teachers don’t experience NP in the same way that she does:

*Another surprise for me is teachers who don’t come on board with Narrative Pedagogy. For me, I can’t understand why you wouldn’t. Why wouldn’t you come round to Narrative Pedagogy? A teacher might say “It’s a complete waste of time. Why should I have to have the students do that in my course? I’d rather that the students learn from the textbook.” That sort of thing was a surprise to me.*



Emma recognizes differences in philosophical stances between herself and her co-teachers; or, perhaps they have not yet even thought about a philosophy of teaching. Emma understands that variations in world-views exist and she does not place greater importance on her way of thinking than the perspective of another. In recognizing these differences, she owns her world-view and understands that her surprise when others have a different response reflects as much on her as it does on the other person.

Teachers often have their own preconceived ideas about teaching and learning. Because of her previous understanding of what it means to be a teacher, Carolyn thought that she could never teach.

*The one thing I thought I would never do in my life was to teach and I realized that it was because I could not get up in front of a class and lecture. It just was not in me to do that. Narrative Pedagogy has worked so well for me because now I can actually teach. When I first started teaching full time, I taught a couple of seminar classes and Narrative Pedagogy worked very well. I would never walk away from it; I could never consider turning back. I think it is the absolute best way you could teach nursing.*

After discovering a new way to teach, Carolyn expresses her commitment to NP because it matches her philosophy of teaching; in addition, her assumptions of what it meant to be a teacher were challenged. Carolyn's thinking was challenged when she discovered that being a teacher did not mean that she had to lecture; somehow, she had come to think that teaching meant lecturing. Carolyn does not say that lecture is a bad thing, she simply indicates that "it was not in" her to lecture. Lecture can be a helpful strategy in the classroom and it can be an efficient way to deliver a large amount of content in a short period of time (Young & Diekelmann, 2002).

Fortunately for Carolyn and her students, she discovered that she *could* teach. The institution of nursing education needs to find ways of attracting more teachers such as

Carolyn. Benner et al. (2010) and the IOM (2011) call attention to the increased need for additional nursing faculty, primarily as a result of the aging of the current teachers in nursing. Benner et al. (2010) suggest that more might be attracted to teaching if they enjoyed learning when they were students. By drawing this connection, Benner et al. propose that this might be another motivation for teachers to find engaging ways to invite students into learning. When Carolyn challenged her own assumptions about teaching, she discovered a new opportunity – teaching.

Narrative Pedagogy is the *Bridge* for teachers as they incline toward a philosophy of teaching hermeneutically. Narrative Pedagogy *bridges* over:

- Teacher-centered pedagogies
- Distractions from developing a philosophy of teaching
- Narrow focus of what teaching can be

### **Inclining Toward a Method of Teaching**

In addition to congruence between a teacher’s theory of learning and their philosophy of teaching, there should be congruence between the theory of learning and the *method* of teaching, or pedagogy (Utley, 2011). Ironside (2001) suggests that we should re-direct our thinking about pedagogy as a *method* of teaching to thinking of pedagogy as “a way of thinking about and comporment within education” (p. 73).

Agreeing with Ironside, Macedo (2000/2009), in his introduction to Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, provides two understandings of pedagogy: pedagogy as a method of teaching and pedagogy as a philosophy. This paper takes the stance that both have a place in the discussion of teaching and learning.

As teachers consider inclining toward a method of teaching, they must be mindful of the tasks that teachers are called to do. Kahlil Gibran in *The Prophet* writes of the task of the teacher:

No man can reveal to you aught but that which already lies half asleep in the dawning of your knowledge.

The teacher who walks in the shadow of the temple, among his followers, gives not of his wisdom but rather of his faith and lovingness.

If he is indeed wise he does not bid you enter the house of his wisdom, but rather leads you to the threshold of your own mind. (Gibran, 1923/1986, p. 56-57)

Gibran points toward what many teachers in this study observed: the task of a teacher is not to dispense knowledge or even to tell students what to think and how to be, but instead, the task of a teacher is to help students discover new knowledge for themselves.

Narrative Pedagogy as narrative telling (strategy) invites students to engage with teachers in new ways of teaching.

Participants in this study described Narrative Pedagogy as a strategy and as a way of being (comportment) with students. Jody describes inclining toward NP as comportment before she inclined toward NP as a strategy:

*Even though I didn't work in education for a long time after I finished my master's degree, I still used Narrative Pedagogy when I was working with medical students. The medical students told me that the way I worked with them was so much different than how other preceptors worked with them. What they were talking about was my innate use of Narrative Pedagogy that was deeply rooted in me from back in the time that I was in graduate school [studying with Nancy Diekelmann]. Narrative Pedagogy was, from the beginning, not simply about teaching. It was about a way of being and also a way of talking about our practice, talking about nursing. At first when I started teaching, Narrative Pedagogy was really innate for me. It was something that I did without really thinking about it.*

Jody describes her “innate” use of this way of being and attributes that to her years of study and *experiencing* Narrative Pedagogy with Diekelmann as it was being developed. Jody did not consciously set out to take an NP-approach with students, but because of her positive experiences with this pedagogy as a student, she used that same way when she worked with medical students. Eventually, when she became a classroom teacher, she made a deliberate decision to use NP as a strategy.

As a clinical teacher, Jody taught as she had been taught; but she had the advantage of understanding NP from a theoretical perspective before she actively chose to include it in her teaching. She describes how she was initially unaware that she was doing anything different as she worked with students. Students brought this difference in comportment to Jody’s attention as she worked with them as a clinical preceptor. After completing her master’s degree, she went into clinical practice where she preceptored medical students and advanced practice nursing students. These students told Jody how much different she was in the way that she worked with them.

In this descriptive narrative, Jody tells us that NP is more than just about teaching; “It was about a way of being” with students. Narrative Pedagogy is more than just a strategy to be used in the classroom. It is a way of being between teachers and students. Diekelmann and Diekelmann (2009) note that “Entities and humans must mutually belong to each other in order for there to be schooling at all” (p. 205). Schooling is more than simply an educative experience:

It is our interpretive pathway that calls into question schooling as the practices and dialogical experiences of teaching and learning that occur within schools or any positing which asserts that schooling is merely an educative practice that places undifferentiated phenomena into some notion of a container in order to be encapsulated therein. (p. 209)

In other words, teaching and learning are more than just a discrete set of skills and information to be learned; they are the sum of interpretation, thinking-saying, and converging conversations between teachers and students.

In his text on pedagogy, van Manen (1991a) points out that becoming a good teacher requires more than reading a textbook on teaching strategies. He suggests that one can have all of the “knowledge” and know the proper skill-set to be a teacher and still fail to be a good teacher:

A pedagogical text like this one should not be composed and studied as if it were a technical handbook that specifies effective procedures for the productive management of learning environments. Rather, a pedagogical text needs to possess an inspirational quality together with a narrative structure that invites critical reflection and possibilities for insight and that leads to a personal appropriation of a moral intuition. It is possible to learn all the techniques of instruction but to remain pedagogically unfit as a teacher. (p. 9)

van Manen proposes that good teachers do not develop from formal education but rather from a “personal embodiment of a pedagogical thoughtfulness” (van Manen, p. 9). What Lisa describes in this next narrative might be what van Manen was referring to with his idea of “pedagogical thoughtfulness”:

*I made a deliberate decision to use Narrative Pedagogy as a teaching strategy when I started using narratives. That was hard for me to do because I'm not one that can think right off the top of my head. I have to have some structure and know what I'm talking about. For me, doing narratives was a leap and I had to learn how to do that in a classroom.*

Jody and Lisa differ in how they came to NP. For Jody, it was “innate” while Lisa tells us that she “made a deliberate decision” when she invited NP into her classroom. She says that it “was hard” to make the change because she likes to “have some structure and know what I’m talking about.” Lisa decided to invite NP into her classroom because,

upon learning about it, she felt it was a good way to teach. She inclined toward Narrative Pedagogy as it inclined toward her.

In addition to describing how she came to Narrative Pedagogy, Lisa describes the courage that it takes to try something new, the courage it takes to be a different kind of teacher. Young (2004) recognizes the challenges facing teachers as they attempt to try something new in their teaching environments. She suggests that creating spaces within schools where teachers can talk about and reflect on their experiences might empower others to try something new.

When trying something new, teachers often face challenges that hinder inviting new approaches to teaching and learning into their teaching. Diekelmann and Diekelmann (2009) interpret Gadamer in *Truth and Method* to understand barriers not as something that confines or restricts, but as something that invites a turning or a re-directing of focus (p. 16); turning from one thing results in turning toward something else. Lisa describes a time when she made a deliberate decision to turn from using the conventional approach to deliberately incline toward Narrative Pedagogy. “Narrative Pedagogy can be used to challenge the assumptions of conventional approaches and engender community among teachers, students, and clinicians” (Young, 2004, p. 129). Narrative Pedagogy provides a *Bridge* over barriers and assumptions that prevent the teacher from inclining toward Narrative pedagogy.

Individuals find themselves in teaching roles for a variety of reasons. Palmer (2000) suggests that each person must discover their own true vocation – that which inclines toward us and in turn, that towards which we incline. Palmer (2000) describes the metaphor of the potter who does not tell the clay what it should be: “The clay presses

back on the potter's hands, telling her what it can and cannot do – if she fails to listen, the outcome will be both frail and ungainly” (p. 16). Teachers must be careful of imposing their will upon learners; the risk is that the learners will be “frail and ungainly.” In other words, they will be unable to become the professional that they must become.

***Learning to Teach.*** Rose (1985/1998) suggests that “*how* [italics added] we teach is as important as *what* we teach” (p. 117). Golden (1985/1998) describes her journey in becoming a radicalized teacher which included realizing that she has “completely altered [her] style of teaching, while remaining committed to the seven components [she] identified as essential to a liberal arts education” (p. 13). She describes her journey into teaching, which included graduate education, during which she “was never taught to be a teacher” (p. 15). Golden was told by the chair of her graduate program that she spent too much energy being a good teacher and not enough energy in her dissertation research because her “research credentials would be far more important than positive teaching evaluations” (p. 15). Benner et al. (2010) acknowledge the failure to include even basic teacher education as a part of graduate nursing education. This results in teachers teaching as they were taught (Diekelmann, Ironside, & Harlow, 2003; Tanner, 1999) which is largely due to teachers lacking the skill set and understanding of pedagogies needed to change their approach to teaching (Diekelmann, Ironside, & Harlow, 2003).

Vandermause and Townsend (2010) describe a course that used an NP-centered approach. As the teachers engaged in active reflective practice about their approach to teaching, they realized that “We are so automatic in our efforts to ‘deliver’, that we miss opportunities to foster thinking. By reflectively processing the situation in this way, we were able to correct our teaching practices” (p. 432). These teachers recognized that

thinking about *how* they teach resulted in a more satisfying experience for them and for the students. They felt that when they inclined toward inviting NP into their teaching that it “enlivened” their teaching leading “to thoughtful practice” (p. 433).

Angela believes that teachers using the same methods they experienced as students may be a good thing, especially if they experienced this approach as a student. She suggests that if one experiences Narrative Pedagogy as a learner, one will incline toward teaching with Narrative Pedagogy:

*I've had people tell me that Nancy's [Diekelmann] stuff isn't anything new because narrative has been in higher ed. for years. But not Narrative Pedagogy the way that Nancy teaches it or how I use it any more. Those of us that have schooled with her, or are part of our little Narrative Pedagogy group that we have, do it the way we were taught and we emulate it. It has a whole different meaning to us than what I read in the literature. I think the key to using Narrative Pedagogy is that you have to experience it and then you want to emulate that. I'm not sure that you can learn how to do Narrative Pedagogy just by reading about it.*

Angela raises the issue of how it is that teachers learn how to teach. Schaefer and Zygmunt (2003) offer that “there is no indication that the methods [of teaching] selected are chosen to meet students’ needs. Rather, they seem to be chosen because they are perceived to be the right thing to do to improve critical thinking” (p. 243). Findings from their research suggest “that teachers focus more on the process of teaching (e.g., methods and testing) than the process of learning and may be conflicted about their primary role as teacher versus nurse” (Schaefer & Zygmunt, 2003, p. 242). Teachers chose the method based on a variety of reasons, which might include the pedagogy the teacher experienced as a student and an intuitive switch in method (Schaefer & Zygmunt, 2003).

In this study, teachers who invite Narrative Pedagogy into their teaching environments engage in self-reflective activities. As teachers seek excellence in teaching,



Utley (2011) suggests that teachers engage in self-reflection, “the process of looking inward to collect information about one’s teaching practices,” and self-evaluation, “the process of judging the effectiveness of one’s actions” (p. 324). In other words, engagement in this type of activity keeps teachers moving in the direction of excellence in teaching. As evidence of participating in self-reflection, teachers in this study frequently expressed concern that they may not be “doing it [Narrative Pedagogy] right.”

Narrative Pedagogy is the *Bridge* over focusing on method, allowing teachers to incline toward teaching reflectively. Narrative Pedagogy *bridges* over:

- Forgetting the task and craft of teaching
- Risk of being “pedagogically unfit”
- Fear of trying something new

### **Inclining Toward Teaching with Narrative Pedagogy**

Narrative Pedagogy is both a strategy and comportment (way of being). Lisa describes both of these in this narrative:

*In my classroom, Narrative Pedagogy shows itself more as Concernful Practices than as teaching strategies, although I do incorporate teaching strategies of Narrative Pedagogy in my classroom too. Here’s an example of how I used Narrative Pedagogy as a strategy in my foundations class yesterday: the class was about patient education. I started class by saying: “Tell me about a time that you have been taught something about your health. I don’t care if it’s something like being taught how to use an inhaler, taught how to use crutches, taught something about a disorder or a disease that you or somebody in your family have been diagnosed with.” From that opening, we had a conversation about how they were educated about health and what that meant to them.*

*Yesterday, Narrative Pedagogy showed itself in the fact that we started class with narratives and then went on to explore a case study. I think more of the Concernful Practices of Narrative Pedagogy showed themselves during the case study discussion and the way that I am open to their ideas. We gather together in the classroom for the purpose of learning. But the Concernful Practices carry outside of the classroom as well in the way that my clinical instructors and I care and guide students*

*in the clinicals; that's caring, or the engendering of community. This caring also shows up because students know that I have an open-door policy; my office is a safe place where they can ask questions. I also introduce students to other people from our campus community that can be resources to them.*

In this descriptive narrative, Lisa points to the gathering of several pedagogies in her teaching – use of case studies, NP as a strategy, and NP as comportment. “Narrative Pedagogy arises out of conventional pedagogies and co-occurs with them” (Andrews et al., 2001, p. 254). In other words, conventional pedagogies and Narrative Pedagogy can be found in the same teaching environment. Lisa recounts an example of how she invites NP as a strategy into a foundations course that she teaches. By inviting students to think and write about a time “that you have been taught something about your health”, she sets the stage for creating connections between students’ lived experiences and new concepts that they will need in clinical practice.

Lisa also tells how Narrative Pedagogy as Concernful Practices, or as comportment, shows up in her teaching practice. She points out that NP can be found inside and outside of the classroom. Narrative Pedagogy as comportment creates spaces for converging conversations; Narrative Pedagogy as method allows for reflective thinking and consideration of many perspectives (Andrews et al., 2001). Ironside (2003b) observes that “When enacting Narrative Pedagogy, thinking shifts from being a means to an end to cycles of interpretation in which uncertainty and fallibility are preserved” (p. 513). It is just this sort of clinical reasoning and reflective thinking that Kristi describes:

*I like getting people to think about things differently, that's my mission as a teacher. The concernful language of the Concernful Practices definitely gives one pause. Narrative Pedagogy just allows a deeper, reflective kind of thinking to happen. Narrative Pedagogy is fun; it brings about*

*community reflexive scholarship. I love thinking together with people in the classroom. That's what I really enjoy.*

Kristi inclines toward NP because it is consistent with her values, beliefs, and philosophy of teaching; additionally, it allows her to engage in the activities that she enjoys about teaching: creating spaces for “thinking together with people.” Kristi’s philosophy of teaching and learning incline her and hold her attention toward NP. She tells us that Narrative Pedagogy allows for “a deeper, reflective kind of thinking to happen.” Forneris and Peden-McAlpine (2006) suggest that as students engage in critical conversations they are able to “integrate their prior learning and practical experience. They move from telling what they know to why they know” (p. 15).

All teachers expect students to think as a part of their education. Kristi points out that she likes “getting people to think about things differently.” Carolyn agrees that getting students to think differently should be an outcome of their education:

*Narrative Pedagogy works. If you want your outcomes to be that your students know how to think, this is the way to do it. Narrative Pedagogy develops thinking from considering multiple perspectives and challenging your assumptions. Those are important ways for nurses to think.*

Carolyn recognizes that nurses not only need to have factual knowledge, but also must know how to think. According to Krell’s (2008) interpretation of Heidegger, humans risk forgetting how to think in the age of technology: “forgottenness, or oblivion, is the kind of concealment that fails to safeguard a thing from the harsh light of the obvious, that neglects the unconcealment of things and so remains blind to the essence of truth” (p. 366). Within this danger lies the possibility that humans no longer know, or remember, how to think.

From Carolyn's point of view, inviting NP into teaching results in students who know how to think because it encourages "thinking from considering multiple perspectives and challenging your assumptions." In a profession such as nursing, this deeper kind of thinking is an absolute necessity. Benner et al. (2010) acknowledge the challenges of nursing education that must address "the advanced knowledge, judgment, skills, and ethical standards" (p. 8) that nursing graduates will be expected to possess. They challenge nursing education to find better ways of meeting this need.

In this next reflective narrative, Monica considers why she stays with NP as a strategy. She understands that graduates must have the deeper understanding of conditions that goes beyond what textbooks are able to provide. Monica describes inclining toward NP as she reflects on what it is about this way of being with students that continues to "pull me back":

*There is something about Narrative Pedagogy that keeps pulling me back to it. I'm learning so much more. You can give a lecture about schizophrenia 20 times and, you know schizophrenia really well, you know anxiety really well, but when you teach this way [with Narrative Pedagogy], every time, you learn something different, you learn something more, you take it one more step. The students teach you. The students teach you. . . . I guess one of my favorite things about it is that I've learned that you can learn a lot from the students.*

Monica inclines toward NP because she believes that "you learn something different" when it is present. She describes knowing "schizophrenia really well. . ." when the teacher lectures, but "you learn something more" when this way of being is present. Monica and other teachers in this study describe learning from and learning with students. When teachers are prepared to learn alongside of students, they also prepare differently to teach. What Monica observes in this narrative is that "the shift in focus is from the teacher teaching the students to teacher and students learning together"

(Andrews et al., 2001, p. 256). Narrative Pedagogy as reflection (thinking and talking about teaching) is the *Bridge* for teachers as they incline toward a new way of teaching.

***Giving Up Control.*** Teachers in this study indicated that Narrative Pedagogy requires the teacher to give up control. There are times when it is appropriate for the teacher to control what happens, but sometimes learning is enhanced when *learning* is in control. The expectation in academia is that the teacher does the teaching and students do the learning. Angela points out that all of that is turned around when NP is present. Through the sharing and interpretation of narratives, learning occurs which would be impossible to plan for; that type of learning is not controlled by the teacher or by students – it just happens. Angela talks about giving up control as she reflects on the question of how a new teacher might experience NP:

*Teaching with Narrative Pedagogy would be very uncomfortable for a new teacher because of the control thing. . . . When you start out teaching, you are not going to feel comfortable with this because you are not in control. I think that's really hard for a new teacher because we come into the classroom and it's a power structure; just walking in there as the teacher, you are in a power position. There is the expectation that I, the teacher, am the expert and you, the student, are not. To give that control up to your learners is hard. It's hard and it kind of violates everything that we've been taught as teachers and that is expected of us.*

Angela describes the tension that teachers experience when they attempt to give control “to your learners”; she admits that it is difficult to do. Education traditionally places the teacher in the power role; the teacher is expected to control all activity in the classroom, whether that activity is learning or behavior (Sims & Swenson, 2001). Dreyfus (1993) points out that “the drive to control everything is precisely what we do not control” (p. 307); once teachers give up trying to control learning and teaching, more focus can be directed toward the difficult task of letting learning happen (Heidegger, 1968/2008).

While some teachers may strive to create an environment where control is shared, teachers *do* have inherent responsibilities to students, patients, and society. Diekelmann (1992) points out that teachers have responsibility “for protecting patients from students’ errors . . . protecting students from entering into dangerous situations. . . [and] ensuring that students are safe and adequately prepared to enter practice” (p. 79). Diekelmann (1992) also suggests that, even though teachers attempt to give control to students, teachers continue to “behave in ways that force students to be penalized for taking a risk or being wrong” (p. 80). Teachers must be mindful of how they “invite” students to participate in and direct their learning because it is easy to have just the opposite happen – “full and free student participation” closes down (Ironsides, 2005c, p. 83).

Narrative Pedagogy is the *Bridge* over the need for control in the teaching and learning environment.

***Teachers Learning Narrative Pedagogy.*** For teachers who choose to use alternative pedagogies, learning to teach that way can be challenging. Sims and Swenson (2001) point out that articles intended to help teachers know how to teach “in non-traditional pedagogical situations” are scarce (p. 2). They also believe that a new teacher must observe the enactment of the new pedagogy in order to fully understand the complex “to and fro of classroom interactions” (p. 8). Lisa considers this as she reflects on how NP shows up in her teaching:

*Some people may need to be taught how to use it. They might have to learn how to use it, especially Narrative Pedagogy as strategy (using narratives) but it shows itself in different ways so it’s okay that we all do it differently. . . I think that it just shows itself the way it is.*

In this description, Lisa finds that even as she has the language to describe how she teaches, she understands the uncertainty of how NP shows up from school to school and

course to course. This lack of uniformity in how NP appears is expected because, as Lisa says, “it just shows itself the way it is”; in other words, it is site-specific. In a 2003 position statement on reforming nursing education, the NLN offered seven recommendations for teachers. One of those was “to develop dynamic, flexible, and *site-specific* [emphasis added] curricular models that effectively prepare graduates to practice in contemporary clinical situations” (NLN, 2004, p. 49).

Another issue that Lisa raises concerns how Narrative Pedagogy becomes a part of a teacher’s approach in teaching and learning environments. For successful transition to alternative pedagogical method, teachers should “have a partner. . . . This is someone to talk to, whine with, cry with, and debrief each class with. . . . Teachers cannot do this kind of teaching in a vacuum and cannot do it alone” (Sims & Swenson, 2001, p. 8). Bringing about changes in teaching may “not require new resources or new skills. It does, however, require re-thinking” (Young, 2004, p. 124) or reflective practice. This brings us back to the notion of reflective practice that Vandermause and Townsend (2010) describe. “The lack of opportunity to reflect thoughtfully with colleagues about the practice and meaning of pedagogical experiences” is problematic (van Manen, 1991b, p. 511). Engaging in community reflective practice enables teachers to be more responsive to the needs of learners.

***Covering Content.*** Enabling students to become self-directed in their learning means that the teacher must be prepared to share the control of learning traditionally connected with the teacher role. In many academic settings, the expectation remains for the teacher to be in control or take the lead in student learning. The NLN (2004) points out that the history of nursing education brings us to the time when, for the most part, “it

is the teacher's responsibility to ensure that all content is 'covered'" (p. 48). Teachers' responsibility for covering the content shows up in many ways. For example, when students do not perform well on standardized testing or licensure exams, the teacher might share the blame for these failures. Angela describes the discomfort that new teachers, especially, might have:

*As new teachers, we feel like we have to cover that content, we have to do it thoroughly and if we don't do it in a systematic way, learning isn't going to happen. By the end of my course, I can look and say "Yes, we covered that." Maybe we covered it in pieces, but it was covered. I describe it as being a spiral. For example, one of the courses I am teaching right now is a graduate course and one of the topics is the issue of working in the work force with different generations [of workers]. We've talked about it already even though it is not a topic for two more weeks because it lent itself to what we were talking about at the time and it was meaningful. When we talk about it the next time, we'll talk about it differently.*

When Angela talks about needing to "cover the content", she describes the conventional pedagogical approach to teaching and learning (Ironside, 2003b; Tanner 2007). Angela expresses the belief that many teachers have: content must be covered so that learning happens. Also, the content must be covered so that the teacher avoids criticism from teachers in the courses following (i.e., if the students don't know the content for the next course, the fault is the teacher's).

In addition to ensuring that the content is covered, more and more content continues to be added to the curriculum while little is taken away (Diekelmann, 2002; Ironside, 2004). Teachers focus on keeping courses up-to-date at the risk of simply adding more and more to be covered; Ironside (2004) refers to this as the "additive curriculum." When this happens, students memorize content to pass the test (Ironside, 2005a). Ironside (2004) raises the pertinent question if focusing on covering the content



has drawn attention away from teaching thinking. She suggests that teachers should “rethink how they teach and the ways in which the pedagogy being enacted influences students’ thinking” (Ironsides, 2004, p. 11). Consequences of the *additive curriculum* are “courses that are boring and alienating for students and that reinforce rote learning, thereby preventing students from developing higher-order thinking capacities” (Ironsides, 2004, p. 6).

To bring about substantive change in nursing education, teachers must think about what possibilities exist within their courses and their schools (Ironsides, 2004, p. 11). Methods used in a conventional or traditional approach include lecture, interactive lecture, formal and informal discussion, asking questions, and use of audiovisuals (DeYoung, 2009). Angela and others who take an NP stance may include some of these conventional strategies (and more) as they gather with students in learning. In making sure that learning happens, teachers must strive to maintain relatedness with their craft – the craft of teaching. Heidegger describes the metaphor of the cabinetmaker’s apprentice’s relatedness to wood:

[For the cabinetmaker’s apprentice], his learning is not mere practice, to gain facility in the use of tools. Nor does he merely gather knowledge about the customary forms of the things he is to build. If he is to become a true cabinetmaker, he makes himself answer and respond above all to the different kinds of wood and to the shapes slumbering within wood. . . . In fact, this relatedness to wood is what maintains the whole craft. Without that relatedness, the craft will never be anything but empty busywork. (Heidegger, 1968/2008, p. 379)

Teachers gather information about what they will teach, but they must do more than simply pass knowledge along to students. Just as the cabinetmaker’s apprentice must learn to understand and relate with different kinds of wood, the teacher must understand and respond to the different types of subject matter that they must cover in their courses.

NP allows teachers to cover the content in new ways inviting students to find meaningful ways of engaging in the hard task of learning to become a nurse. As teachers incline toward teaching with Narrative Pedagogy, *Narrative Pedagogy is the Bridge* over teachers' need for controlling learning.

**Mentoring.** Several of the teachers in this study expressed concern that they are not “doing it right.” As a masters-prepared teacher, Stacy has been teaching for several years and has recently started teaching in a new program for second-degree students. The program uses a Narrative Pedagogy approach throughout the entire curriculum. Even though she has done a lot of reading about NP and had help from expert consultants to get started with this new approach, Stacy is so concerned that she is “not doing it right” that she connected with a mentor to help her as she seeks to enact NP in her classroom:

*I've connected myself to a mentor because I'm still putting myself in the 'in-the-box-thinking' because it's what I've always, always known. . . . That has been a real challenge for me and it's why I have connected with a mentor; I still want to come in and give them ideas and goals and learning objectives for the next week when that is really something that they should be driving themselves.*

Stacy finds that she wants to fall back into her old ways of thinking and being with students. She recognizes that the best way to keep from returning to her previous ways is to find someone who will mentor her. McKinley (2004) suggests that mentoring consists of “three R’s: reflecting, reframing, and resolving” (p. 209). While similarities exist between mentoring and partnerships as Sims and Swenson (2001) envision, mentoring requires that the mentor be more experienced in the phenomenon of interest than the mentee. Mentoring of new teachers is especially important as most graduate nursing programs do not have courses preparing graduates to be teachers (Finke, 2009).

As many current teachers near retirement, mentoring can be an especially effective way to transition clinicians into the role of teacher (Finke, 2009). Many (Benner et al., 2010; Sauter, Johnson, & Gillespie, 2009; NLN, 2006; and Utley, 2011) suggest formal and informal mentoring as ways of recruiting and retaining new teachers. DeYoung (2009) points out that one does not become a good teacher simply by modeling their own good teachers, but suggests that having a good mentor might be helpful. Benner et al. (2010) offer the apprenticeship model, which they acknowledge might connote images of the old hospital training models that contained “abuse, domination, and control” (p. 25). They suggest a re-visioning of this apprenticeship model that might have application in the clinical world as well as in academia.

Stacy continues to work with her mentor as she completes the first semester of the new program and expects that she will continue working with a mentor for the foreseeable future because of her “in-the-box” thinking. Throughout the conversation, Stacy referred to “in-the-box thinking” as the way that she used to teach and think about teaching, but she recognizes that NP calls for a new, unsettled way of thinking about teaching and learning. Diekelmann and Diekelmann (2009) acknowledge this unsettled way of thinking as something that already occurs whether we are aware of it or not: “To be unsettled is to be settled in the abode of a sojourn, a sojourn in which one must think and act anew, which one always already does in any case” (p. 213). They point out that when one is unsettled with something, “ways are opened up as they open up” (p. 213); in other words, we will find new ways of thinking, doing, and being when we are no longer able to continue with our current approach. Narrative Pedagogy is the *Bridge* between

teachers and old ways of thinking about teaching so that teachers might be able to incline toward Narrative Pedagogy.

Monica inclines toward Narrative Pedagogy because she believes it has made her a better teacher by inviting “the listener in her” into attendance:

*I've learned so much about listening to people's stories. I really believe that Narrative Pedagogy has made me a better teacher. I don't think we listen to peoples' stories enough; I don't think we listen to people enough. I'm a psych nurse, so I've spent my life learning to listen but one of the things that I've learned while listening is that some people never listen. . . . I think it [Narrative Pedagogy] helps . . . my students be better listeners. I think they do move up a notch as far as being better able to analyze and interpret and see their patient's viewpoint differently, their classmates' viewpoint differently, **my** viewpoint differently.*

While showing that teachers and students are co-learners in an NP-centered classroom, Monica also points toward the part of NP that invites/requires new ways of listening for which many teachers are unprepared. According to Palmer (2000), the academic system discourages individuals from listening to that which inclines toward us; instead, “we are taught to listen to everything and everyone but ourselves” (p. 5). Heidegger (1962) connects hearing, silence, and speech in this way: “*Hearing and keeping silent [Schweigen]* are possibilities belonging to discursive speech” (p. 204). In other words, conversation, or communication, occurs when there is the possibility of hearing, listening, and silence. Gadamer (1975/1982) suggests that as we listen, we are “fundamentally open.” Genuine human relationship requires this type of openness:

Without this kind of openness to one another there is no genuine human relationship. Belonging together always also means being able to listen to one another. . . . Openness to the other, then, includes the acknowledgement that I must accept some things that are against myself, even though there is no one else who asks this of me. (Gadamer, 1975/1982, p. 324)

When teachers incline toward NP and also incline toward teaching, the way we are as humans in the world (or teachers in the classroom) requires the sort of listening that Monica describes in the narrative.

Narrative Pedagogy, as a strategy and comporment, is the *Bridge* as teachers incline toward teaching. NP *bridges* over:

- Thinking in terms of means to an end
- Teaching that closes down thinking
- Focusing on students telling what they know
- Thinking only in terms of factual knowledge
- Teachers “controlling” learning
- Focusing only on covering the content
- Teachers teaching in isolation

### **Inclining Toward Preserving Narrative Pedagogy**

As several participants pointed out, the Narrative Pedagogy community (i.e., those experienced with Narrative Pedagogy) is not very large. There are many reasons for this, but within this reality rests the danger of the possibility of NP disappearing. Lisa points out that preserving Narrative Pedagogy might be as simple as pointing out where NP already appears in teachers’ practices:

*The Narrative Pedagogy community is very small; there aren’t a lot of us using Narrative Pedagogy the way that Nancy Diekelmann describes it. But, I think that people are using it and not realizing it. . . . I think that schools are going to use Narrative Pedagogy without identifying it as Narrative Pedagogy. I think that it is our job to help them understand that and help them see how Narrative Pedagogy is showing itself already in their schools.*

Lisa understands NP and has developed a philosophy of teaching. But she goes beyond her own understanding and philosophy to consider how to sustain Narrative Pedagogy in education. Lisa says “it is *our* job to help them understand . . . and see how Narrative Pedagogy is showing itself already in their schools.” In other words, individual teachers who know Narrative Pedagogy must share their experiences in order to increase awareness and understanding of NP. Earlier in this chapter, Emma said “Once Narrative Pedagogy is in your philosophy as a teacher, it’s who you are.” Emma’s perspective coupled with Lisa’s ideas about educating others about NP presents a way of preserving Narrative Pedagogy.

Kristi shares Lisa’s concern of Narrative Pedagogy’s sustainability.

*. . . I think that people who get introduced to it [Narrative Pedagogy] totally get it and value it. We have these pockets of interest in Narrative Pedagogy and we’re talking “Narrative Pedagogy” capital “N”, capital “P”, whereas it’s out there as “narrative pedagogy” too. People talk about “narrative pedagogy” but they are not talking about Diekelmann’s Narrative Pedagogy like we are. In a sense, Narrative Pedagogy may get a little diluted but it will continue to be out there. As long as the articles keep coming out, I’ll have my students continue to read them because once they read it and get introduced to it, they hook on to it and understand what it is. . . . I don’t think that it takes only Nancy Diekelmann or having to learn it from Nancy Diekelmann to get it and to embrace it and move forward with it. I think that it’s that grassroots effort where my nurse educator students are interacting, knowing and connecting, welcoming and gathering, engendering caring communities in new ways in their classrooms. That is how it makes a difference.*

In this narrative, Kristi clearly describes several of Diekelmann’s Concernful Practices: Presencing, Assembling, Gathering, Caring, Listening, Interpreting, Inviting, Questioning, Retrieving Places, and Preserving (Diekelmann & Diekelmann, 2009). But Kristi’s narrative is about more than these; it addresses the issue of sustaining or preserving Narrative Pedagogy.

Kristi makes certain that Narrative Pedagogy continues because she teaches it to graduate students who are studying to be teachers. She also maintains the scholarly aspect of NP by inviting her students to engage in the current literature. Kristi and Lisa describe several ways of preserving Narrative Pedagogy: teaching current teachers, teaching graduate students, and adding to the existing body of literature of NP. While Kristi inclines toward Narrative Pedagogy, she models this for future teachers, some of whom will also incline towards inviting Narrative Pedagogy into teaching.

Teachers enacting NP require interpreting the literature and interpreting individual experiences with it, as there is no “user’s manual” on how to *do* Narrative Pedagogy. Given that NP is site-specific (Diekelmann, 2001), teachers can adapt this approach to meet the needs of teachers, students, and schools in order to ensure well-prepared, safe clinicians.

Narrative Pedagogy is the *Bridge* as teachers incline toward teaching. Narrative Pedagogy *bridges* over:

- Risk of NP being forgotten
- Risk of NP becoming diluted
- Understanding NP only as use of stories as a teaching strategy

### **Summary of Chapter III**

Narrative Pedagogy as *Bridge* appeared as the over-arching pattern for this hermeneutic phenomenological study of the experiences of teachers who invite Narrative Pedagogy into their learning environments. The metaphor of the *Bridge* allows consideration of Narrative Pedagogy and the many opportunities for discovery of the meaning of the experience of NP. At times, Narrative Pedagogy is the *Bridge* over

something (for example, barriers to learning and hidden assumptions) and at other times, Narrative Pedagogy is the *Bridge* between things (for example, students and teachers on one bank, learning on the other bank).

The two themes that emerged are: Students and Teachers Gathering in Learning and Inclining Toward Inviting Narrative Pedagogy Into Teaching. Essentially, Theme 1 examined learning while Theme 2 explored teaching. Even though learning and teaching are co-occurring phenomenon, it was important to deal with them as though they are separately identifiable experiences. Doing this risked privileging one at the expense of the other; for example, focusing on teaching or the teacher directs the focus away from learning or the learner. But, in an attempt to examine the experience and the meaning of each, it seemed necessary to examine learning and teaching separately.

This chapter has examined the findings in the hermeneutic phenomenological study of teachers' experiences with Narrative Pedagogy in their learning environments. It has described the over-arching pattern, examined the two themes, and explicated the sub-themes and notions. The next chapter examines the significance for nursing education.



## Chapter IV: The End is Only the Beginning

Winnie-the-Pooh sat down at the foot of the tree, put his head between his paws and began to think.

- A.A. Milne. 1926/1957. *The World of Pooh*. p. 9.

Any beginning must have started somewhere and at some time in order to enable a glimpse of its on-coming emergent/elusive origins.

- N. Diekelmann & J. Diekelmann. 2009. *Schooling Learning Teaching*. p. 83.

The Curriculum Revolution in Nursing Education started in large part due to perceived problems there. It was within this framework that Diekelmann began her years of research using Heideggerian hermeneutic phenomenology ultimately resulting in the development of Narrative Pedagogy. One of the calls for reform invited turning from the “outcomes and competency-based models” prevalent in nursing education (Ironsides & Valiga, 2007, p. 5). Narrative Pedagogy continues to be ready to respond to that call.

### **Implications for Nursing Education**

One of the implications of this study is that it offers an understanding of Narrative Pedagogy as both a strategy and as comportment. Some of the barriers for Narrative Pedagogy rest in the confusion about what NP is and is not. Many understand it to be a strategy, a way of using stories/narratives to better understand the experiences of nurses, patients, families, and others involved in providing patient care. But Narrative Pedagogy is more than just a strategy to be implemented. In fact, to consider Narrative Pedagogy as only a strategy covers over an even greater usefulness. A wonderful application of NP resides in the Concernful Practices identified by Diekelmann after conducting her multi-site research using Heideggerian hermeneutic phenomenology. In Diekelmann’s work, the Concernful Practices of Narrative Pedagogy describe a way of comportment between teachers and students as they co-experience schooling, learning, and teaching.

Scholars and teachers experienced with Narrative Pedagogy would do well to heed Tyler's (1949) caution when he wrote his "little book" on curriculum that has come to be known as "Tyler's Rationale." Tyler's intent was to provide answers to the four questions<sup>27</sup> that he said should be answered when developing a curriculum. He stipulated that curriculum is site-specific and therefore each school should find their own responses.

This book outlines one way of viewing an instructional program as a functioning instrument of education. The student is encouraged to examine other rationales and to develop his own conception of the elements and relationships involved in an effective curriculum. (Tyler, 1949, p. 1)

Disregarding Tyler's idea that curricula are site-specific, nursing education has reified Tyler's Rationale resulting in closing down new ways of thinking about teaching and learning.

Narrative Pedagogy is site-specific and any attempt to suggest otherwise by developing a one-size-fits-all type of "how to" guide must be avoided, even though developing such a manual may seem like a good way to clarify some of the confusion about NP. However, this must be resisted because such a guide goes against the underpinning philosophy of NP as well as what Diekelmann and other NP scholars have found in their research. Perhaps some of the confusion about this approach might rest in its name – "Narrative Pedagogy." The current understanding in higher education of each word in this name suggests a teaching strategy that uses story-telling. Indeed, many authors take just such an approach in their manuscripts (for example see: Brown et al., 2008; Chan, 2008; Crawley, 2009; Forneris & Peden-McAlpine, 2006; Gazarian, 2010; Heinrich, 1992; and many more). This narrow view of NP as story-telling limits the usefulness of NP.

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<sup>27</sup> See "Tyler's Rationale" in Ch. I.

The teachers in this study sought to maintain consistency between their teaching practice and their personal philosophies of teaching and learning. They understand the value of reflecting on their teaching so that they can remain true to their philosophy of teaching. It is possible to have a philosophy of teaching and yet teach in ways that are inconsistent with that philosophy. Developing and using a personal philosophy of teaching, and the language of that philosophy, may help keep the focus on students and learning. As teachers participate in the level of reflection required to develop, use, and maintain their own philosophy, they may find that Narrative Pedagogy has already been present in their teaching, but they have merely failed to notice. When teachers have a philosophy of teaching that is actively a part of their teaching practice, they are more likely to avoid the pitfalls against which Csokasy (2009) cautions. She suggests that failure to develop a philosophy of teaching results in reliance on past practice to guide current practice. Recognizing Narrative Pedagogy's place in our teaching and learning environments will aid in extending NP's role in nursing education.

In response to Bevis' (1988) five turns (periods) in nursing education, I suggest that it is time to add a sixth turn. Bevis' five turns are: 1) the religious orders, seventeenth and nineteenth centuries; 2) Florence Nightingale, late nineteenth century; 3) development of standard curriculum for schools of nursing, early twentieth century; 4) Tyler's principles of curriculum and instruction, mid-twentieth century; and 5) "Curriculum Revolution", late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Given the current technologies available in the classroom, simulation laboratories, and complex healthcare system, the sixth turn might be called the period of technology. Rather than to be controlled or propelled by these new technologies, nursing education would do well to find ways to adapt and

accommodate these new challenges. NP should be included in nursing education's continued process of developing strategies and ways of responding to the 6<sup>th</sup> turn. Great possibilities exist for inviting Narrative Pedagogy into distance education classrooms. Creative thinking and reflection on teaching practice are called for as these new opportunities are considered.

Several of the teachers in this study suggested that not all students or teachers find Narrative Pedagogy (as a strategy) beneficial. In fact, they might be frustrated by the lack of structure found in a narrative-centered classroom. Stacy describes the student that opted out of the program even though she initially seemed to be most likely to succeed. The student wanted structure and clearly defined expectations because she felt that was how she learned best. Emma talks about the melt-down and the complaints that they experienced when the school developed a narrative-centered curriculum. Lisa says that students don't understand how to be self-directed and may be frustrated with NP as a strategy. Some students and teachers find the structure of conventional learning environments more capable of meeting their needs than Narrative Pedagogy can provide. This pedagogy offers a new approach to teaching and learning that is so different from previous ways of teaching and learning. Teachers and students may become frustrated as they attempt to transition into this new approach. Even though NP offers exciting new possibilities for teaching and learning, not all will embrace this new approach.

### **Significance**

This hermeneutic phenomenologic study of teachers' experiences with Narrative Pedagogy found one overarching pattern and two themes. Specifically, the overarching pattern is Narrative Pedagogy as *Bridge*; the themes are 1) Students and Teachers

Gathering in Learning and 2) Inclining Toward Teaching with Narrative Pedagogy. This study found that as students and teachers gather in learning and teachers incline toward teaching with Narrative Pedagogy new possibilities open up. The significance of these findings is that it offers students and teachers new ways to think about learning and teaching as co-occurring phenomena. By considering new ways of thinking about commonly-occurring activities, old ways of thinking are made visible, creating opportunities for new ways of being. For example, teachers in this study described ways that they became co-learners with students, and times that they became the learner while students became the teacher. In another example, one teacher described developing a community of learning as she and students gathered to overcome the fear of test-taking.

### **Strengths and Limitations**

A strength of this study lies in the rich conversations with the participants. This type of research does not seek to develop generalizable or quantifiable understandings, but rather to open up and keep open possibilities (Gadamer, 1982, p. 266). The aim of hermeneutic phenomenology is to “attempt to interpret that which at the same time conceals itself” (Gadamer, 1986). This study did just that; it made visible the experiences of teaching and learning. These are qualities of a good phenomenologic study: “A good phenomenological description is collected by lived experience and recollects lived experience – is validated by lived experience and it validates lived experience” (van Manen, 1990, p. 27). Other strengths in this study include:

- All participants had experience with NP.
- I have continued to invite NP into my teaching.

- I participated in several research groups with doctoral students and expert phenomenologists.
- I had a naïve peer de-briefer with whom I met regularly and who challenged my assumptions and offered “fresh eyes” for my interpretations.
- I have provided a thick description of my participants while maintaining their anonymity.
- I maintained a research journal from the beginning of my doctoral studies through the writing of my dissertation.
- I have kept process notes and notes from de-briefing sessions with my peer de-briefer, phenomenology experts, and research group participants.
- My study included participants from three countries.
- I was an observer/participant for a full semester in a class taught by Narrative Pedagogy experts.
- I have participated in the Institute for Hermeneutic Phenomenology three times and the Institute for Heideggerian Hermeneutical Methodologies one time.

A limitation for this study is that I was limited in the type of responses that I got.

Several times throughout the conversation, participants were invited to “Tell a story about. . . .” While stories did come out, participants often responded with descriptions and explanations rather than a story. See Appendix D for the Interview Guide used in conversations with participants. The guide provided an outline of possible questions for the conversations, but the interview was directed by participant responses. Asking a question to elicit a story can be done in many ways. Future work might be to work on

more ways to ask for stories. For example, I might ask participants to “Think of a time when. . . . Tell me about that experience.” Also for future studies, I might consider having more than one conversation with participants. A second conversation might invite participants to re-consider things that came up in the initial conversation. This might allow for deeper reflection and exploration of the experience.

### **Areas for Future Research**

Even with the richness of the conversations/interviews with participants, some questions remain, offering possibilities for future ponderings. Some of these questions require consideration from other paradigms; they cannot be answered completely from a phenomenologic paradigm. For example, as nursing has sought a “seat at the table” in higher education, nursing education research has used the model of empiric measurement, which has resulted in a behavioristic approach focusing on competencies, goals, and objectives. While nursing values the difficult-to-measure phenomena of caring, listening, and reflection, we have yet to develop ways of determining how much and when those types of learning occur. If those types of learning are essential attributes for nursing graduates, both in undergraduate and graduate programs, how can we know that graduates embody those qualities? These phenomena are intangible, not measurable by empiric methods, but they are there and we must find ways to demonstrate that graduates have them.

This current study points to additional areas for potential research. Some of the teachers in this study talk about assessing learning in their NP-centered classroom. They acknowledge that NCLEX-type tests may not be the best way to assess the type of

learning that occurs in this environment. How is learning to be evaluated or assessed in an NP setting? What is the place of testing in an NP curriculum?

Teachers often include the type of teaching methods used in the course within the syllabus. Will the syllabus from a course that invites NP look any different from the syllabus from a conventionally-taught course?

Stories such as Stacy's "taking students to the edge of the cliff" highlight the phenomenon of trust in the learning environment. This issue exists regardless whether NP or conventional approaches are used. It can be a question of students trusting teachers, teachers trusting students, teachers trusting colleagues, or students trusting students. How can we address the development of trust?

Confusion about what Narrative Pedagogy is and is not exists in nursing education and even in nursing education literature. As described earlier, the name "Narrative Pedagogy" may add to the confusion and may limit inviting NP into teaching and learning. Can it be made more accessible? How do we let teachers know that they can successfully invite NP into their teaching and learning environments?

In asking some of these questions, we risk falling into the trap against which van Manen (1991) warns us – restricting ourselves to asking the questions based on assumptions of traditional approaches of education. However, since current licensing, registering, and certifying bodies use traditional competency and outcomes focus for determining readiness to practice, these questions remain pertinent as the future of nursing education is considered. Following are some possible beginnings for continued work in the areas of these questions.



When thinking about the issue of how to assess learning in an NP setting, it is important to remember that Narrative Pedagogy is site-specific. This means that the tools used to assess learning should also be site- and even course-specific. Nursing must turn away from the old ways of thinking that all essential qualities for our graduates are quantifiable. But, as long as entry into practice is determined by ability to pass multiple choice-type tests, the old ways cannot totally be abandoned.

Since Narrative Pedagogy is based in a paradigm other than traditional approaches to teaching and learning, use of alternative assessment strategies (i.e., other than standard multiple-choice tests) should be implemented for determining learning. Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs) provide one option because they can be adapted to the setting, course goals, type of learning to be assessed, and amount of time available for the evaluation (Angelo & Cross, 1993). For example, the one-minute paper might be used in an NP setting. This paper consisting of two or three sentences asks students to respond to a variety of prompts such as, “What was your most significant learning?”, or “What questions do you want to talk about next time?” The one-minute paper invites students to reflect more deeply on what happened during class. Additional examples of CATs can be found in Ch. III.

The question of how NP shows up in the syllabus or course design invites some creative options. Most syllabi include a description of the type of methods used in the course. Whether considering NP as a strategy or as a component, teachers should include the ways in which NP shows up. Following are some examples of statements that might be included in the syllabus:

- Narrative Pedagogy as a strategy:
  - “In this course, narratives will be written and interpreted in order to understand the experience of the patient, the nurse, and the family.”
  - “You and your small group will read and interpret the narrative that you write in response to a prompt given during class.”
  - [Note: This might appear under NP as strategy or NP as comportment. It might be considered a method of obtaining feedback or a way of gathering and inviting students.] “Several times during this course, you will be invited to identify things that are going well and things that you would like to have done differently. You may sign your name to your suggestions or may opt to submit them anonymously.”
  
- Narrative Pedagogy as comportment:
  - “Please feel free to stop by my office any time whether it is to talk about something specific with this course, or anything else that you may wish to discuss.”
  - “Due dates for assignments may be negotiated. Please talk with me if you wish to negotiate a due date other than what appears in the syllabus.”
  - [Note: This may be difficult to do in a larger class but can easily be adapted by inviting students to write their ideas and then have a large group discussion. Technology such as “clicker” systems that allow anonymous “voting” can also be used to adapt this option for a larger group.] “The school has established goals and objectives that must be achieved for this course but you and I will also determine the goals *we*

would like to have. The first hour of this course will be spent talking about our goals for learning; these goals will continue to be negotiated throughout the semester.”

- [Note: This highlights the idea of reciprocity. Teachers evaluate students by assigning a grade. With this example, students are given an opportunity to evaluate the teacher.] “At the end of the course, you will be invited to complete an anonymous evaluation of my teaching this semester.”

### **Summary**

Diekelmann and Diekelmann (2009) suggest that “a hermeneutic phenomenological investigation of schooling works to free schooling from the conceptualizations of validity, standards, and norms as these show themselves as repressive holding powers” (p. 210). The focus of this study was on the experience of teachers with Narrative Pedagogy and what that means for them. Using Heidegger’s (1962) notion of ready-to-hand one might consider that schooling, learning, and teaching are already present as ready-to-hand; teachers and students are no longer aware of what presents itself as schooling, learning, and teaching. When schooling, learning, and teaching are made unready-to-hand, teachers and students are able to question these activities because they are made unfamiliar and therefore able to be assessed. Humans have a tendency to not notice things that we come into contact with every day. Narrative Pedagogy makes apparent schooling, learning, and teaching; this is one of the values that Narrative Pedagogy brings to nursing education.

The teachers in this study experienced Narrative Pedagogy in their learning environment and many of them experienced Narrative Pedagogy both as student and

teacher. One of the ways that NP might be promoted for broader use in nursing education might be if more students experienced it and had their attention drawn toward it. An exemplar course might be offered at nursing education conferences. For example, the content for a break-out session might be taught with Narrative Pedagogy rather than the traditional delivery of content by lecture.

Narrative Pedagogy responds to the calls for reform in nursing education to re-direct the focus from a competency-based education model. NP is not simply another strategy for teachers to “use,” but invites teachers to re-think the way that they gather with students in teaching in learning. NP calls teachers to think of how they gather with students in learning and incline toward teaching with Narrative Pedagogy.

Considering the voices of the many teachers with whom I have been privileged to formally and informally converse over the past four years, I find myself pondering the future of nursing education in general and more specifically, the role of Narrative Pedagogy in nursing education. Overall, the voices of teachers who experience Narrative Pedagogy are few, but that should not lessen the impact of those voices. Narrative Pedagogy should not be silenced simply because relatively few teachers invite Narrative Pedagogy into their learning environments. I see the future as holding great possibilities for Narrative Pedagogy.

**INDIANA UNIVERSITY STUDY INFORMATION SHEET FOR  
Experiencing Narrative Pedagogy: Conversations with Nurse Educators**

You are invited to participate in a research study of nursing teachers' experiences with Narrative Pedagogy. You were selected as a possible subject because of your past experience with Narrative Pedagogy in your nursing classroom. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

The study is being conducted by Melinda Swenson, RN, PhD., and Ruth Stoltzfus, RN, PhD Candidate, at Indiana University School of Nursing.

**STUDY PURPOSE**

The purpose of this study is to develop an understanding of the meaning that nursing educators gain from their experience with Narrative Pedagogy in teaching nursing.

**PROCEDURES FOR THE STUDY:**

If you agree to be in the study, you will be interviewed by the researcher for 60 to 90 minutes. The interview will take place in a mutually agreed upon location or it might be done through phone or video conferencing. This interview will be audio-recorded. You will be asked to relate stories about your experiences with Narrative Pedagogy in nursing education. It is possible that you would be contacted by phone following the interview for clarification or review of the text. If so, you will receive no more than one additional call. If you would prefer not to be re-contacted, please let the researcher know during your interview.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

Efforts will be made to keep your personal information confidential. We cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality. Your personal information may be disclosed if required by law. Your identity will be held in confidence in reports in which the study may be published. Only the investigators will have access to the audio-recordings. The audio-recorded interview will be transcribed, de-identified, and permanently deleted after verification of accuracy. Any identifying information from the interview will be removed or changed to a pseudonym on the written text. The transcripts will be shared with a research team consisting of the investigators, faculty members experienced in hermeneutical research, a peer de-briefer, and doctoral students. Transcripts will be identified with numbered codes to maintain anonymity. No personal identities will be detectable in any reports or publications from this study.

Organizations that may inspect and/or copy your research records for quality assurance and data analysis include groups such as the study investigator and his/her research associates, the Indiana University Institutional Review Board or its designees, and (as allowed by law) state or federal agencies, specifically the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP).

**PAYMENT**

You will not receive payment for taking part in this study

**CONTACTS FOR QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS**

For questions about the study, contact the co-investigator, Ruth Stoltzfus, at 574-533-0040.

For questions about your rights as a research participant or to discuss problems, complaints, or concerns about a research study, or to obtain information, or offer input, contact the IU Human Subjects Office at (317) 278-3458 or (800) 696-2949.

**VOLUNTARY NATURE OF STUDY**

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to take part or may leave the study at any time. Leaving the study will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled. Your decision whether or not to participate in this study will not affect your current or future relations with Indiana University School of Nursing.

Appendix B: IRB Approval



**INDIANA UNIVERSITY**

**OFFICE OF RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION**

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| <b>To:</b>   | MELINDA MARIE SWENSON<br>NURSING   |
| <b>From:</b> | IU Human Subjects Office<br>Office of Research Administration – Indiana University |
| <b>Date:</b> | August 18, 2011  |
| <b>RE:</b>   | <b>EXEMPTION GRANTED</b>   |

Protocol Title: Experiencing Narrative Pedagogy: Conversations with Nurse Educators

Protocol #: 1107006287

Funding Agency/Sponsor: None

IRB: IRB-02, IRB00000221

Your study named above was accepted on August 12, 2011 as meeting the criteria of exempt research as described in the Federal regulations at 45 CFR 46.101(b), paragraph(s) (1) (2) . This approval does not replace any departmental or other approvals that may be required.

As the principal investigator (or faculty sponsor in the case of a student protocol) of this study, you assume the following responsibilities:

**Amendments:** Any proposed changes to the research study must be reported to the IRB prior to implementation. To request approval, please complete an Amendment form and submit it, along with any revised study documents, to [irb@iu.edu](mailto:irb@iu.edu). Only after approval has been granted by the IRB can these changes be implemented.

**Completion:** Although a continuing review is not required for an exempt study, you are required to notify the IRB when this project is completed. In some cases, you will receive a request for current project status from our office. If we are unsuccessful at in our attempts to confirm the status of the project, we will consider the project closed. It is your responsibility to inform us of any address changes to ensure our records are kept current.

Per federal regulations, there is no requirement for the use of an informed consent document or study information sheet for exempt research, although one may be used if it is felt to be appropriate for the research being conducted. As such, these documents are returned without an IRB-approval stamp. Please note that if your submission included an informed consent statement or a study information sheet, the IRB requires the investigational team to use these documents.

You should retain a copy of this letter and any associated approved study documents for your records. Please refer to the project title and number in future correspondence with our office. Additional information is available on our website at <http://researchadmin.iu.edu/HumanSubjects/index.html>.

If you have any questions, please contact our office at the below address.

Thank you.

1| c/o IU Human Subjects Office | (317) 278-7189 | [irb@iu.edu](mailto:irb@iu.edu)



## Appendix C: Interview Guide

### Experiencing Narrative Pedagogy: Conversations with Nurse Educators

Following are the ways in which I will invite conversations with Nurse Educators in this research study.

1. You and I are talking because I know that Narrative Pedagogy is found in your classroom. Tell me about your experience with Narrative Pedagogy.
2. Think about your experience with Narrative Pedagogy:
  - a. Tell me a story about a good experience with NP.
  - b. Tell me a story about an experience with NP that did not go so well.
3. Have you ever considered walking away from NP?
4. Tell me a story you will never forget about your experience with NP.

Additional prompts:

1. Tell me more about that
2. Tell me a story about that
3. What happened that you weren't expecting?
4. Can you give me an example?

## Appendix D: Pattern and Themes

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| Pattern | Narrative Pedagogy as <i>Bridge</i>               |
| Theme 1 | Students and Teachers Gathering in Learning       |
| Theme 2 | Inclining Toward Teaching with Narrative Pedagogy |

## Appendix E: Titles Gathered from Stories

### **Jody**

- Theme 2
1. *Narrative Pedagogy as Innateness*
  2. *Beyond Just Stories*
  3. *Naming Exemplars: Respecting the Person*
  4. *Creating the Narratives*
  5. *Narrative Telling*
  6. *Learning in Context*
  7. *Listening: Knowing & Connecting*
- Theme 1
8. *Finding Meaning: Helping Students Create Contextual Understanding*
  9. *Taking students beyond the familiar learning*
  10. *Frustrating & Burdensome or Meaningful & Joyful?*
  11. *Ensuring learning: Testing for learning*
  12. *On Being a Novice Educator with Narrative Pedagogy*
  13. *Being the Teacher: Finding the Joy*
  14. *Narrative Pedagogy Goes Online*
  15. *Getting emotional: Making connections*

### **Angela**

1. *Learning Narrative Pedagogy*
  2. *On Being a Lab Test*
- Theme 2
3. *Experiencing Narrative Pedagogy Comes Before Using*
  4. *Uncovering Learning: Taking Risks*
  5. *What I love about Narrative Pedagogy . . . .*

Theme 1 6. *Overcoming Teacher-vs-Learner Barriers*

Theme 1 7. *Giving up control*

Theme 1 8. *More than just a teaching strategy*

### **Kristi**

Theme 2 1. *Spreading the Word: Making a Difference*

2. *Using the Language of Concernful Practices*

3. *The Curriculum Never Changes*

Theme 1 4. *The Journey Paper*

5. *Thinking-in-action Journals*

6. *An Audience of One*

Theme 1 7. *Reading Out Loud: A Different way of Thinking*

Theme 2 8. *Why Narrative Pedagogy?*

### **Carolyn**

1. *Everybody's Doing It*

2. *Preparing students to think/learn differently*

3. *Narrative Pedagogy: Educating Nurses to Think and Practice Differently*

Theme 1 4. *Valuing Past Experience*

Theme 1 5. *Learning as questioning*

6. *Narrative Pedagogy: It is Unpredictable*

7. *Going it alone: It's Hard when it's Narrative Pedagogy*

Theme 2 8. *Walk away from Narrative Pedagogy? Never*

9. *... so powerful*

10. *Caring for each other through Narrative Telling*

Theme 1 11. *Narrative Pedagogy: Bringing out the practice of Nursing in Students*

**Lisa**

Theme 1 1. *Teaching Transformed*

Theme 2 2. *Authenticity in Teaching*

Theme 1 3. *Co-learners with Narrative Pedagogy*

Theme 2 4. *Narrative Pedagogy: Beyond Strategy*

Theme 2 5. *Narrative Pedagogy: A Deliberate Turn*

6. *What we think students want*

Theme 1 7. *Narrative Pedagogy: New Ways of Learning*

Theme 1 8. *Learning from each other*

9. *Why Narrative Pedagogy?*

10. *Testing What We Can't Measure*

Theme 2 11. *Narrative Pedagogy is who I am*

Theme 1 12. *What does it mean to be cared for?*

13. *A Common Language*

Theme 2 14. *The Future of Narrative Pedagogy*

15. *Reflections on Concernful Practices*

Theme 1 16. *Transparency in Teaching*

**Stacy**

1. *Students thinking: the role of the nurse*

Theme 1 2. *Structure: What students (think they) want*

3. *Reflection is key*

4. *Sitting on my hands*

- 5. *Angry students due to lack of structure*
- Theme 2 6. *Taking students to the edge of the cliff*
- 7. *To structure or not to structure?*
- Theme 1 8. *Narrative Pedagogy: Driven by students*
- 9. *I don't know all of the answers*
- 10. *Learning from expert nurses at the bedside*
- 11. *Teacher as co-learner*
- 12. *Responsible for their own learning*
- 13. *No one needs to carry a textbook*
- 14. *Understanding the theory behind the pedagogy*
- 15. *Learning skills from the expert*
- 16. *Challenging the expert, respectfully*
- Theme 2 17. *Connecting with a mentor*
- 18. *Doing away with PowerPoints*
- Theme 1 19. *Finding comfort in the silence*
- 20. *Reflecting on reflection*
- 21. *Technical robots or skilled critical thinkers?*
- 22. *Surprises*
- 23. *Honoring learning while keeping patients safe*
- 24. *Only "top notch" preceptors*

**Emma**

- Theme 1 1. *The Way I Learned*
- 2. *It doesn't have to be that way*

- Theme 1 3. *The light just went on*
- Theme 1 4. *Narrative Pedagogy: Creating safe spaces for teacher and student story-telling*
- Theme 1 5. *Interpreting the stories*
- Theme 1 6. *Teachers & Students: Fearing Failure*
7. *When Narrative Pedagogy is hard.*
8. *Novice teachers are more passionate about Narrative Pedagogy*
- Theme 2 9. *I could never walk away . . . . It's who I am*
10. *Midwifery, woman, story sharing: It all works*
11. *Narrative Pedagogy is more than just story telling*
- Theme 1 12. *Qualities of a successful student in a Narrative Pedagogy setting*
- Theme 1 13. *Reflecting on student learning and clinical practice*
- Theme 1 14. *A huge surprise*
- Theme 2 15. *Some Teachers Never Come 'Round*
16. *A kind of teaching that you can never really prepare for*
- Monica**
1. *Coming to Narrative Pedagogy*
2. *Brave Enough*
3. *The very first time*
- Theme 1 4. *Narrative Pedagogy: Changing students' ways of thinking*
5. *Interpretations: The hardest part of Narrative Pedagogy*
6. *Differences in the classroom*
7. *Sometimes stories can show movement*

- Theme 2 8. *The students teach you*
9. *Monologue or story-telling?*
10. *Teachers & Students: Differences in stories*
11. *Narrative Pedagogy: It's hard work*
12. *Alternative Pedagogies: No evidence of effectiveness*
13. *I could never walk away from Narrative Pedagogy*
- Theme 2 14. *Narrative Pedagogy has made me a better teacher*



Appendix F: Definitions Table

| <b>Word</b> | <b>Definition</b>   |
|-------------|---|
| Attending   | Paying attention with all of our senses; being aware of what is said and not said – both are equally important. When we attend, we place ourselves within and outside of the activity, always mindful of what takes place.  |
| Comportment | Way-of-being-with; more than just what I do or how I am with another  |
| Gathering   | A way that teachers create spaces that invites conversations between students and teachers resulting in thinking and learning.  |
| Inclining   | The action of being drawn toward  |
| Mutuality   | Reciprocal relation between interdependent entities   |
| Reciprocity | A type of relationship based on an exchange, or an interchange; it is also giving-and-taking.   |
| Schooling   | <p>It is more than the process of being taught. Schooling should not be separated from learning and teaching; they all occur together.</p> <p>Schooling is one of the activities of teaching and learning.</p> <p>Schooling is more than mere cognitive gain or skill acquisition.</p> <p>“Schooling is more than the processes inherent in knowledge acquisition and skills training” (Diekelmann &amp; Diekelmann, 2009, p. 193).</p> |

| <b>Word</b>              | <b>Definition</b>  |
|--------------------------|--|
| Teaching hermeneutically | Teaching interpretively and reflectively. In order to gather with students in learning using Concernful Practices, the teacher reflects and interprets what happens in the teaching and learning environment.                    |
| Themes                   | Themes are not “‘the same thing’ said again and again, but rather an understanding [that] we have seen something that matters significantly, something that we wish to point the reader towards” (Smythe et al., 2008, p. 1392). |
| Titles                   | Careful consideration was given to titling the stories in this study. Titles are another way to make meaning from the story.   |
| Turn                     | A deliberate re-direction of focus; an action that moves one toward something new. This re-directing often occurs as a result of encountering a barrier that invites consideration of where we are going.                        |

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## CURRICULUM VITAE

Ruth A. Stoltzfus

### Education

|  |  |      |
|--|--|------|
| PhD<br>Nursing Science                 | Indiana University<br>Indianapolis, IN | 2012 |
| MSN<br>Pediatric Nurse<br>Practitioner | Indiana University<br>Indianapolis, IN | 1987 |
| BSN                                    | Goshen College<br>Goshen, IN           | 1979 |

### Academic Appointments

| Dates          | Courses  | Role in Course   |
|----------------|--|------------------|
| 2011 – present | Advanced Health Assessment<br>(Graduate Program)     | Faculty          |
| 2010           | Role Foundations<br>(Graduate Program)               | Faculty          |
| 2010 – present | Pediatrics Didactic & Clinical<br>(Graduate Program) | Lead faculty     |
| 2009           | Health Care Ethics<br>(Undergraduate)                | Faculty          |
| 2008 – 2010    | Concepts & Strategies in Nursing                     | Faculty          |
| 2008 – present | Adult Health Clinical<br>(Graduate Program)          | Clinical Faculty |
| 2008 – present | Women’s Health Clinical<br>(Graduate Program)        | Clinical Faculty |
| 2008 – present | Curriculum Coordinator FNP<br>Program                |                  |
| 2008 – 2010    | Pediatrics Clinical & Didactic<br>(Undergraduate)    | Faculty          |



|                             |   |  |
|-----------------------------|---|--|
| 2008                        | Pharmacology<br>(Undergraduate)                                   | Assistant to lead Faculty  |
| 2007 – present              | Cross-Cultural Aspects of Health<br>& Illness<br>(BSN completion) | Faculty  |
| 2005 – 2006                 | Study Service Term (SST):<br>Dominican Republic                   | Faculty leader during a<br>three-month<br>international education<br>course. Led 2 groups.<br>SST combines elements<br>of language, cultural<br>learning, and service. |
| 2003 – 2005                 | Holistic Client Assessment<br>(BSN completion)                    | Faculty  |
| 2000 – present              | Human Sexuality<br>(SoAn 300/Soc 260)                             | Co-teach with Keith<br>Graber Miller, PhD  |
| 2000 – 2011                 | Wellness Class  | Guest lecture  |
| 2001 – 2005;<br>2008 – 2009 | Holistic Client Assessment<br>(Undergraduate)                     | Lead Faculty with up<br>to 3 clinical faculty  |

### **Professional Memberships**

| Dates          | Organizations  |
|----------------|--|
| 2010 – present | Coalition of Advanced Practice Nurses of Indiana (CAPNI)                     |
| 2009 – present | American Academy of Nurse Practitioners (AANP)                               |
| 2008 – present | National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculty<br>(NONPF)               |
| 2008 – present | National League for Nursing  |
| 1987 – present | Fellow of NAPNAP (National Association of Pediatric<br>Nurse Practitioners)  |
| 1987 – present | Fellow AAP—American Academy of Pediatrics (as allied<br>health professional) |

1987 – present                      Sigma Theta Tau International, Honor Society of Nursing  
(Alpha Chapter & charter member of Nu-Omicron at large)

### **Professional Certification**

1987 – present                      The National Certification Board of Pediatric Nurse  
Practitioners & Nurses

### **Selected Service Activities**

Sept. 29, 2012                      Volunteer to provide free school physicals

Sept. 2010                              Latino Health Fair – took 9 graduate students who  
volunteered in various capacities; supervised 4 FNP  
students who performed clinical breast exams.

2007 – present                      Super Shot Saturday – an initiative from the Elkhart  
County Health Department to provide free immunizations  
to school-age children.

2007 – 2010                          Volunteer with flu shot clinics.

2000 – 2008                          Volunteer to provide free sports physicals at a private  
middle and high school.

2005                                      Helped to organize and provide free kindergarten exams  
and immunizations to uninsured and underinsured children  
in Elkhart County.

### **Invited Scholarly Activities**

Dates                                      Activities

December 8, 2011                      Podium presentation at International Narrative Pedagogy  
Research: Of conversation, narrative telling and dialogue,  
Auckland, New Zealand.

October 2009                          Review 3 chapters of new text book, *Pediatric Physical  
Examination and Health Assessment*, from Jones and  
Bartlett publishers.

August 2007                          Exam question writer for Pediatric Primary Care SAE for  
PNCB.

March 2007                              Exam question writer for Pediatric Nursing Certification  
Board (PNCB).

|                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| January 2007                          | In-depth chapter reviews for <i>Sexuality Today</i> by Gary F. Kelly, McGraw-Hill.        |
| May 2002                              | Review text book <i>Sexuality Today</i> by Gary F. Kelly, McGraw-Hill                     |
| 1992                                  | Seminar for Goshen College BSN students: asthma pathophysiology                           |
| May 1991                              | In-service for Maternal and Child Health Division of the Elkhart County Health Department |
| February 1991                         | Keynote address for Goshen College Nursing Student Mock Convention                        |
| March 1989                            | Newborn Assessment Workshop   |
| November 1988,                        | In-service for the Teenage Parenting Program Staff of the Elkhart County Schools          |
| January 1990, January 1992, May 1988, | In-service for Community Health Nurses of Elkhart County Health Department                |
| November 1987                         | Denver Developmental Screening Workshop for RN's  |

### **Professional Meetings & Continuing Education**

| Dates              | Activities  |
|--------------------|---|
| December 8-9, 2011 | International Conference, Narrative Pedagogy Research: Of Conversation, narrative telling and dialogue, Auckland, New Zealand.        |
| December 6-7, 2011 | International Conference, Hermeneutics at the critical edge: Conversations with Professor Hans-Herbert Kogler, Auckland, New Zealand. |
| August 12-13, 2011 | 3 <sup>rd</sup> International Narrative Pedagogy Conference, Quincy, IL   |
| June 20-23, 2011   | Institute for Hermeneutic Phenomenology, Indianapolis, IN   |
| October 2010       | Pharmacology: Infectious Disease Standards Assessment. Sponsored by NAPNAP  |

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| October 2010      | Pharmacology: Current Concepts Standards Assessment.<br>Sponsored by NAPNAP                               |
| September 8, 2010 | AACN's Essentials of Master's Education in Nursing (1.0 credit hours)                                     |
| June 21-24, 2010  | Institute for Hermeneutic Phenomenology, Indianapolis, IN   |
| June 28-30, 2010  | Project-Based Learning Institute, Indianapolis, IN.   |
| March 6, 2010     | Advanced Practice Nursing. Sponsored by Clarian Health Partners   |
| June 15-19, 2009  | Institute for Heideggerian Hermeneutical Methodologies, Indianapolis, IN                                  |
| May 2009          | Course Development Seminar, Goshen College.   |
| April 2009        | NONPF 35 <sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting: Building a Stronger Tomorrow for Nurse Practitioners, Portland, OR |

### **Scholarships & Awards**

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 2011 – 2012 | Travel Fellowship Award, Indiana University School of Nursing |
| 2011 – 2012 | Mininger Center Grant, Goshen College                         |
| May 2011    | Spotlight on Nursing Graduate Nursing Scholarship             |
| April 2011  | Emily Holmquist Award from IUSON Nursing Alumni Association   |
| 2010 – 2011 | Mininger Center Grant, Goshen College                         |
| May 2010    | Spotlight on Nursing Graduate Nursing Scholarship             |
| April 2010  | YWCA – Woman of Wisdom scholarship award                      |
| May 2009    | Indiana League for Nursing Scholarship award                  |
| Spring 2009 | AARP/AAUW Northern Indiana scholarship award                  |
| 2009 – 2010 | Mininger Center Grant, Goshen College                         |
| 2008 – 2009 | Mininger Center Grant, Goshen College                         |