THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF STUDENTS AS ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN THE NURSING CLASSROOM: A CRITICAL HERMENEUTIC INQUIRY

A Dissertation Presented

by

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ABSTRACT

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A CRITICAL HERMENEUTIC INQUIRY

June 2008

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This qualitative study explored the lived experiences of students as English language learners in the nursing classroom. The study is a direct response to the under-representation of students from linguistically diverse backgrounds in nursing education, the call for greater diversity in the nursing workforce and profession, and the issue of ever-increasing numbers of students entering college as English language learners. Employing interpretive phenomenological methodology, participants engaged, in open-ended, hermeneutic interviews which yielded new understandings of everyday concerns that impact their academic success. A critical theoretical framework applied during data analysis exposed power structures impacting student experience across language, culture, classroom practices, and socioeconomics.

Four themes emerged from interviews with six participants at an urban community college in the Northeast. These themes include the ways in which students make adjustments, overcome doubts, demonstrate determination, and co-create community. Findings suggest that the key to participants' academic progress involves additional academic learning time dedicated to studying the English language, along with learning the language of health care and nursing concepts. Findings also reveal that students experienced classroom environments as uneven and unequal; some classes fostered learning and the development of higher order thinking skills while others did not. Traditional and monocultural practices, representing acts of power and dominance, thwarted learning and possibly contributed to lack of progress. Yet participants also articulated learning gains despite challenges presented by less effective pedagogical practices and socioeconomic realities.

Finally, this query initially related to a notion of identity but expanded to participants' perceptions of "being-in-the-world," their sense of wholeness, and to future endeavors. Faced with myriad inequalities and missed opportunities in the classroom, a pattern of hope and possibility was also revealed as central to participants' outlook as each suggested ways to enhance teaching and learning in the nursing classroom and beyond. This study counters the dominant perception that students without a greater command of English are not ready for the rigors of nursing education. The study, therefore, offers specific recommendations to faculty, policy makers, and students for creating inclusive classroom practices and keeping the doors to nursing education open to students developing English proficiency.

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"Things that change force themselves on our attention far more than those that remain the same" (Gadamer, 1975, xxii).

This acknowledgment attends to those who have stayed me throughout this dissertation journey. How can I really acknowledge all who have provided me with new understandings, support, and love beyond their knowing? Simply by trying...

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> "...do not think it strange if a dialogue leaves undefined what is really intended, or even restores it back to the keeping of the undefinable. That is part, I believe, of every dialogue that has turned out well between thinking beings. As if of its own accord, it can take care that that undefinable something not only does not slip away, but displays its gathering force ever more luminously in the course of the dialogue" (Heidegger, 1971, 13).

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Overview and Forethought

In 2007 an estimated 30% of the nation's populace claimed membership in diverse groupings, either racially, ethnically, or linguistically (U.S. Census, 2007). Who we are as a society, however, is not reflected in nursing education or nursing practice today, and unlikely to be so in the near future. This glaring disparity in representation is highlighted in the National Sample Survey of Registered Nurses, a federal nurse survey conducted every four years which has documented that out of a total 2.9 million licensed RN's only 10.6% of the respondents report racial and ethnic groupings other than White (non-Hispanic), along with an additional 7.5% unspecified (Health Resources and Services Administration, 2004). Although increasing representation is critical to meeting the nation's present and future health care needs, current growth patterns can be described as slow moving at best. Today's attendance and graduation rates within nursing education programs reveal that tomorrow's health care professionals will likely neither catch up nor keep pace with the nation's changing racial, ethnic, and linguistic population patterns.

Underrepresentation and the nursing shortage

Experts generally agree that the nursing profession's capability to meet the country's health care needs and challenges is dependent on its capacity to embrace students and nurses entering the profession from diverse groups (National League for Nursing [NLN], 2008; Nugent, Childs, Jones, Cook, & Ravenell, 2002; Tanner, 2003). The Sullivan Commission on Diversity in the Healthcare Workforce and the National Advisory Council on Nurse Education and Practice (NACNEP) has called for increasing the number of underrepresented minorities to reflect the populace and to address the many concerns brought to light in recent health care disparity reports. These reports concluded that minorities receive lower quality health care for serious conditions and routine services.

Issues of quality, such as improving access to care, patient satisfaction, communication patterns between patient and provider, and educational experiences for health care students of diverse or minority backgrounds, were linked to services provided by health care professionals of similar backgrounds (Deville, 1999; Institute of Medicine, 2002; National Academies of Sciences, 2003; Smedley, Stith, & Nelson, 2003). Moreover, a lack of language competence in health care has resulted in impaired exchange of information, less access to services, and lower levels of preventative care (Sullivan Commission, 2004). Increasing acceptability of services by minority populations improved with greater numbers of minority nurses, along with concomitant language and cultural compatibility (NACNEP, 2000).

The issue of underrepresentation is further compounded by today's nursing shortage, a shortage which is projected to worsen in the next fifteen years as all three types of pre-licensure RN nursing education programs- diploma, associate degree, and baccalaureate degree, cannot keep pace with current market need, let alone increased demand for greater numbers of nurses. Projections show that the RN supply will continue to decline and by 2020 the workforce will be 29% below need (NLN, 2007a).

The nursing shortage can be attributed to many factors, including an aging nursing workforce, an overall decrease in numbers of students entering nursing schools, increasing health care needs for an aging population, and the lack of qualified, well compensated faculty (American Association of Colleges of Nursing [AACN], 2007; NLN, 2007b; Valiga, 2002). Even with the encouraging news of a reported 22% increase in applications, admissions, and enrollments in 2005 over the previous year, schools of nursing continue to reject record numbers of qualified applicants. For example, schools rejected more than 147,000 qualified applicants in 2005, an 18% increase over 2004 figures, primarily due to the decline in faculty (NLN, 2005). The increasing number of rejected qualified applicants, along with variability in admission criteria definitions of "qualified applicants" across academic institutions, adds to the growing concern of underrepresentation.

Moreover, statistics identifying specific ethnic and linguistic groups are often unavailable and preclude a more accurate depiction of representation and related admission, completion, graduation, and employment concerns. Nursing education programs report admissions data only by racial and not ethnic or language breakdowns.

The estimated percentage of African American student admissions to all nursing programs in 2003, for example, was 14.5%, up slightly from 12.7% in 2002. Percentages of admitted students from other groups, Hispanic, Asian, and American Indian, were 6%, 5%, and 1.2 % respectively. Yet the overall percentage of graduates stayed at 11.9% for African American students, and 5.6%, 3.9%, and 1% for graduates from the other respective groups (NLN, 2006a). Despite slim increases in overall admissions, corresponding numbers of nursing graduates by racial groups remained relatively unchanged. More disturbing, no growth in minority representation has been documented since then (NLN, 2006b). Without a concerted effort by the nursing education community to address admission, progression, completion, graduation, and employment rates for students and graduates of all groups, concerns about underrepresentation will likely keep mounting.

Furthermore, federal nursing surveillance data has not kept pace with U.S Census Bureau data which created new definitions for demographic categories in 2004 and now reports ethnic and language backgrounds, as well as racial backgrounds (U.S. Census, 2004). Lack of consistency in definitions and specificity in groupings has created confusion in reporting nursing study findings. Therefore, for this study's purpose, the use of the word "diverse" is intentionally broad to describe persons from underrepresented backgrounds, either racially, ethnically, or linguistically, unless otherwise indicated.

Degree completion and English language learners

Characterizing students by specific racial or ethnic identifiers, while analyzing such rates, imparts limited information at best. Descriptors, such as educational

experience, preparation, expectations, learning styles, fluency in English, native language use, immigration status, cultural affiliation, level of acculturation, age, socioeconomic status, and family status, create a more inclusive and nuanced exploration, especially when considered in conjunction with educational environments and larger structural issues. Keller (2001) and Miller (2003), for example, pointed out that students enrolled in community colleges possessed varying degrees of social and cultural capital, or the set of characteristics, assets, attitudes, values, behaviors, and norms that impact student departure, retention, and degree completion. Earlier schooling may have failed students, or educational experiences may be far in the past for older students, further compounding concerns.

In particular, attending to nursing students with limited English proficiency and lower degree completion patterns, is important as educators strive to enhance instructional processes, improve learning outcomes, and facilitate the entry of greater numbers of students from diverse backgrounds into the nursing profession. Program completion rates, degree attainment, and nursing licensure exam pass rates represent the quantifiable measures of academic nursing success. Lower nursing entrance exam scores, higher attrition rates, particularly in the first semester, along with lower graduation rates, and lower pass rates on the national nursing licensure exam amongst students from diverse backgrounds have been reported (Evans, 2004; Fitzsimons & Kelley, 1996; Fletcher et al, 2003; Flinn, 2004 ; Kosowski, Grams, Taylor, & Wilson; 2001; Martin-Holland, Bello-Jones, Shuman, Rutledge, & Sechrist, 2003; Villaruel, Canales, & Torres, 2001; Weaver, 2001; Yoder, 2001; Yurkovich, 2001). Despite a concern for academic

success amongst students from diverse backgrounds by a handful of educators, researchers, and policymakers, this issue has lacked national, statewide, and local attention and action by the nursing practice and education communities. Increasing diversity in the nursing healthcare workforce, education, and leadership and improving the overall health of the nation will remain elusive goals without a concerted effort by greater numbers of institutional leaders and researchers.

Investigators have primarily focused research efforts on identifying particular variables associated with academic success; including English as a Second Language (ESL), or more accurately those in the process of acquiring English language skills and knowledge or English language learners or ELLs. English language learners are defined as meeting the federal government's definition of having limited English proficiency, that is an individual who has limited ability in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language; whose native language is a language other than English; or who lives in a family or community environment in which a language other than English is the dominant language (U.S. Department of Education, 1998). The term English language learner has also been defined as referring to those who primarily speak a language other than English at home and is used interchangeably with limited English proficiency (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2004).

In the past ten years alone, the number of K-12 students with limited English proficiency grew by over 60%, the majority being students with Hispanic and Asian backgrounds (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition and Language Instruction Educational Programs, 2006). Persons of Hispanic and Asian backgrounds

constitute the fastest growing population groups within the U.S. today with Hispanics comprising the largest minority group or 15% of the total population (U.S. Census, 2007). Population estimates project that in 2050, Hispanics, African American, and Asian Americans will constitute a new U.S. majority. By 2050 the Hispanic population will triple from 36 million to 103 million, the Asian American population will triple from 11 million to 33 million, and the African American population will almost double from 36 million to 61 million (U.S. Census, 2004). Therefore, greater attention to today's college students with limited English language proficiency makes sense in consideration of those who will be entering college in the near future.

Purpose

The phenomenon of interest for this study was the lived experience of students as English language learners in the nursing classroom. To explore student experience, I engaged students in dialogue via open-ended interviewing, followed by listening and transcribing narratives and interpreting participants' texts. This qualitative study specifically centered on students learning in the urban community college setting as the main access point into higher education for many students from diverse backgrounds. Additionally, this study focused solely on student learning in the traditional college nursing classroom. Teaching and learning occurs across many settings in nursing-classrooms, labs, and clinical areas involving a broad host of participants. Yet the classroom represents a common learning site shared by large numbers of students.

Research Question

Student classroom experience and the experiences of students as English language learners have not been well researched. The majority of learning environments neither reflect heightened faculty awareness nor innovative teaching practices for diverse learners. Furthermore, their academic success continues to falter. This explorative study, therefore, centers on the phenomenon of the lived experience of students as English language learners and the concerns that shape their realities in the nursing classroom by asking the question:

What does it mean to be a student learning nursing and English in the classroom?

Szelenyi and Chang (2002) have reported that English language learners are a distinct group with specific concerns. This inquiry, therefore, focuses on the perspectives of this particular grouping of students to shed light on the phenomenon of their daily experiences as nursing students, on English language learning, and on concerns about learning environments.

Seeking a deeper understanding of student experience in the nursing classroom brings forth many questions, some related to commonalities and some to differences. Do the perceptions of a predominantly monolingual educator have any connection to what students themselves are experiencing? Do students see themselves as both nursing students and English language learners, focused primarily on academic or other relevant concerns? How is it that some students are learning and succeeding with observable limited language proficiency and others are not?

Significance

Inquiring about the experiences of students as English language learners is a significant area of study for numerous reasons. English language acquisition and proficiency is universally agreed upon to be a vital component of educational attainment; yet many community college students demonstrate limited English skills (Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees, 2007; Jackson & Sandiford, 2003; Szelenyi & Chang, 2002). Although the numbers of English language learners in nursing programs is currently unknown, limited English language proficiency has been well reported as one of the most challenging barriers to nursing student success (Abriam-Yago, Yoder, & Kataoka-Yahiro, 1999; Guhde, 2003; Kataoka-Yahiro & Abriam-Yago, 1997; Klisch, 2000; Malu & Figlear, 1998; Newman & Williams, 2003; Pacquiao, 1996a). Students *and* faculty lack awareness as to the extent that English language proficiency impacts student success (Abriam-Yago et al., 1999). Students acquiring English language learning skills often require supplemental instruction related to ongoing language development and cognitive academic language proficiency; however, the scope of programmatic delivery of additional services remains unknown.

Language is basic to the development of new knowledge, skills, values, and ways of thinking, essential learning elements in educational environments for all students. Students find themselves engaged in multiple forms of communication and associated languages and literacies while enrolled in nursing education programs. These associated languages and practices are commonly practiced, in written and spoken forms, across all settings in nursing academia and health care.

Nursing academic activities are considered "cognitively demanding," requiring deliberate focus on understanding the language and concepts related to complex patient care. Moreover, nursing students often learn in "context-reduced" communicative situations, such as attending large lecture classes, where dialogue and interactive activities may be limited. Furthermore, students read complex texts which present fewer clues and are more linguistically demanding (Abriam-Yago et al., 1999). Interpretation of context-reduced communicative situations depends on the student's knowledge of the language (Cummins & Schecter, 2003; Fillmore & Snow, 2000; Santos, 2004). Given these conditions, comprehension and retention of material can present new challenges to English language learners in nursing programs.

Sociocultural context in learning and success

A closer examination of the classroom environment and faculty practices shifts the dialogue from particular students to more complex issues, including faculty-student interaction and the social and cultural contexts of learning (Braxton, 2000; Fitzsimons & Kelley, 1996; Shaw, Valadez, & Rhoads, 1999). Culture is defined as "the shared values and beliefs that serve four purposes: to convey a sense of identity, to facilitate commitment to an entity other than self such as a college, to enhance the stability of a group's social system, and to provide a sense-making device that guides and shapes behavior" (Rendón, Jalomo, & Nora, 2002, p. 136). Culture plays a central role in the classroom setting with language concerns placed under the culture rubric. Greater percentages of nursing students enrolled in nursing schools in community colleges are depicted as "non-traditional", that is, they may be older, have more family and financial

obligations, or come from racial, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds different from the majority faculty. In contrast, ninety percent of nursing faculty are characterized as older, White, middle class, English-only speakers, and have received little or no preparation in teaching students with cultural or linguistic backgrounds different from their own (Branch, 2001; NLN, 2007b; Tucker-Allen, 1994; Yoder, 1997).

Faculty lack awareness that educational practices can disadvantage those from cultural backgrounds different than their own (Kataoka-Yahiro & Abriam-Yago, 1997; Trueba & Bartolomé, 2000). Monocultural practices can minimize or ignore students' heritage and abilities and directly impede student success (Garcia & Smith, 1996; Rendón, 1996, 1999; Yoder, 1996). Nursing education literature lacks clarity in defining cultural diversity, cultural differences, diverse or multicultural backgrounds, or underrepresented minorities and often includes students from different racial, ethnic, linguistic, or native and immigrant backgrounds under one or more of these headings. Lack of faculty understanding of cultural differences, along with student perceptions of hostility, prejudice, and racism, contribute to unfavorable learning environments and departure decisions (Barbee & Gibson, 2001; Campinha-Bacote, 1998; Hassouneh-Phillips, 2003; Kosowski et al., 2001; Merrill, 1998; Tayebi, Moore-Jazayeri, & Maynard, 1998; Sommer, 2001; Weaver, 2001).

Correspondingly, faculty disinterest and resistance have been reported as obstacles to changing pedagogical practices (Bok, 2006; Pardue, Tagliareni, Valiga, Davison-Pierce, & Orehowsky, 2005). Compounding these concerns are nurse educators who, similar to other higher education faculty, hold advanced degrees within their

specific disciplines, and rarely in education. Moreover, Cummins & Schecter (2003) report that most educators have not acquired expertise in multilingualism. Given academic and disciplinary priorities and competing demands, a concerted interest in students as English language learners in nursing programs has yet to rise to the top. Hence, educational achievement for students developing English language proficiency continues to receive inadequate attention despite the call from professional groups for greater representation and diversity in health care and academia (AACN, 2008b; NLN, 2008; Sullivan Commission, 2004).

Nevertheless, few nurse educators have designed studies to explore academic success for students from diverse backgrounds. Their work highlights faculty, known as "bridging" or "bicultural" faculty, who exemplify greater awareness to differing worldviews and to their positionality in the classroom; "bridging" faculty implement numerous instructional strategies conducive to learning for students from diverse backgrounds (Flinn, 1999; Kelley & Fitzsimons, 2000; Pacquiao, 1996a; Yoder, 1996). More recent studies have highlighted faculty who are implementing newer pedagogical practices, including narrative and critical pedagogies, to draw upon student knowledge and shared experience, to equalize power relationships in the classroom, and to enhance learning (Diekelmann & Lampe, 2004; Diekelmann & Mikol, 2003; Ironside, 2004; Mikol, 2005; Tanner, 2004). These practices are currently carried out by small, but reportedly increasing, numbers of innovative educators.

Providing intentional support to students from diverse backgrounds for successful program completion, however, remains a continuing challenge for a majority of

educational programs (Fletcher et al, 2003; Kelley & Fitzsimons, 2000; Newman & Williams, 2003). Consequently, there is good reason for concern about nursing students' experiences, classroom practices, and academic achievement, particularly for students with limited English proficiency, now and for the foreseeable future. In the U.S., two-thirds of all new nursing students enter RN nursing education via associate degree nursing programs in community colleges (American Association of Community Colleges, 2008). Therefore, it is both timely and important to specifically pay attention to the experiences of students in this sector.

Policy expectations and practices

An in-depth study focusing on student learning in the classroom environment is important for practice and policy decision-making as well. Many educators observe a disconnect among students, pedagogical practices, learning, and success (Banks, 1998; Braxton, 2000; Canales, 2002; Howard, 1999; Rothenberg, 2002; Sleeter & McLaren, 1995). Compounding this lingering concern are new threats to student enrollment, progression, and completion numbers. In an increasingly competitive enrollment environment current nursing school admission practices jeopardize the selection of students from diverse backgrounds (Belack, 2005; Mulready-Shick, 2005, National Advisory Council on Nurse Education and Practice, 2000).

In this era of increasing regulation multiple stakeholders, such as state boards of higher education, state boards of nursing, and national nursing education accrediting bodies, expect schools to demonstrate and quantify higher levels of performance and quality. Schools respond accordingly to external pressure and tighter controls by altering

practices, often focusing on efficiency over effectiveness. For example, schools may raise admission criteria admitting only those applicants with the highest grade point averages and nursing admission exam scores, thereby choosing only those who perform best on standardized English, reading, math, and science exams, rather than taking into account a wider range of abilities and personal attributes. Consequently, those considered educationally disadvantaged, often including students from diverse backgrounds, continue to be placed at even greater disadvantage (Belack, 2005).

Limiting admissions to students from diverse and underrepresented groups can be viewed as an exclusionary practice. For instance, use of admission exam results may lead to denials for greater percentages of students who may be either academically underprepared or lacking well developed test-taking skills, which often includes students from diverse backgrounds. Admission exam scores, moreover, do not measure or predict a student's future competency as a health care practitioner (Sullivan Commission, 2004). Standardized test scores, though arguably more efficient, cannot fully measure or encompass the scope of abilities and attributes needed for academic success. Admission test scores are imprecise and incomplete approximations of potential academic performance (Sullivan Commission, 2004).

Also, completion rates for educationally disadvantaged students are increasingly threatened. In pre-licensure nursing education programs, administering high stakes multiple choice type exams is standard practice for measuring learning, determining academic progression and completion, and preparing students for the national licensure exam. Schools are mandated by state boards and national accrediting bodies to conform

to pre-determined performance outcomes, measured by nursing licensure exam pass rates. Consequently, strict standards are often enacted by programs, such as requiring increasingly higher passing course grades or multiple high-stakes course and program exit exams, to meet imposed performance criteria. Students with limited English language proficiency are negatively impacted in larger numbers by these policies, as evidenced by lower progression and completion rates. Yet at the same time, leading experts raise questions about the problematic nature of high stakes multiple choice testing and its relationship to thinking, learning, caring, and performing safely in practice (del Bueno, 2005; Diekelmann, 1992; Ironside, 2004).

Connecting performance, learning, cognition, student experience, and success are seen as priority policy concerns across sectors. The National Advisory Council on Nurse Education and Practice (NACNEP), for example, created a policy goal to address the specific indicators of academic success for minority students and its impact on developing future leaders in their 2000 report to the Secretary of Health and Human Services and Congress (NACNEP, 2000). Hence, exploring the lived experiences of language minority students directly supports this agenda.

As one in five children are growing up in households where a language other than English is being spoken, focusing on classroom experiences for English language learners becomes increasingly relevant (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2004). Over the past fifteen years, the number of ELL K-12 students in U.S. schools more than doubled and ELL enrollment increased at nearly seven times the rate of total student enrollment (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition and Language

Instruction Educational Programs, 2006). Yet educators, the majority of whom are English-only speakers, continue to report inadequate preparation and little formal training in educating increasing numbers of limited English proficient students.

At the same time policymakers claim interest in retaining and graduating greater numbers of students from diverse backgrounds. Yet, the American Council on Education's (ACE) Center for Advancement of Racial and Ethnic Equity 2004 Report, reflecting on the minority experience in higher education over the past twenty years, concluded that the country's future competitiveness will further falter if performance and graduation rates by students with limited English show little improvement (ACE, 2004). Educating students, already fluent in other languages and desiring greater English acquisition for health care careers, also become increasingly important as workforce demands expand in our multicultural, multilingual, global society.

Hence, a study of the lived experiences of students in the nursing education setting is germane for these reasons. Exploring the experiences of community college students as English language learners in the nursing classroom may reveal new understandings about students, learning, and success. Addressing the complexity of experiences and challenges faced by students across differences of language and intertwining aspects of culture, educational preparation, and socioeconomic status adds a critical dimension to this study. Remaining open to learning from what students have to teach us by giving voice to students less heard from has the potential to unmask new understandings instructive to all.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature exploring student experience in today's college classroom was reviewed across many disciplines. Chapter Two conveys foundational understandings about student perspectives and academic success, multicultural education, pedagogical practices in nursing education, and English language learning. Theoretical perspectives, predominantly interpretive and critical in nature, framed this review. It is important to note that the literature was reviewed at different times. Four areas of literature were reviewed during the dissertation proposal stage, as presented in this chapter. Later, during the data analysis stage as reported in Chapter Four, new understandings were sought primarily through additional philosophical and interpretive readings in feminist, phenomenological, and critical works.

Student Perspectives and Academic Success

Premature student departure from college remains a pressing concern for educators disquieted by achievement gaps and dedicated to reducing inequities and advancing democracy (Braxton, 2000). Hence, exploring the specific literature emphasizing student voice and position made sense. One cannot talk about student success without including students in the dialogue. Acknowledging this underlying

premise was critical: By including students in theory building and praxis, authority is relinquished and more egalitarian learning environments can be created (Giroux, 1992).

Left largely unexplored in the literature are the perspectives of students from diverse multilingual backgrounds. Researchers, not surprisingly, have called for greater inquiry into student academic success from varying ethnic and racial perspectives (Stage & Hossler, 2002). For example, Johnson (2002) advocated in favor of discourse analysis to address "student narrative in interactive discourse regarding students' experiences to generate theory that is more sensitive to cultural distinctions, along with acknowledging the constructed nature of reality giving a context for student persistence" (p. 167).

Given the paucity of studies centered on student perspectives, particularly students of multilingual backgrounds developing English proficiency, this literature review focused on perspectives of diverse college students and nursing students examining strengths students bring or create to overcome barriers to success. In the past, investigations were more likely conducted *on* students; that is, research questions originated from educators who, as dominant group members, solely determined what help and strategies students needed imposing educational practices and structures on students (Spring, 2004; Weis & Fine, 1993). Recently, however, educators have formulated their inquiries with student perspective more fully in mind.

From a critical theoretical perspective, exploring the voices of students from diverse backgrounds is crucial. Students are seen as transformative agents who can make a difference in forming more equitable milieus. Lincoln (1991) has explained that students provide the experience that is official curricular content, bringing voices that

have been marginalized and new cultures to academia. They are the "co-producers of knowledge, along with teachers, and are therefore central to the process of their own education" (p. 27).

Educational researchers studying what students have to say about student success are akin to Freire's partner-teachers. The researcher or teacher as midwife supports the full involvement of students in discovering student success in their particular location (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1995). Student voice plays a key role in theory and practice, in developing new learning communities and changing structures, rather than "accepting the received wisdom of a community that has prearranged structures of knowledge that define truth" (Tierney, 1993, p. 28).

Understanding the current realities of today's community college students by listening to their own voices is essential as a myriad of concerns, economic and personal circumstances, and conflicting commitments, often interfere with community college student success. When college attendance may not be a part of a student's family tradition or expectations, a student may face additional challenges, such as identity conflict, being perceived as different, and breaching family codes of unity and loyalty (Rendón & Garza, 1996). Students may find that that going to college is "tantamount to living between two worlds and retain separate identities, mannerisms and peer associations" and without academic and social support, students often depart (p. 293).

The central role of self agency

Yet despite identifiable economic and personal concerns, a number of qualitative studies have indicated that students can meet with academic success. Student narratives

provide rich evidence of the complex interactive process of coping and successful adaptation among some considered ethnic minorities. Self-efficacy, a strong sense of self, spiritual fortitude, and developing systems of social support have been described as key elements in finding academic success among nursing students from racial and ethnic minority backgrounds (Lisk, 2003; Zetlin-Ophir, Melitz, Miller, Podoshin, & Mesh, 2004).

In a phenomenological inquiry by Omotosho (1998) the crucial role of agency was revealed in the experiences of African students transitioning into American schools of nursing. Becoming a student meant becoming a stranger, facing challenges and confronting issues about difference, learning new technology, facing unfamiliar methods of testing, and learning unfamiliar cultural and language practices. Transitioning to the student role encompassed adaptation, determination to succeed, reconciliation of new and old experiences, and the realization that some experiences were not reconcilable. Recommendations called for faculty open-mindedness and sensitivity to students' attachments to home places.

Correspondingly, McGregor (1996) addressed student voice and power imbalances by exploring the meaning nursing students constructed from their successes and failures in the professional socialization process. McGregor's study represents one of the few research designs that have examined how nursing students make meaning from their experiences. Drawing from critical pedagogical, symbolic interactionist, and feminist frameworks, a portrait of how students and faculty roles are negotiated and managed from student and institutional perspectives emerged. Students coped via

"on-going bonding and setting boundaries, adopting a 'chameleon role', and moving from silence to an authentic voice", reiterating the student's ability to change roles and negotiate multiple identities as important components for success (p. vii).

Similarly, Padilla, Trevino, Gonzalez, and Trevino (1997) explored how students successful in college learned to face challenges. What accounted for the difference between those who completed programs of study and those who did not was the student's ability to overcome local barriers. In their study of Chicano university students, results indicated that successful students became experts in negotiating a myriad of barriers which included a lack of resources and nurturing. Padilla (1999) later demonstrated how successful students locally constructed both theoretical and heuristic knowledge to overcome barriers and subsequently took effective action.

The role of student as self agent and cultural worker has also been examined by other researchers. Rhoads (1996) elaborated on student capabilities to produce and transform his or her particular cultural environment whereas Giroux (1992) portrayed the student actively working to create meaning, expression and liberation. In Gonzalez' (2001) study of Chicano student participation in a predominantly Anglo college, "cultural struggle" emerged as a theme. Students saw themselves as cultural workers, or active agents, working to transform their cultural environment, "not just objects acted upon by a dominant oppressive environment, but subjects acting towards the transformation of the environment" (p. 555). Five important elements emerged in their cultural transformation process- family, friends, role models, language, and existing cultural works, including pictures, books, music, posters, paintings, all serving as sources of nourishment.

Institutional agents and sources of capital

Additional agents and sources of capital have also been found to support student success. Beyond student commitment to personal educational goals, positive interactions with agents within educational institutions have been found to relate positively with student retention and success. Faculty, friends, and family also aid students in acquiring cultural and social capital, thereby bolstering success. Cultural capital refers to the knowledge and skills bestowed upon students by others which provides for certain advantages, such as expectations for educational achievement. Whereas, social capital refers to the resources students gain from relationships and supportive networks.

From studying student success and departure via a cultural lens, studies indicate that cultural connections promote college success. Consistent with findings from the multicultural education literature, Kuh and Love (2002) highlighted the faculty role in promoting cultures of origin as a potential primary source of cultural capital positively affecting student success when woven into the teaching and learning process. Their recommendations included further study of student departure "via action research to discover what elements of cultures of immersion are encouraging students to persist and what elements are alienating" (p. 210). Kiang (2000) similarly promoted creating cultural contexts in which student voice and experience is expressed and valued as a vital component of educational equity and success.

For enhancing social capital, Stanton-Salazar (1997) suggested that students, particularly those considered marginalized, gain resources and support needed through relationships with institutional agents, such as faculty because " these ties represented

consistent and reliable sources from which students learned appropriate decoding skills and obtained other key forms of institutional support" (p. 7). Having greater contact with nursing faculty was recognized as a first step towards improving retention in Matteson-Kane and Clarren's (2003) study about student perceptions of faculty alienation. Students made social and academic gains from validating experiences, as exemplified by nurturing faculty and high levels of faculty-student interaction, which allowed students to express themselves as powerful knowers (Rendón, 1996). Rendón articulated that this validation, or active intervention from an in- or out- of class agent, could come from a faculty member, a friend, or family member who served as an "encouragement agent." This active agent initiated actions acknowledging the student as being capable of learning or instilling motivation for personal academic goal achievement.

The use of institutionally sanctioned discourse, or socially accepted ways of using language and engaging in communicative behavior, has been identified as another important source of knowledge. Stanton-Salazar (1997) described a "meta-awareness of relational strategies for negotiating one's way within social and institutional settings, an ability to code switch linguistically in different cultural settings and to juggle complex and disparate social identities" (p. 27). Yet, Rendón et al. (2002) pointed out that minority students were not accustomed to engaging in discourse, asking questions, or getting involved on their own, and therefore were unlikely to take responsibility for becoming integrated. Stressing the institution's and its agents' active roles in fostering validation, these investigators encouraged educators and administrators to take initiative,

reaching out to students by devising activities that would encourage active learning and interpersonal growth among students, faculty and staff.

In Pacquiao's (1996a) review of the literature on student interactions with faculty in nursing programs, faculty contact with students affected student learning, self-confidence, and moral development, both positively and negatively. Negative behaviors included lack of concern, giving unreasonable amounts of work, showing prejudice, and favoritism. Faculty practicing from a bicultural perspective possessed positive behaviors listed by students as caring, showing respect, honesty, and being a role model.

Furthermore, Conchas (2001) discovered that schools could circumvent inequality when school communities structured learning environments that linked academic rigor with strong collaborative relationships among students and teachers. Most importantly, student voices affirmed the significant role supportive institutional and cultural processes played in the formation of high achievement. In sum, family, friends, role models, including mentors and peer tutors, together with supportive structural and cultural institutional processes were frequently vocalized as relevant to academic success by students from diverse backgrounds (Conchas, 2001; Fletcher et al, 2003; Fox & Broome, 2001; Higgins, 2004; McGrath &Van Buskirk, 1999; Merrill, 1998; Price & Balogh, 2001; Shelton, 2003). Rather than singular, individual adaptations, complexity and collaboration were evident in the simultaneous interplay of structure and culture with agency.

At the programmatic level, Fitzsimons and Kelley (1996) quantitatively and qualitatively measured transcultural nursing retention within a collegiate program

designed collaboratively with four nursing programs. The program, titled the Transcultural Leadership Continuum, extended over four years and involved faculty and administrators working with a significant population of diverse students. Retention figures indicated progressive gains and significantly improved graduation rates, particularly for African American students. In addition to early intensive learning development, project researchers encouraged friendship relationships, minority mentor role models from among senior students and faculty, course schedules to accommodate heavy family and work responsibilities, and future career goals related to ongoing formal education (Kelley and Fitzsimons, 2000). Moreover, faculty development activities focused on an earlier cited concept, "educational biculturalism." Programmatic goals required a de-centering, placing the responsibility on faculty and administrators to adapt to meeting the needs of an ever-increasing population of students from diverse backgrounds with complex life challenges.

Evans (2004) filmed interviews with Hispanic/Latino and American Indian nursing students and cited barriers including "leaving home, entering a different world, feeling isolated from culture and family, experiencing the pull from home/family obligation, lacking parental understanding of factors needed for success, espousing traditional family values, facing economic difficulties, having work conflicts, experiencing racism, noticing a lack of welcome, and lacking understanding/support by teachers and rigid environments" (p. 220). Tenets of a "caring" curriculum were subsequently aligned with barriers to determine whether or not their use could prevent or

mitigate their severity. Evans found the "caring" curriculum to be a supportive programmatic structure useful in eliminating barriers.

Of import here is the emphasis placed on a need for programmatic and faculty change, rather than individual student improvement. Hitherto, nursing education literature had placed greater emphasis on student adaptation as the essential requirement for success, rather than focusing on structures and faculty; but this pattern appears to be shifting. Widening the circle of accountability for student learning and success to include the collective actions of educational agents gives voice to perspectives previously unheard.

Theoretical implications about learning and success

Research which focuses on student success as a function of particular student characteristics rather than the larger environment illustrates deficit or cultural deprivation theory. Deficit/cultural deprivation theory, one of four theoretical perspectives on learning and success, posits that success or failure resides exclusively with the individual and discounts the influence imposed by the organizational structure on the student's likelihood for achievement; individual cultural tradition is also downplayed (Tayebi et al., 1998). This theory is illumined when strategies, such as reading, study, time management, and test-taking skills are developed by faculty and administrators *for* students, centering on students with identified "deficiencies". Program admission or continuation is often conditional on required participation in supplemental learning skills programs (Hesser, Pond, Lewis, & Abbott, 1996; Parkes & Kirkpatrick, 1996; Thompson, 1998).

A review of nursing student success programs and strategies revealed an emphasis on educators calling for students to develop personal strengths and behaviors to maximize learning. Working within an imposed structure, student voice was present only in so much as identifying how he or she had improved (Kirkland, 1998; Symes, Tart, Travis, & Toombs, 2002). Student success is implied to hinge solely on individual behavioral changes and personal adaptation; capital gains and faculty and structural concerns are often unrecognized and absent.

Alternatively other researchers have embraced an effectiveness approach. Tayebi et al. (1998) explained effectiveness theory as "an inclusive participatory process whereby the vertical organizational structures of most educational systems are critiqued and the implementation of a horizontal structure is recommended" (p. 102). Inviting faculty, students, family members, friends, or community members to assist in student retention and success is encouraged with this approach (Butters, 2003; Jeffreys, 1998; Matteson-Kane &Clarren, 2003).

Recommendations from this genre typically include early identification of "at-risk" students. Dominant perspectives previously prevailed in assigning students of diverse backgrounds to the "at risk" category. However, nowadays "at risk" encompasses greater complexity in identifying students based on a range of environmental, academic and background variables with environmental variables, such as hours of employment and financial status often seen as exerting a greater influence on achievement. Jeffreys (1998) defined "at-risk" students as those more likely to overestimate their academic supports and underestimate their need for preparation and suggested ways educators

could assist students utilize their limited time more efficiently. Jeffreys (2004) later moved towards a more inclusive organizing framework to enhance student retention and success incorporating faculty, programmatic, and societal variables. Settling on whether students, faculty, or institutions are responsible for initiating and sustaining these relationships and strategies depends on one's theoretical viewpoint.

Campinha-Bacote (1998) asserted that the majority of retention activities in nursing education were Eurocentric in nature and placed responsibility on the shoulders of individual students and on their personal adaptations. Campinha-Bacote bemoaned the lack of an adequate repertoire of retention efforts honed from more complex collective actions centering on specific cultural strategies. Depicting a cultural difference approach, Campinha-Bacote suggested that this was due in part to the dearth of research on organizational characteristics and retention programs for ethnic minorities that were meeting with success.

Cultural difference theorists hypothesize that all students possess a rich culture heritage which often conflicts with the norms of the dominant community. Educational researchers adopting this viewpoint often investigate the richness of alternative cultures and advocate aligning teaching styles with cultural learning styles (Tayebi et al., 1998). Kosowski et al. (2001) studied the experiences of African-American nursing students engaged in intercultural caring groups while enrolled in a predominantly White nursing education program. Unique differences included discovering practical and psychological help with academic success and personal and professional growth from faculty and other support agents. Commonalities and contradictions with majority culture students emerged

in three distinct patterns. The first pattern was defined as bonding or non-bonding with the themes of connecting and disconnecting and feeling isolated and different. In the second pattern of supporting or non-supporting, three themes emerged- studying together, being open, and receiving faculty support. In the third pattern of beneficial or non-beneficial, three themes also emerged, "learning to relax and manage stress, being conscious of self and others, and recognizing non-caring" (p. 11). The investigators found that their abilities to illuminate experiences of minority students in a majority nursing education program, in which there were no minority faculty, were enhanced by sustaining a critical awareness, or a social, political, and racial consciousness, thus embodying a critical theoretical perspective.

Proponents of a critical theoretical perspective agree to the claims of cultural difference theorists. However, they enlarge the sphere and look more globally to inherent power differentials, asserting that education is shaped by social stratification whereby the dominant culture is empowered. From this perspective, examining structures that consciously or unconsciously support and act to preserve the domination of some groups while systematically oppressing others deserves inquiry. From this theoretical perspective, researchers often detail student experience with isolation and racism, showing how differences complicate one's ability to integrate successfully, academically, socially, and culturally. Marinara (1997) concluded that students are often asked to remove themselves from their experiences and learn a system of ideas and representations which reproduce societal inequities. Marinara called for educators to "teach students to

take uncomfortable risks and address their role as critical citizens who can animate a democratic culture" (p. 14).

Aligning more closely with the two latter theoretical viewpoints, Kossman (2003) studied African American and White faculty and student perceptions of nursing education culture and its impact on success. The following insights emerged as key findings: an awareness of universal struggle in nursing education, the pervasive and negative impact of racial prejudice on students' experiences, the conflict between nursing education's values and norms or typical behaviors of nurse educators, the positive impact of welcoming behaviors and negative impact of unwelcoming behaviors, and the key role of faculty on influencing minority student success. Welcoming behaviors, consistent with previous findings of Ballmer (1999), Jennette (1998), Kirkland (1998), and Weaver (2001), included personal support, an open door policy for student input, supportive programs, and clear and consistent policies. Recommendations also included an increased awareness by faculty of prejudice and unconscious privilege for greater sensitivity in valuing differences and perspectives of nursing students from diverse backgrounds.

Moreover, availing students to faculty from similar ethnic and racial backgrounds was a common theme (Choi, 2005; Sullivan Commission, 2004). Students verbalized the lack of diverse faculty role models and mentors as barriers to academic success (Martin-Holland et al., 2003; Mills-Wisneski, 2003; Wisnewski, 2003). Campbell and Davis (1996) found that minority faculty showed greater commitment to the success of students from similar backgrounds. However, these investigators argued that dedication from majority faculty was equally essential as dedication by both majority and minority faculty

was found to be the primary factor in minority student success. Although the authors suggested that faculty re-examine their beliefs and attitudes, no recommendations for faculty development or altering teaching strategies or learning environments were made.

The majority of nurse educators and researchers have yet to concentrate on restructuring learning environments cooperatively with students, although some are moving in that direction (Diekelmann & Mikol, 2003). Specific recommendations offered include respecting students as colleagues and full participants, increasing opportunities for student participation on departmental advisory committees, requesting input from students when developing culturally-relevant curricula, and involving students as co-creators of portions of nursing courses, (McGregor, 1996; Maloney, 2003; Thomas, 1996). Advocates of critical theoretical perspectives call out for greater power sharing between faculty and students and curricular and program co-creation via such teacher-student collaborative efforts.

Yurkovich (2001) implored faculty to act proactively through "culturally responsive advisement, culturally relevant environments, and use of humanistic and andragogical approaches, defined as the use of accumulated experiential reservoirs students bring to the learning environment, to teaching-learning processes" (p. 268). This approach exemplified student involvement in building local models of success. Likewise, Diekelmann (2003) expanded the concept of engendered community, or "learning how to enhance learning environments to be more inclusive, fair, and respectful, knowing that attending to shared and common concerns can be sustaining" (p.243).

A conceptual model for nursing student success, founded on models of nontraditional student success, was proposed by Jeffreys (2003). The nontraditional undergraduate retention and success (NURS) model presumes the greater importance of environmental variables in interaction with academic and social integration variables for nontraditional students. Jeffreys identified professional integration variables, namely nursing faculty advisement, enrichment programs, tutoring, peer encouragement, mentoring, and group membership, as central factors in nursing student success. This model represents effectiveness perspectives and begins to address cultural difference concerns. However, classroom environments, critical pedagogical practices, and student experiences within learning communities were not addressed. Consequently, these issues are more closely scrutinized in subsequent sections.

Summary

In sum, a commonly conveyed premise was the need for faculty to more closely attend to students' beings. By addressing who students really are and what they express as most significant, researchers suggested meaningful learning environments could be created. Since students represent a broad range of cultural and educational backgrounds, faculty could not assume a common knowledge base. Valuing student voice, differing perspectives, and individual cultures helped students see college and their own lives as inherently worthy.

What also came to light when considering student viewpoint was that learning has been negatively impacted by numerous barriers. Nursing programs, faculty, friends, family, and self were seen both as barriers *and* bridges. What was often described by

students as a barrier could also be recommended bridge or support to others. Collective action initiated by faculty, programs, and educational institutions promoted gains in students' social and cultural capital.

From the students' stance, settings which retained diverse students possessed multiple common characteristics: strong organizational climates and leadership attitudes, decision making geared towards maintaining high standards, cultural identity development, community-building activities, solid institutional support services, such as financial aid and child care, programmatic academic support services, strong faculty-student interaction, curricula highlighting cultural diversity and student experience, a culture of caring and support, and a commitment to hiring staff reflecting the diversity seen in the student population. These strategies highlighted a need to take into account approaches from multiple theoretical perspectives.

The experiences and challenges for college students with multicultural identities, including English language learners on campuses today, was inextricably intertwined with educational practices. Examining student experience and learning, particularly for those with multicultural, multilingual identities, deserves greater emphasis. Hence, a review of classroom experience, learning, and academic success from multicultural education perspectives follows.

Multicultural Education Perspectives

To gain an understanding of students as English language learners, the larger context of students as multicultural learners, faculty as multicultural educators, and

multicultural education practices was examined. Multicultural education seeks to promote equity for diverse students who vary in race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, social class, age, sexual orientation, religion, literacy, and language backgrounds (Nieto, 1999). Nieto states that primarily multicultural education is "an antiracist and basic education for all students which is embedded in a sociopolitical context and committed to social justice and critical approaches to learning" (p. xviii.) By designing and implementing multicultural curricula, educators can "reflect the nation's new emerging identity which will be perceived by all students as being in the broad public interest" (Banks, 1998, p. 14). Educators practicing from a multicultural education perspective promote cultural inclusiveness and educational transformation by revising current structures and practices to better meet current students' learning needs.

To help teachers become effective in multicultural settings, Banks (1998) advocated for teachers to first learn how to become insiders within a community by acquiring new knowledge, skills, and perspectives and suggested that educators stay mindful of majority or dominant thinking. Banks proposed five dimensions of multicultural education: content integration, the knowledge construction process, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, and an empowering school culture and social structure. For example, within the content integration dimension Banks and Banks (1999, p. 232) described four levels of multicultural content integration: "contributive (focusing on important events and people), additive (inserting concepts but not structure), transformative (emphasizing how society emerged from a complex synthesis and interactions of multiple groups) and social active (educating for criticism and change).

Related dimensions of multicultural education include faculty self-awareness, cultural competence, racism and social inequity, critical pedagogy, and the concepts of border knowledge, negotiating identities, monoculturalism, and biculturalism.

Faculty identity work and cultural competence

Faculty who view themselves as multicultural education practitioners explore their own backgrounds, past educational experiences, and current perspectives to better assist students and change practices. Inquiry into issues of identity, difference, culture, and power is emphasized as a critical first step for all educators working with students today. Some advocate for a deep understanding of one's own racial identity prior to teaching and relating to others in multicultural education settings (Howard, 1999; Tatum, 1997). Others call specifically for Whites to explore their racial identities within the context of power and privilege (Rothenberg, 2002; Rothschild, 2003).

In the process of studying students researchers can undergo self discovery. For example, Gonzalez (2001) became aware of his own struggle and pain living as an educator and researcher in a culture different from his past when studying Chicano student participation in a predominantly Anglo college. However, exploring one's own identity in the process of studying or teaching others may be considered unfamiliar or uncomfortable to others.

Few nursing faculty have reported engaging in such self-discovery (Yoder, 1997). Nursing studies rarely center on faculty identity work relative to students' cultural backgrounds and learning. More often, nurse researchers investigate developing competence about other cultures for establishing effective relationships with diverse

students and patients (Campinha-Bacote, 1991; Merrill, 1998). Sommer (2001) discovered faculty possessed limited knowledge and degree of comfort with self inquiry and related diversity issues, even though many stated embracing a multicultural nursing curriculum, including knowledge, sensitivity and valuing of cultural differences.

Yet a shift to focusing on the intersection of nursing faculty experience with students from diverse backgrounds is evident in qualitative inquiries (Crow, 1993; Dickerson & Neary, 1999; Kossman, 2003; Yurkovich, 2001). Through interpretive methodologies, researchers find avenues for faculty to assess their own personal beliefs and values while studying different student groups. For example, via hermeneutic analysis Dickerson and Neary (2000) discovered common themes and patterns from interviews with faculty described as Anglo-American teaching students of Native American background. The first theme emerged as the "academic worldview". Faculty expected assertive learning behaviors, achievement and winning, reflecting their middle-class Anglo-American values, as opposed to harmony and cooperation, values described as important to students of Native American heritage. The second theme surfaced as the "nursing worldview", or viewing nursing as a profession with a common base of values, beliefs, and customs, such as a concern for individual competence in care, professional communication, and cultural sensitivity.

The final theme involved nursing pedagogy, or traditional approaches to teaching and learning, including lecture, seminar, and clinical skills acquisition. Many faculty had not acquired knowledge in cultural competence, yet the need to bridge cultures emerged as a pattern along with developing greater cultural sensitivity. The study of cultural

groups other than one's own was indirectly utilized as a vehicle for self reflection, yet connecting learning about student and faculty differences to student success and pedagogical revision remained unexamined.

Yoder (1996) found most nursing faculty neither incorporated students' cultural knowledge nor helped them to preserve their own individual identities. Yoder initially investigated approaches employed by majority and minority nurse educators teaching students of diverse ethnic backgrounds. Varying levels of consciousness among nurse educators were discovered. Five archetypal faculty patterns emerged as "generic, mainstreaming, nontolerant, struggling, and bridging" (p. 320). Mainstreaming and generic approaches expected conformity and assimilation; cultural perspectives were devalued. The researcher hypothesized three variables that influenced low levels of faculty cultural awareness: educational preparation, self-awareness, and the specific educational setting. Nursing educators, who did cross over boundaries of race, culture, and class, were characterized in this study as "bridging" faculty. In contrast to other patterns, students' unique contributions were prized and cultural perspectives were reinforced by "bridging" faculty. These faculty helped students negotiate barriers, such as racism, and also advocated for institutional and larger societal changes.

Subsequently, Yoder (2001) specifically examined the teaching strategies of "bridging" educators, expanding the work of Dickerson and Neary (2000). "Bridging" faculty had the greatest levels of cultural awareness, which positively influenced their responsiveness to ethnically diverse students. "Bridgers" recognized the subtle needs and feelings of students of diverse ethnic backgrounds and identified the same needs that

students expressed. Furthermore, faculty made use of four major bridging strategies: "incorporated student's cultural knowledge, preserved cultural or ethnic identity, facilitated negotiating barriers, and advocated for system change" (p. 322). The "bridgers" in the study were all faculty from diverse backgrounds leading Yoder (2001) to recommend that nursing programs have on staff at least one person with advanced graduate preparation in transcultural nursing theory or cross cultural communication theory to promote strategic improvements. Such "bridging" faculty fully integrated all aspects of cultural competence and all dimensions of multicultural education as previously described by Banks (1998).

Educators who practice from a self-awareness perspective often assume not only an awareness of their own backgrounds but also an understanding and sensitivity to the histories, cultures, and learning styles of students when shaping new learning experiences (Dilg, 1999). Students who come to college believing they may be unsuccessful can be transformed by faculty who create meaningful in and out of class experiences that value cultural distinctiveness (Laden, 1999). Individual transformation along with institutional transformation can stem from learning about students' cultures. Recommendations for developing cultural literacy include studying students' countries of origin, focusing on languages spoken, names, and origins, visiting students' neighborhoods, attending local cultural activities, reading well-known literature from the students' heritages, and interviewing members for understanding life stories (Cheng, 1993).

Yet Campinha-Bacote (2003) claimed that nurses must first possess cultural "desire", or the motivation to engage in the process of cultural awareness, prior to

seeking encounters to become culturally skilled. In addition to cultural desire, Campinha-Bacote's (2002) five constructs of cultural competence included cultural desire, awareness, knowledge, skill, and encounters. Alternatively, Hayes (1997) found that nursing faculty possessed a greater awareness and desire for a culturally inclusive curriculum when the curriculum was foundationally based on the concept of caring. Suitably, Leininger (2005) drew the two concepts of care and cultural competence together into the central tenet of cultural congruent care in her theory of culture care diversity and universality, connecting cultural care to larger political and economic structures.

Racism and social inequities

Banks and Banks (1999) described attending to larger social issues as the transformative and social active levels of multicultural education practice. Meleis (1996) suggested that multicultural education in nursing should not stop at learning about cultural heritages but rather address how heritage has been used to marginalize people and deprive them of fair and equitable access. Hitherto, nursing theorists often left larger institutional and societal issues unexplored or unchallenged and without regard to the dynamics of race, sex, and class (Boutain, 1999; Drevdahl, 1999, 2002; Kirkham & Anderson, 2002). Moving beyond a focus on cultural background, researchers have called for greater theory-building and practice from a critical perspective, inclusive of racism and social inequities, culture, language, identity, and power for constructing greater societal equity, rather than continuing to deny or ignore current realities (Canales, 2002;

Cowling, Chinn, and Hagedorn, 2000; Drevdahl, 1999; Hassouneh, 2006; Kirkham & Anderson, 2002; Spence, 2005).

Drawing from the American Nurses Association's Position Statement on Discrimination and Racism in Health Care, Campinha-Bacote (2003) affirmed that "discrimination and racism continue to be a part of the fabric and tradition of American society and adversely affect minority populations, the health care system in general, and the profession of nursing"(p. 239). Others have also advocated for faculty and students to critically reflect upon racist attitudes and practices as important first steps in challenging the status quo of racism in nursing education. Hassouneh-Phillips' (2003) critical hermeneutic study found racism to be pervasive, harmful, and largely invisible to Euro-American faculty and students. Moreover, Byrne (2000) uncovered racial biases as stereotyping, imbalance and selectivity, fragmentation, linguistic unreality, and omissions in a study of nursing texts. Likewise, Perez's (2003) analysis of successful Mexican-American nursing students revealed primary language and negative instructor bias. What becomes clear is that at the beginning of a new century, the need for critical examination and instruction about racism, discrimination, bias, and class still remains (Brown, 2001).

Critical pedagogical practices and language development

Faculty who espouse such critical perspectives promote the use of critical or emancipatory pedagogies in the classroom. For example, Abrums and Leppa (2001) advocated teaching about race, gender, ethnicity, language, class, and sexual orientation utilizing the theory of "relational positionality" to help students recognize that everyone has a perspective through which they view the world as "normal"; and, "normal", as

defined by the dominant group, can create situations of oppression for others (p. 270). A critical perspective in the classroom de-centers dominant culture giving voice to persons previously marginalized. Phillips and Drevdahl (2003) emphasized an awareness of the language of race as a first step in raising consciousness about the impact of language that many may take for granted as being neutral. Boutain (1999) recommended analyzing language via critical discourse analysis to explore power relationships and expose hegemonic practices.

Sleeter and McLaren (1995) viewed multicultural education and critical pedagogy as mutually informing constructs and suggested their usefulness in changing existing educational structures. A critical view of multiculturalism advances a critical pedagogical perspective. Since "critical pedagogy begins with the experiences and viewpoints of students it is by nature multicultural" (Nieto, 2004, p. 360). Similarly, Wink (2000) explained that "critical pedagogy asks why and how knowledge gets constructed the way it does and how and why some of the constructions of reality are legitimated and celebrated by the dominant culture while others are not" (p. 36). In addition to the central concept of border knowledge, or the multiple forms of knowledge that reside outside of the canon and cultural mainstream, problem posing is encouraged in critical pedagogy. Building on the work of Freire (1993), multicultural educators teach by beginning with the students' own experience, identify, investigate and pose a problem within the student's own life, and problem solve together, thereby creating ways to act collaboratively.

Critical pedagogical practice is akin to Cummins (1994) minority student empowerment model, a socioacademic achievement approach which emphasizes multiple knowledges, literacies, cultures, and histories, inclusive of social inequity concerns. Schecter and Cummins (2003) have highlighted the specific concerns of language development, one educational issue brought to light by changing student demographics. The researchers proposed that faculty and educational institutions are generally oriented towards three separate constructs, which can be expressed as language as problem, with its primary focus on providing ESL classes, language as a right, with its support for home language development, and language as a resource or a strength to be developed in the classroom.

When language diversity is viewed as problematic, Bartolome´ (2006) has encouraged faculty to examine the legacy of colonization, assimilation, and subordination of oppressed groups to expand understanding. Schecter and Cummins (2003) have demonstrated improvements in student's identity development, learning, and success as defined by academic progression when language diversity is utilized as a resource in the multicultural classroom. Although their studies focused on elementary children, implications within higher education can be drawn. Given that few studies have specifically focused on enhancing learning and academic success for the ever-increasing linguistically diverse college student population, their educational policy recommendations are worth considering.

Cummins and Schecter (2003) drew connections between learning and linguistic diversity for academic language learning and for predicting the adequacy of educational

provisions for linguistically and culturally diverse students. One key construct was that of negotiating identities which implied that educators' interactions with students are "constantly sketching a triangular set of images, an image of our own identities as educators, an image of the identity options we highlight for our students, and an image of the society we hope our students will help form" (p. 8). Their large-scale studies of classroom interactions suggested that teacher-centered transmission of information and skills, or conventional pedagogy, remained the predominant mode in instruction. They contended that when teachers ignored or communicated indifference to language and culture this attitude constituted a specific message to students with respect to their identity, expecting them to behave as conformists while denying their heritage.

Conversely, their observations of teachers who see multilingualism as a strength and significant accomplishment communicated a very different message. Cummins and Schecter (2003) asserted that the learning process must be observed through the twin lenses of maximizing cognitive engagement and investing in identity development, building an association of respect and expectation for success. Echoing the perspectives of multicultural and critical pedagogical educators, these investigators viewed the role of the faculty member as one who creates instructional environments where linguistically and culturally diverse students can be active partners in the learning process and where faculty also see themselves as learning from their students.

In culturally, linguistically, or economically diverse contexts, where social inequality inevitably exists, interactions between students and educators were never

neutral (Cummins & Schecter, 2003). Interactions either "challenged the operation of coercive relations of power in the wider society or reinforced those power relations" (p. 11). Within the interpersonal space of teacher-student interactions, students' cognitive engagement can best be put to use. Cummins and Schecter further argued that interactions affirming students' cultural, linguistic, and personal identities can maximize identity investment in the learning process thereby fostering success.

Critical and postmodern theoretical implications

Theoretical implications can be drawn from these multicultural education practices. Prominent theorists connect praxis to theory, particularly critical theory and postmodernism, with a developing "critical multiculturalism" as a useful construct for building more inclusive and democratic educational settings (Leistyna, 1999; Nieto, 2004; Noel, 2000; Sleeter, 2003; Tierney, 1993). Tierney (1993) connected praxis to theory by advocating for educators to become cultural learners, creating dialogue and building communities across differences. Tierney theorized a fusing of critical theory's advocacy for empowerment and development of voice for oppressed people with postmodern notions where difference became the central organizing concept, calling this fusion "cultural democracy."

Cultural democracy emphasizes honoring difference rather than subjugating difference to mere attributes in an individual's identity. By dissolving boundaries and incorporating ideas of borderlands that are inhabited by all, Tierney (1993) asserted that "our struggle is to constantly cross these borders and exist in a tolerable discomfort with one another, as we confront difference, creating conditions for change" (p. 11).

Furthermore, Tierney similarly supported practices that included initiating structures for developing voice and dialogue, de-centering norms, implementing alternative structures for learning, lessening authority in the classroom, and developing faculty self-reflection.

Likewise, Rhoads (1999) advocated for a "critical multiculturalism," combining critical theorists' desire to transform institutional structures with cultural theorists' determination to honor differences. Faculty who practiced from a critical multiculturalist perspective saw themselves as facilitators of student inquiry, debating what gets defined as knowledge. They also viewed the student-teacher relationship on a more level plane where authority was no longer a central fiber. Rhoads and Valadez (1996) posed important questions based on the theoretical framework of critical multiculturalism, such as drawing attention to the skills and understandings that "marginalized" students bring to the classroom. In other words, they questioned how to embrace border knowledge, or the various ways of knowing that exist outside of the canon and cultural mainstream, to enhance cultural capital and academic progress. Rhoads and Valadez contended that community colleges represented the greatest diversity in student population of all of the higher education sectors and consequently were well suited for embracing border knowledge and finding solutions to inherent complex problems, thereby reaffirming the college commitment to democracy.

However, Rhoads (1999), in an organizational case study, found faculty did not embrace a multicultural stance. Rather, faculty exhibited monocultural beliefs when talking about their work and, perhaps most importantly, in their personal interactions with students. Rhoads discovered faculty who stated the purpose of education was to facilitate

student assimilation and adoption of mainstream cultural values. Other faculty adopted an authoritarian pedagogical style that was based on "the dangerous assumption, that teachers (and administrators) absolutely knew what was best for students," (p. 113). Rhoads noted that his findings could not be taken as evidence of widespread faculty hostility towards minority students. Yet, his findings bore close resemblance to Yoder's (1996) archetypal generic, mainstreaming, and nontolerant faculty patterns within a university setting. When present, monoculturalism reflected a cultural prejudice that ignored the significance of cultural differences more commonplace today on college campuses.

Rendón (1996) shared a similar analysis and demonstrated how a monocultural perspective undermined the academic success of cultural minorities on campus. Faculty who practiced from a monocultural perspective failed to examine the value system of dominant culture, which was described as prerequisite work for providing the context for evaluating all other values and behaviors. Rendón (1999) furnished faculty with a monocultural checklist to aid in identifying and altering beliefs and behaviors. Rendón compared and contrasted the following monocultural with multicultural organizational and classroom elements:

> the college reflects multiple identities and diverse ways of knowing and operating versus operating as if a single culture prevails reflecting mainstream values... students prepare beyond employment aspirations for multiple roles in their communities and society versus narrow career choices... and

> democratic classrooms are created with faculty and students as equal partners in teaching and learning versus students not being viewed as knowers (p. 200).

Correspondingly, Pacquiao (1996a) drew from a psychosocial background employing expectancy theory and social group theory arguing that teachers' behaviors toward students are influenced by their expectations of their students' abilities. Pacquiao explored faculty practices and analyzed the relationship between sociocultural factors and cognitive styles in determining outcomes of student success in one urban nursing program. Major findings included incompatible cognitive skills and styles and unassertive interactions.

Pacquiao (1996a) recommended instructors change practice by becoming bicultural that is, by making dominant norms visible, teaching them rather than assuming they were inherent. Biculturalism also referred to an understanding of the dynamic tension between emic and etic perspectives. This concept was grounded in cultural knowledge of self and others and in behaviors that facilitate mutual understanding and teamwork within a situated context. Examples included making explicit the expectations for participation in class and developing a keen ability to perform on multiple choice tests.

Pacquiao (1996a) further encouraged faculty to guide students in asking questions, given that certain students viewed questioning as an affront to authority. Expecting students to speak out, share viewpoints, and to partner in the teaching-learning process, were reiterated as foreign experiences for some students from different cultural backgrounds. The role of biculturalism, or dual socialization processes, played an

important role in student success. Faculty and staff created bicultural experiences by bridging norms, values and language and making available cultural mediators to assist students function more effectively in many worlds. Thus the onus for cultural adaptation and transformation was not placed solely on the shoulders of students from minority backgrounds, but rather on institutions and staffs.

In a study of Latino student empowerment, Darder (1995) also stressed that faculty practice within a bicultural framework. Five student patterns of bicultural development emerged: alienated, dualistic, separated, negotiated, and affirmed. Darder proposed that educators create environments where bicultural voices can be spoken, describing a discourse that incorporated world views, histories, and lived experiences of subordinated cultural groups. Darder further contended that such environments provided students safety, where affirming their particular knowledge and challenging mainstream perspectives was not only permissible but also encouraged.

Findings supported certain prerequisite conditions for developing bicultural identity and voice, such as "critically conscious educators, educators from students' own communities, classrooms where social injustice is made explicit and whereby students are assisted to develop a sense of empowerment" (Darder, 1995, p. 327). Leistyna (1999), however, disagreed with the descriptor "bicultural" and asserted that "the cultural complexities of subordinated students should not be reduced to nation and language abstracted from issues of class, race, gender..."(p. 44). He argued that all individuals, including those from dominant groups, were not bicultural but multicultural as all people navigated multiple discourses and identities.

Summary

In sum, the positions expressed in this review of multicultural education perspectives intertwined with themes articulated in the review of student perspectives on success. Multicultural and critical pedagogical educators engage students in power sharing and encourage inquiry into issues that shape their realities (Sleeter, Torres, & Laughlin, 2004). Faculty are advised to develop self-awareness and cultural competence, attend to prejudice reduction and racism education, and shift from monocultural to bicultural and multicultural practices promoting negotiated identities and border knowledge. Evidence suggested that students need encouragement in developing their own cultural identities while academically engaged; otherwise, they were likely to struggle. The particular pedagogical approaches commonly practiced by nurse educators, including those specifically helpful to English language learners, is next explored in the third and final sections.

Nursing Education and Pedagogical Practices

Although a considerable body of literature on multicultural issues in nursing care exists, few studies address the quality of teaching and learning in nursing education for culturally and linguistically diverse students (Choi, 2005; Yoder, 1996). One study, the California Strategic Planning Committee for Nursing, did address nursing school efforts in educating culturally diverse nursing students by surveying deans and directors from registered nurse (RN) nurse education programs. Although integrating cultural competency content was stated, no mention of utilizing multicultural pedagogical

approaches or incorporating student experience or participation was made (Martin-Holland et al., 2003). More recently, Choi (2005) suggested that quantitative study was required to examine correlations between improved English language acquisition and success. Overall, there remains a dearth of studies examining pedagogical change, innovative approaches, and academic achievement. Thus, this section concentrates on nursing classroom practices and strategies that incorporate student experience and concludes with studies related to enhancing English and academic language acquisition for learning gain.

As emphasized in the review of multicultural education theory and practice, a moral imperative exists for all nursing faculty to respect, value, and integrate into the classroom multiple expressions of difference or multiperspectival thinking by connecting with students' lived experience. Flinn (2004) lamented that nursing curriculum largely continues to be based on Caucasian, middle-class Euro-American culture depicted as "linear, sequential, time-oriented, individualistic, competitive, dualistic, and with a dominance over nature" (p. 10). Even though nurse educators articulate the relevance of examining faculty viewpoints about teaching practices in order to gain clearer perspectives of pedagogical impact in the classroom, few studies have examined these dynamics (Sommer, 2001; Tracey, 2003).

Traditional approaches

In the college classroom, pedagogical practices have traditionally centered on the instructor as expert. Educators oftentimes taught college students the ages of their own children; hence the older instructor could assume limited experience from traditional age

students. It is understandable then that ideas, such as student and teacher as co-creators and equals, have taken hold only recently as the older and experienced nursing student, particularly in community college settings, has become commonplace. Furthermore, it can be reasonably argued that students whose cultural characteristics corresponded to faculty members' norms, values, and expectations had greater opportunity for academic success, leaving students with fewer shared experiences disadvantaged. Diekelmann (1993) shed light on diverse student experience by connecting pedagogical processes and content decisions to learning stressing that how nursing students learn to think and critique was imperative. As greater numbers of students are mature adults from a wide variety of backgrounds, it follows that research has expanded to include pedagogical change and faculty-student collaboration.

Newer practices

Student-centered educators recognize the larger sphere of student position. If students are to be recognized as equal partners in the classroom, then student experience and voice in the teaching-learning process is central. Thus, student location falls conceptually within the realm of not only multicultural, but also andragogical practices. Application of adult learning theoretical concepts is apparent in current higher education research as evidenced by greater attention on student engagement over the past twenty years (Carnegie Foundation, 2007). The shift from covering material to doing what will help students learn has been expressed as both the "learning paradigm" and "student-centered pedagogy". An emphasis on reconfiguring learning environments to include intellectual skill development in judgment and thinking, along with psychosocial skill

development in effective communication, relationship-building, collaboration, and team participation, can be credited to Barr and Tagg (1995) among others. This shift has become increasingly apparent in nursing education as well.

As student perspective is considered, interpretive approaches become more noticeable. Consequently, nursing educators are beginning to include phenomenological, feminist, postmodern, and critical perspectives into the classroom to call forth new thinking and learning. Diekelmann and Lampe (2004) recounted a multisite study of schools of nursing implementing new student-centered pedagogies which reformulated nursing education so that students participated as co-creators of new learning. In this project, teachers and students challenged their usual ways of thinking about nursing education questioning underlying assumptions, such as 'testing as learning'. By welcoming students as participants in co-creating student-centered pedagogies and new curricula, substantive reform in nursing education emerged (Diekelmann, 2003; Diekelmann & Mikol, 2003).

The practice of shared experience has also come forth as an innovative and reforming practice for cognitive gain. The development of narrative pedagogy emanated from Diekelmann's (2001) nursing education analysis of teacher and student classroom experience. Narrative pedagogy describes an interpretive method that discloses wisdom and practical knowledge gained through discursive inquiry (Diekelmann, 2001). As a phenomenological approach to schooling, learning, and teaching and a way of thinking narrative inquiry connects common concerns and practices that surface when teachers and students openly relate stories of their shared, lived experiences (Diekelmann, 2001;

Ironside, 2001, 2004; Tanner, 2004). As interpretations of these shared experiences come forth, common practices emerge and new ways of thinking and learning are revealed and constituted, referred to as "concernful practices of schooling, learning, and teaching" (Diekelmann & Diekelmann, 2004).

Diekelmann (1993, p. 249) asserted that "we must keep before us that learning is never neutral and disengaged from the real world of students, teachers, and patients." Freire's concepts are foundational; the teacher as guide helps draw out these essential meanings and substance from the experiences of students, teachers, and nurses. Interpretive practices, including narrative, feminist, postmodern, and critical pedagogies complement and extend other classroom practices, as a way to create new communities of learners, teachers and students alike, and to "overcome the isolation, competition, and teacher-centeredness inherent in conventional approaches to education" (Ironside, 2001, p. 81).

Narrative pedagogy's emphasis on shared experience aligns closely with storytelling and dialogic inquiry practices illustrating contextually based and locally constructed teaching and learning. Building upon Bourdieu's assumption that "alignment of teachers' and students dispositions is critical to students' recognizing and responding to learning opportunities", Rex, Murnen, Hobbs, and McLeachen (2002, p. 765) found storytelling significantly shaped students' classroom participation. Likewise, dialogic inquiry, described by Gordon (2002) as "evoking a mutual search for meaning" was found to be a critical intervention that "not only allowed individuals the time and space to reflect on their decisions and opinions, but also allowed for the expression of

contradiction, transformation, and discovery of new meaning" (p. 278). Narrative pedagogies, therefore, entail much more than alternative learning strategies; through sharing and interpreting everything is held open and problematic (Diekelmann, 2001).

The "caring" curriculum also utilizes dialogue and reflection about common daily occurrences and attends to "human freedom, critical awakening, caring, commitment, modeling, and confirmation" (Evans, 2004, p. 221). The Caring Curriculum Model, stemming from Watson's theory of human caring, speaks to wholeness and mutual respect in engaging students in a moral, scientific manner and to the construction of knowledge modeled on problem reframing (Bevis &Watson, 1989). Caring practitioners "lead from spirit-filled mindfulness by listening to others, being authentically present to students, and looking for caring moments that allow connection with their students" (Evans, 2004, p. 220). Taking class time to discuss common issues was considered a connecting practice that shaped nursing curricula responsively to students' contemporary lives, as well as a participatory learning tool that improved classroom climate. Moreover, Evans (2004) proposed that the caring curriculum was an important retention strategy; yet few studies have directly connected this approach to conventional concerns related to improving student outcomes.

Teaching for inclusion

Faculty who create pedagogical change to enhance learning for all students, inclusive of diverse students, are addressed by many names, cultural mediators, bicultural mentors, and bridging faculty. Similarly, the term "cultural broker" has described one who bridges, links, or mediates between groups of differing cultural backgrounds to reach

desired outcomes (Jeffreys, 2005). The Mexican feminist theorist and poet Gloria Anzaldúa (2002) chose the Nahuatl word *nepantla*, meaning "in-between space", and created the word *nepantlera*, for one who facilitates passages through other worlds. Living between cultures results in seeing double and allows one to acquire new perspectives and shift from one world to another (Keating, 2006). Culturally responsive educators, described as mediating, mentoring, brokering, bridging or bicultural, commonly practice by beginning with the student.

Responsive educators know students individually, create conducive climates, provide for student experience as class content, offer a variety of formats, such as visuals, observations, and demonstrations, give regular feedback, encourage active participation, cooperation and collaboration, include reading, writing, and speaking during each session, help students acquire resources, and focus on faculty-student interaction, in and out of the classroom (Bain, 2004; Bok, 2003; Crow, 1993; Mellow, Van Slyck, & Enyon, 2003; Williams & Calvillo, 2002; Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995). Responsive educators follow such solid teaching practices with all learners without distinction.

Summary

The literature illustrated examples of innovative practices to foster engagement and learning. Improvements in classroom climate have been consistently and favorably reported with feminist, critical, postmodern, and phenomenological approaches (Ironside, 2003). Connecting newer pedagogical practices of responsive to operational measures of educational success remains mainly unexplored. Explicating the experiences of students

learning and faculty teaching in the multicultural, multilingual classroom and exploring why more faculty have yet to modify practices also merits further investigation.

Nursing Education and English Language Learners

Approaches for enhancing teaching and learning, to preclude premature departure and to foster greater program completion, deserve greater scrutiny. Language proficiency is critical in learning and success in nursing education programs (Femea, Gaines, Brathwaite, & Abdur-Rahman, 1995; Malu & Figlear, 1998; Martin-Holland et al., 2003; Newman & Williams, 2003; Samway & McKeon, 1999). English language issues have been reported not only as the most outstanding barrier to students' achievement, but language difficulties and accents have also been perceived as reflecting lesser intelligence (Pacquiao, 1996a; Villaruel et al., 2001). Consequently, examining the literature related to current classroom experience and strategies designed to enhance learning and student success via language development is especially relevant.

Strategies utilized by experts in language and literacy development have informed nursing education approaches. The linguistic literature has supported a critical pedagogical stance and socioacademic framework based on the foundational work of Vygotsky (1978) to address the communication, integration, and cooperation components of second-language development (Cummins, 1994; Freeman & Freeman, 1996; Lee & Smagorinsky, 2000; Lvovich, 2003; Wink, 2000). The Cummins model of language proficiency, as derived from a socioacademic framework, has been suggested as a useful strategy for teaching ELL nursing students (Abriam-Yago et al., 1999).

Yet little pedagogical consensus regarding best practices within linguistically diverse learning environments is evident. Cummins and Schecter (2003) proposed the following questions for educators to ponder:

> How long does it take a second language learner to acquire adequate English proficiency for academic success? What do educators need to know to teach effectively in linguistically and culturally diverse contexts? What adjustments should be made in curriculum, instruction, and assessment, to ensure that all understand what is taught and are assessed in a fair and equitable manner, including high stakes testing (p. 3)?

These questions are particularly relevant given the high stakes testing environment commonplace in nursing education with competitive entrance screening, admissions exams, multiple choice testing and comprehensive assessment required for course advancement, program completion, and national licensure.

Furthermore, most educators have not developed expertise in multilingualism (Cummins & Schecter, 2003). Determining individual learning needs is an intricate task as wide variations in assessment often exist. Challenges abound regarding how best to educate college students with varying linguistic abilities. The involved lexicon of descriptors, such as limited English proficiency, English as a Second Language, English for Speakers of Other Languages, language minority students, nonnative speakers of English, second language learners, and English language learners alone is bewildering. Combining groups of native-born learners in classrooms, coming from varying

disadvantaged or advantaged educational backgrounds, with recent immigrants of different language backgrounds and abilities, illustrates yet another complex challenge. Moreover, Blumenthal (2002) pointed out that many students resent labeling as each has different needs and concerns requiring individualized attention. Concerns have also been raised about widening gaps in educational equality for English language learners who have been identified as a distinct group with specific needs (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition and Language Instruction Educational Programs, 2006; Szelenyi & Chang, 2002).

A socioacademic framework for identity, linguistic, and cognitive development

Cummins (2000) has spoken to the importance of incorporating practices to maximize cognitive engagement and investing in cultural and linguistic identity development. Cummins designed explicit instructional practices to develop linguistic and metacognitive awareness, such as encouraging oral and written language use in higher-order thinking and problem-solving and promoting critical literacy skill development. Specifically, Cummins' framework (1994) promoted three basic foci across all educational sectors. The framework's first focus centered on meaning, beginning with student's prior knowledge, moving from the literal phase, through a personal phase, to a critical phase, and finally to a creative phase for action. Its second focus was on language development and when to use informal versus formal forms. The third and final focus highlighted usage, through oral and written expression.

Other investigators lend support to socioacademic approaches, along with bicultural practices, bilingualism, and student involvement in re-structuring programs

(Grant & Sleeter, 1999; Johns, 1994; Lee, 2002; Miramontes, Nadeau, & Commins, 1997; Rumsberger & Larson, 1998). Studying community college students of diverse ethnic backgrounds, Jiang and Keuhn (2001) found enhanced cognitive skills and language development when faculty created opportunities for students to use personal examples to make connections between native culture and language and the newly adopted second culture and language. Schmid (2001) reported that students who remained strongly anchored in their ethnic cultures and communities and acquired fluency in both ethnic and English languages were most likely to be academically successful.

Fillmore and Snow (2000) articulated that a fair curricular process was one that built on the sociocultural and linguistic backgrounds, or prior knowledge, experiences, skills, and attitudes, which students brought with them. The most significant student background variable impacting success was the amount of formal schooling students had received in their first language; cognitive and academic development in the first language had positive effects on second language development.

Language proficiency and nursing success

Conversely, nurse researchers have linked academic problems directly to language issues (Flinn, 1999; Pacquiao, 1996b; Yoder, 1996). "Poor" language skills, defined primarily as "English as a second language or ESL", have been associated with lower nursing entrance exam scores and access to a nursing education denied, along with first semester attrition, lower performance on multiple choice exams, lower grade point average, or GPA, and failure on nurse licensure exams (Allen, 1994; Ethridge, 2000;

Femea et al., 1995; Guhde, 2003; Jackson & Sandiford 2003; Manifold and Rambur, 2001; Westcott, 1997).

Pacquiao's (1996b) phenomenological study of ESL nursing students revealed slow reading ability and limited vocabulary hampering coherent oral and written communication, along with slow reading speed and comprehension hindering high exam scores. In a multimethod study of first year ESL nursing students, Malu and Figlear (1998) found ESL students had more difficulty with course and clinical work which led to higher attrition; students also self identified language development problems. Students spent more time on concrete learning such as memorizing factual information than on conceptual and abstract learning, which required greater effort. Moreover, students identified lack of study time due to personal obligations as the reason for lack of test success, but Malu and Figlear asserted that underdeveloped language abilities may have been the more significant factor. Similarly, Martin-Holland et al. (2003) found underdeveloped critical thinking and test-taking skills, verbal expression, writing skills, and low reading ability in English as academic barriers. Yet Washington and Perkel (2001) found no significant relationship between primary language and success on the nursing licensure exam, but stated that "the impact of language could not be ruled out as an intervening variable" (p. 12).

A certain level of language proficiency appears crucial for successful test taking as well as nursing practice. A central tenet of preparing students for future nursing practice is the development of high level thinking and clinical judgment skills, fully integrated with related communication skill development, such as interpreting and

transcribing orders, creating written plans of care, and documenting patient data, assessments, and nursing actions. Nursing practice is also highly dependent on accurate verbal communication since much information to patients, families, and other health care team members is passed on orally. Well developed literacy skills are also expected when acquiring health care computer technology competence. For students with limited English understanding and communicative ability, supplemental skill development in language proficiency, in addition to learning and applying new disciplinary knowledge and skills, is imperative but often remains unattended.

Second language acquisition or language proficiency has been described by its two components, BICS (basic interpersonal communicative skills) or social language, and CALP (cognitive academic language proficiency), or academic language. Students demonstrating BICS proficiency in everyday routines may be encouraged to enroll in nursing programs but often have little command of CALP. A significant amount of academic language competency is required in nursing education, and issues often occur without early intervention. Experts had generally agreed that between five and seven years of intensive study was needed to become proficient in learning the academic language and abstract concepts of the scientific disciplines. However, Fillmore & Snow (2000) concluded that seven to ten years was more accurate.

Cummins (1989) envisioned language proficiency along two continuums. The first was a continuum between context-embedded (CE) and context-reduced (CR) communicative situations. Context-embedded situations provide contextual cues to assist in the understanding of language, such as facial expressions, gestures, and feedback from

speaker or listener, often occurring outside of the classroom. In contrast, context-reduced communicative situations, such as lectures or texts present fewer clues and are more linguistically demanding. Cummins purported that interpretation of context-reduced communicative situations depended on the student's knowledge of the language.

Language proficiency has also been portrayed along a second continuum ranging from "cognitively undemanding" to "cognitively demanding", the latter requiring conscious focus on understanding language and concepts. Abriam-Yago et al. (1999) placed nursing academic activities in the "cognitively demanding" and "context-reduced" realms, making comprehension and retention of material more difficult for English language learners. Harklau (2001) advised additional inquiry into literacy transitions into college given the demands of note taking, listening skills, and content volume.

The need for nursing programs to discern student background information about language proficiency prior to program acceptance becomes apparent. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) 2001 national adult literacy survey revealed that the age at which an individual learned to speak English was related to his or her English literacy proficiency as an adult. On an average, individuals who entered this country before age twelve had English literacy skills as adults comparable to members born in the U.S., which correlate to Fillmore and Snow's findings (2000).

Formal education also plays a fundamental role in the acquisition of English language fluency and literacy for individuals who were raised in non-English speaking homes, regardless of immigrant or native birth. Particularly, among immigrants who arrived in the United States at age twelve or older, the NCES survey found the level of

formal education to be related to language fluency and literacy. Only non-native English speakers with low levels of formal education were truly disadvantaged in the workforce by their lack of native English language skills (Greenberg, Macias, Rhodes, & Chan, 2001). Therefore, obtaining information about the length of time of spoken English and formal education in a first language may better help educators and programs address nursing students' learning needs.

Strategies for enhancing language development

Both Jackson and Sandiford (2003) and Symes et al. (2002) recommended assessing all students for English proficiency during nursing orientation and offering support. Manifold and Rambur (2001) further suggested a designated program prior to starting a nursing education program to serve as a bridge between conversational speech and "test speak". Additionally they argued that the standard English format used in nursing multiple choice tests presented students with difficulty comprehending the meaning of questions and interfered with their ability to critically analyze which led to failure. Additionally, Santos (2004) suggested collaboration between ESL and disciplinary content faculty in academic vocabulary instruction for language minority community college students in introductory courses.

Moreover, intensifying skill development not only at program entry but years in advance, as well as throughout program attendance, has also been advised. Developing consortia of employers, community-based organizations, and state agencies to partner with educational institutions to initiate courses for ESL students interested in health care

career education and to provide ongoing assistance to English language learners has been recommended (Adger & Locke, 2000; Bosher, 2004).

From a ten year review of ESL retention efforts utilized in nursing programs, Klisch (2000) grouped strategies into categories focusing primarily on faculty, programmatic, and institutional adjustments. Effectiveness strategies generally included academic language enhancement activities such as practicing verbal skills in a language lab or within clinical groups. English language learning students often exhibit great difficulty comprehending textbook information. Beyond vocabulary development, frequent instructional support and practice in learning how to summarize and analyze texts, along with ongoing reinforcement of communication skills in listening, reading, writing, and speaking have also been suggested (Fillmore & Snow, 2000; Flinn, 1999). In contrast, Friedenberg (2002) proposed a model in which students without English proficiency were provided academic courses in their native languages, thereby not disadvantaging their knowledge acquisition. More common, however, is the call for greater emphasis on teaching and practicing situated writing and other communicative skills to strengthen students' disciplinary literacy and language acquisition throughout their educational experiences (Choi; 2005; Leki, 2003; Parks, 2001).

Altering teaching methods in recognition of cultural and linguistic differences has been addressed by a limited number of educators. Westby and Rouse (1993) outlined faculty's role in facilitating text comprehension by utilizing multiple strategies for developing higher order thinking skills. Investigating alternate texts that more closely align with the reading and language level of admitted students has also been

recommended (Kataoka-Yahiro & Abriam-Yago, 1997; Kurz, 1993; Tropello, 1996). Faculty adaptation has also included educators developing academic language fluency handouts for problem words, requiring students to keep vocabulary notebooks, providing additional time on exams, greater faculty-student interaction, teaching English as well as nursing vocabulary, more writing on boards, using consistent outlines, providing note-taking guides, going slower in lecture, and repeating content (Flinn, 1999; Malu & Figlear, 1998).

Approaches recommended by students have included using bilingual or customized electronic dictionaries, tape recording classes, holding peer study groups, making greater use of faculty and counselors, and gaining assistance with multiple choice test-taking strategies and writing assignments (Abedi, Hofstetter, & Lord, 2004; Newman & Williams, 2003). A supportive ESL advisor was discovered to be the most positively perceived retention strategy according to Klisch's (2000) survey of ESL nursing student satisfaction.

Despite the presence of specific strategies reported in the literature, practices are often unchanged. Taggar (1998) found faculty were not modifying their teaching strategies with ESL students, even though faculty could consistently identify effective practices, such as learner-centered approaches, student autonomy approaches, and use of visuals, concrete objects, examples, analogies, and case studies. Lecturing was used most frequently with all learners despite findings indicating the lecture to be the least preferred and effective delivery mode for ESL nursing students.

In contrast, Flinn (1999), found faculty were incorporating a variety of strategies with culturally diverse learners, including discussion, active learning, brainstorming, examples, small group work, lesson models, peer tutoring, simulations, writing groups, friendship groups, and case studies. Additional strategies were emphasized for students acquiring English language proficiency, such as content delivery with visual representation, content review, note taking, and not assuming that students understood the meanings of common English words. Exploring student experience was also recommended. The need for all educators to diversify learning activities for cultural inclusion and language enhancement was further implied.

Again, the majority of faculty continue to infrequently implement inclusive and alternative strategies. Moreover, responsiveness to newly adopted practices and linkages to academic success remain largely unanswered. Hence, Malu & Figlear (1998) concluded that the failure of educators, programs, and institutions to address student learning needs warranted further study and rejected attributing lack of success to ability among English language learners. Critical advocates admonish faculty and education leaders to become more proactive and take on greater responsibility. Therefore, faculty development merits examination.

Faculty development and programmatic change

Recommendations for improving teaching and learning provide numerous opportunities for designing faculty development programs. Studies have suggested incorporating various learning styles in instructional practices highlighting preferred styles, such as kinesthetic, tactile, and visual, rather than auditory (Flinn, 1999; Guhde,

2003; Keane, 1993; Kurz, 1993). Park (2002), however, found support for all learning style preferences, stressing the importance of utilizing multiple strategies in the multicultural, multilingual classroom. Malu and Figlear (1998) advised teaching faculty how to create context-embedded learning experiences, via the Cummins model, to strengthen the development of students' cognitive academic language proficiency.

For providing students with linguistic and contextual support, Abriam-Yago et al. (1999, p. 148) recommended faculty help students to "practice many multiple choice test questions to learn various ways a question may be phrased about majority culture, along with how to interpret nursing concepts and nuances of English. They further encouraged faculty provide study questions to assist students find pertinent information in the text, to build speed and stamina over time, read a variety of academic texts for repeated exposure to academic terminology, and read nursing journals rather than textbooks, which often have more diagrams, charts, and visual information.

Finally, Bosher (2003) encouraged faculty development to examine teacher-made tests to detect bias. Bosher's analysis of faculty exams found twenty-eight types of flaws, leading Bosher to conclude faculty lacked awareness about linguistic and cultural biases which could impact ELL student performance. The need for faculty development programs to improve test item writing was emphasized.

Summary

Improving the learning experiences for nursing students as English language learners takes on greater importance in the context of the growing nursing shortage and an increasingly diverse society. Multilingualism and cultural differences are promoted as

strengths for faculty to take advantage of in the classroom. Student success has been demonstrated when educators have simultaneously engaged linguistically diverse students on two levels, cognitively and individually, by investing in academic and identity development. However, such practices have yet to become commonplace in nursing education programs.

This review implies a need for further inquiry into diverse student perspectives. An understanding of the experiences of students acquiring English language proficiency in the nursing classroom remains equally underdeveloped. Involving students in ways to develop greater cognitive academic language proficiency and revise classroom practices bears additional consideration.

Summary of Literature Review

This literature review centered on the growing numbers of diverse nursing students who learn in environments still predominantly inhabited by faculty from predominantly White, English-only speaking backgrounds. Studies, particularly student-based inquiries have documented the difficulties students experience in monocultural settings. The significant influence of the sociocultural context in learning and academic success is well supported in the literature. Recommendations for change have been proposed at the student, faculty, programmatic, and institutional levels from multicultural and critical pedagogical perspectives.

The contextualized and localized nature of the findings from the majority of studies reviewed reveals particular themes. The literature commends culturally relevant

environments that simultaneously maximize cognitive engagement and invest in identity development, thus building an association of respect and expectation for success. McKay and Wong (1996) counseled, however, that contextualized perspectives should not be viewed as easy solutions for pedagogical transformation and academic success, noting that change comes slowly when relations of power are involved.

Yet the degree to which teaching practices, curricula, and programs are culturally inclusive, or the extent to which biculturalism and multiculturalism is practiced, is emerging as a significant factor in academic success for students from diverse backgrounds in general, and for nursing students in particular (Center for the Improvement of Teaching, 2004; Kelley & Fitzsimons, 2000; Schecter & Cummins 2003). From the small number of inquiries conducted, higher grades, improved retention and completion rates, and student statements of a greater understanding of content, and a strong sense of satisfaction and community have been demonstrated. Building an inclusive curriculum is depicted as a first step toward educating new majorities and minorities.

Culturally relevant instruction provides sharp contrast to monocultural, monolingual practices, or assimilation teaching, which showcases the status quo and transmits dominant ideologies for reproduction in the workplace. For faculty working with students with backgrounds different from their own, acquiring new knowledge, skills, and values to gain new cultural understandings and perspectives for improving teaching has been recommended. Findings have indicated that too few faculty have

engaged in introspective processes or innovative pedagogical practices implying a need for faculty development.

Findings have also illustrated the interplay of structure, culture, capital, and agency as sources of engagement in relation to student success. Students from diverse backgrounds perceive success as primarily a result of their own effort and determination; active and persistent effort is crucial. Faculty, programs, and institutions also contribute and support student achievement. The need for institutional, programmatic, and faculty change, rather than solely stressing the need for individual student improvement, is particularly stressed.

Lastly, the review of current nursing pedagogical practice has provided additional insights for enhancing teaching and fostering learning across cultural and linguistic differences. Research suggests educators revise practices to include newer interpretive pedagogies for enhancing thinking and learning for all students and to actively involve students in making meaning, creating new curricula, and restructuring programs. Researchers advocate utilizing a socioacademic framework with students acquiring English proficiency to affirm student cultural and linguistic identity and enhance learning and achievement. Teaching from student experience and valuing cultural heritage is seen as foundational to developing meaningful learning experiences. Investigators also advise creating more highly contextualized learning environments to develop cognitive academic language proficiency and suggest utilizing instructional strategies to not only develop linguistic and metacognitive awareness but also promote higher-order thinking and problem-solving through oral and written expression.

In sum, opportunities for student identity affirmation, active engagement, and participation in knowledge development, in culturally inclusive learning environments, with educators capable of crossing borders and enacting alternative pedagogies and innovative practices for learning enhancement and student success, are highly recommended. The majority of students as English language learners, nonetheless, continue to falter academically signaling the need for further study of classroom experiences, pedagogical, programmatic, and institutional practices. Accordingly, the methodological design utilized for the intentional exploration of nursing student experience follows.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN

"Everywhere, wherever and however we are related to beings of every kind, we find identity making its claim on us" (Heidegger, 1969, p. 2). Chapter Three presents the design of this inquiry. A personal journey and philosophical perspective provide insight to the method chosen. An introduction to interpretive phenomenology lays out the philosophical foundation to the Heideggerian hermeneutic approach. A subsection related to critical hermeneutics establishes its suitability and potential usefulness during data interpretation and analysis stages. The chapter's final segment details specific study methods and addresses study rigor.

Personal Journey and Philosophical Perspective

The experiences I bring to this study as an investigator are integral to its context. As an upper middle class, White, monolingual female, with limited conversational Spanish abilities, my identity resembles that of many nurse educators. I have practiced nursing in urban settings for more than twenty-five years, nursing education for the past twenty years, and nursing education administration for the past five years. Although my nursing education degrees were obtained in university settings, I chose to primarily work within urban community college environments. Most of the students with whom I have

interacted identify as multicultural and multilingual coming from ethnic backgrounds more different than alike my own yet we share a common goal in learning and success. Although I am more similar in gender to the majority of participants, I am less alike in cultural, linguistic, and class orientation, age, and educational preparation, amongst other identifiers. I think about what it means to be an investigator, learning to speak, interpret, and read the word and world of others. I tried to keep in mind possible inadvertent oppressive behaviors, miscomprehension, or arrogance on my part throughout this study.

As an educator situated in a multicultural institution, I have also consciously thought about my own being in my chosen work environment. I have reflected on the meaning of my own circumscribed upbringing and schooling, and on issues of identity, difference, culture, and power to gain a deeper self awareness as I relate to others, historically, socioculturally, and politically (see Appendix A). Given my experience as a predominantly monolingual educator in a nursing classroom with students who readily speak two or more languages and identify as English language learners, many questions come forth. I wonder where concerns about English language proficiency rest within classroom experience, learning, and success from the student perspective. I wonder whether the many thoughts that come to my mind about how students possibly make meaning from their classroom experiences bear any similarity to their views. The close relation of identity and difference is "that which gives us thought" (Heidegger, 1969, p. 21). This consideration is germane as it frames my current thinking.

A common theme addressed in the literature is the need for educators to more closely attend to students' beings; yet little has been written about the considerations of

nursing students acquiring English. Few nursing education research studies have specifically addressed the concerns of students with continuing English language learning needs, or how students have experienced being in the nursing classroom. Accordingly, what mattered to students, for better understanding their world as English language learners in the nursing classroom, provided the focus for this study.

The reality of human experience, both that which is present and that which is hidden from awareness, is the object of inquiry for human sciences, such as nursing and education. Ontologically, the most significant order of reality is in its meaning. In the human sciences, "understanding is considered more powerful than explanation and prediction because it stands more fully in the human world of self-understandings, meanings, skills, and traditions" (Dreyfus, 1994, p. xv). Hence I was drawn to interpretive phenomenology as a mode of inquiry.

Introduction to Interpretive Phenomenology and Critical Hermeneutic Inquiry

The focus on experience and meaning, or what it means *to be*, describes phenomenological inquiry both philosophically and methodologically. Phenomenology as a qualitative research method centers on understanding human experiences, social connections and interrelationships. Phenomenology has been described as asking the question of what is the nature or meaning of something (van Manen, 2002). A phenomenological approach is well suited to an in-depth exploration of student experience as the phenomenon of interest is the lived experience of particular students in the nursing classroom. A phenomenological approach can "make us suddenly 'see'

something in a way that enriches our understanding of everyday life experience" (van Manen, 1997, p. 345).

In phenomenological inquiry, two distinct approaches are considered, the descriptive or interpretive. In descriptive or Husserlian phenomenology, the investigator holds all personal beliefs about the phenomenon in abeyance, setting them aside so as to discover their essence or true meaning. On the other hand, Heidegger employed methods distinct from Husserl's. In Heideggerian hermeneutics, the investigator brings his or her prejudgments, or prejudices, to the study at hand making them explicit viewing them as unavoidable and integral to interpretation (Parse, 2001).

Hermeneutics, or interpretive phenomenology, delves into the ways people go about understanding the world in which they live, moving beyond the structure of understanding to how the phenomenon of interest is interpreted. Diekelmann & Magnussen-Ironside (1998) have conveyed that "to allow oneself to be drawn into the complexity of the simple and overlooked is the way of hermeneutics" (p. 244). The text, or written description of the phenomena, is the object of interpretation in hermeneutics. Going beyond description, hermeneutic researchers study text looking for meanings embedded in common life practices uncovering commonalities and differences.

Knowledge of the realm of meaning is gained through interpretive phenomenological or hermeneutic procedures of linguistic production, by reading or hearing narratives, and then interpreting the texts of human experience. The focus of hermeneutic inquiry is "what...the individual's narratives imply about what he or she experiences every day, rather then the pure content of human subjectivity" (Lopez &

Willis, 2004, p.732). What is produced then is an expanded understanding of human existence (Polkinghorne, 1988). This process of understanding is "a movement from the first prejudgmental notion of the meaning of the whole to a change in the sense of the meaning of the whole because of the confrontation with the detailed parts of the text" (Polkinghorne, 1983, p. 227).

Interpretive phenomenology involves a rigorous scholarly reading of texts with the goal of understanding the world, self, and others (Benner, 1994). The production of meaning through reading is the core strategy. Text interpretation is informed by experience, subsequent interviews, interpretations, re-reading of the original texts, new readings, and interpretations by others. The ethical stance of the interpretive researcher is one of respect for the voices and experiences portrayed in the text (Benner, 1994). Although hermeneutic inquiry "does not prescribe action for us to take, it does influence a thoughtful reflective attentive practice by its revealing of the meanings of human experience" (Van der Zalm & Bergum, 2000, p. 211).

Interpretive phenomenology is committed to discovery and understanding, revealing shared practices and common meaning, making manifest what is normally hidden in lived human experience and relations. An interpretive phenomenological approach can help extend our present understanding as educators to the common everyday experiences and practices of being a student in the nursing classroom. More precisely, our present understanding can shift to new or different understandings from that which we held before.

Gadamer (1975, p. xxxii), a leading philosopher and phenomenologist who studied under Heidegger saw hermeneutics not so much as a methodology but "as a theory of the real experience that thinking is," exploring one's experience, such as being a nursing student and a learner of English, in the world bound by language. Gadamer explored the nature of understanding as a three-way relation: "what makes coming to an understanding possible is language which rests with a common willingness of the participants in conversation to lend themselves to the emergence of something else" (Gadamer, 1975, p. xvii). While reading the narratives, the investigator interacts with the text, focusing on what people experience, rather than what they know, what may be concealed, rather than what is apparent (Lopez & Willis, 2004).

Heideggerian hermeneutic concepts

Heidegger (1962) espoused particular concepts germane to an interpretive phenomenological approach. In Heideggerian hermeneutics, "embodiment" refers to the individual's access to the world through all of his or her senses and consciousness at that specific point in time whereby a particular perception exists. The experience, along with the meaning of the particular phenomena, is interpreted individually. An extension of embodiment occurred by taking notes before and after participating in an interview, reflecting on the experience. As suggested by Crist and Tanner (2003), vocal intonation, physical expressions, and gestures were included in field notes and incorporated into transcriptions.

A phenomenon is revealed as it is, in its present everydayness, inclusive of past, present, and future, and regarded as a taken-for-granted unawareness. "Being-in-the-

world" relates to our understanding of the world in its everydayness. The question of the meaning of 'being', rests in "Dasein", or "being-in-the-world", a "caring presence residing alongside whatever is of concern" (Heidegger, 1962, p.237). Heidegger (1962) also claimed that as humans we are already thrown into a world of circumstances in which we are always already involved. "'Thrownness' belongs to its possibilities, its being understands itself in these possibilities and projects itself upon them" (Heidegger, 1962, p. 225). Being thrown means already being underway with our pre-understandings as part of the ongoing process (Weinsheimer, 1985).

Both participant and investigator come to the present time of the interview with considerations of their own pasts and futures. The hermeneutic task becomes a questioning of things acknowledging that a particular understanding precedes questioning. Moreover, the focus of the study may shift as participants concentrate on what is important to them. Therefore, the existential-ontological constitution of "Dasein's" totality is grounded in temporality as "a horizon of understanding, seeing things as they are becoming" (Heidegger, 1962, p. 63).

More precisely, Heidegger (1962) portrays a threefold structure of hermeneutic understanding. The investigator's familiarity with background practices, or fore-structure, of the phenomenon of study was central to the investigation. Heidegger has claimed that interpretation is founded on "fore-having, fore-sight, and fore-conception" (p. 191). Heidegger described this sense of something we have in advance as fore-having. That which we see in advance is fore-sight. Finally, fore-conception is something we grasp in advance. One's particular interpretive lens is shaped by all three. Heidegger has professed

"that which can be articulated in interpretation, and thus even more primordially in discourse as expressed in language, is what we have called meaning" (p. 204). Language defines the hermeneutic relationship and is "its authentic saying" (Heidegger, 1971, p. 53).

As a nurse educator working with students as English language learners for over fifteen years I as the investigator brought to this study the necessary fore-structure. My fore-having could be expressed as the collective experience gained over this time. My fore-sight came from my observing and participating in students' daily triumphs and disappointments in the classroom. The fore-conception I brought related to an understanding that there was much more learning to be had, in closely attending to our mutual everyday experiences and in understanding anew our interconnections, commonalities and differences.

In hermeneutic inquiry the investigator brings this fore-structure to bear on the phenomena at hand by reading the narratives of the participants' experiences, listening, engaging in conversation, interaction, and interpretation of the texts. Engaging in ongoing dialogue and re-reading of texts lends itself towards reflection and away from explanation. In the hermeneutic approach the temporal situatedness of both the investigator and participants is recognized. "Time as it advenes", or time-as-lived, is a central theme that distinguishes hermeneutics from other forms of phenomenology (Diekelmann & Magnussen-Ironside, 1998).

The hermeneutic experience, then, is generally seen as a continual process without a definable beginning or end. Specific approaches utilized include moving back

and forth with the text several times, reading the text as a whole, analyzing to identify patterns of meaningful connection, interacting with the whole again, reflecting on the initial reading of the text along with the interpretation, bringing new readings into the process, considering new issues and themes, or practicing "engaged reasoning in transition" (Benner, 1994, p. 101). The totality of these actions comprises the hermeneutic circle. Moreover, humans as self-interpreting beings are already within this hermeneutic circle of understanding (Heidegger, 1962).

In hermeneutics, a new level of interpretive commentary or meaning comes forth with the goal of uncovering commonalities and differences. Benner (1994, p. 101) put it this way, "What do I now know that I did not expect or understand before I began reading?" The resulting interpretation is a fusion between text and its context with the reader and her context. Gadamer calls this a "fusion of horizons", or a dialectical interaction between the expectation of the interpreter and the meanings of the text (Polkinghorne, 1983, p. 227). The fusion comes about when one or both undergo a shift making room for that which did not fit before (Taylor, 2002). The focus is not on explicating differences alone. As being socially constituted by relationships, habits, and practices, commonalities are likely to come forth as well.

Hence, another important concept is that of co-constitutionality. The meanings at which the researcher arrives in interpretive research are a blend of the meanings spoken by both participant and researcher within the focus of the study, and as such are fluid and open to change (Lopez & Willis, 2004). However, meanings stated must remain logical and plausible within the study framework. Also, the investigator must go further "by

interpreting meaning for practice, education, research, and policy to create informed and culturally sensitive knowledge" (p.730). The intended hope was to conduct such an inquiry by creating a space where discovery and new understanding of student experience in the classroom could emerge.

Hermeneutics "deconstructs the corresponding relationship between theory and practice and reveals the practical knowledge and expertise that evolves over time" (Diekelmann & Magnussen-Ironside, 1998, p. 245). Via hermeneutic analyses of student narratives, what may be unspoken or concealed may be revealed, such as developing a different way of thinking or a new understanding that is culturally relevant and respectful of the social realities of being a nursing student and an English-language learner. Embedded in an interpretive phenomenological approach to studying issues of concern in nursing education is the co-existing nature of schooling, learning, and teaching (Diekelmann & Diekelmann, 2004). Instructors and students as both learners and teachers shape and are shaped by the situations of their experiences.

Heidegger (1962) asserts that humans are embedded in their world to such an extent that subjective experiences are inextricably linked with historical, social, cultural and political contexts. Described as "situated freedom", individuals are free to make choices but their freedom is not absolute; it is circumscribed by the everyday conditions of their daily lives. This intersubjectivity extends to the investigator as interviewer and the participant as interviewee, both bound by individual experiences within particular contexts of possibilities, free to make meaningful decisions, choosing how to respond and

act (Leonard, 1994). Habermas, a contemporary critical theorist and philosopher, argues however, that this freedom is further limited by powerful social structures (Young, 1990).

Given that linguistic history is neither produced democratically nor is free from domination by those who belong to the privileged elite, every linguistic expression stands within a linguistic context (Figal, 2002). In a historic sense, this study attended to the beings of students as newer members to the college experience. Educators holding dominant perspectives might perceive this inquiry as occupying "the linguistic margins". Holding up the perceptions of students as English language learners, drawing on their practical knowledge gleaned from their everyday lived experiences in the classroom, could bring forth distinct insights as well as some skepticism from those holding mainstream perspectives within the research community and from others outside.

Nevertheless, this study was envisioned as an effort towards greater democracy illuminating a social exchange not considered by some as conventional. I had gleaned certain understandings from my work with students from multicultural, multilingual backgrounds and regarded myself to be a "border crosser". I as the main interpreter, therefore, was likely to be considered less suspicious than one with fewer multicultural, multilingual interactions. Our grasp of the other is to "be true to their particular culture, language, and way of being" (Taylor, 2002, p. 133). The participants' concerns were what mattered. By both the investigator and participant remaining open in the dialectic, concerns would be considered salient and would be noticed.

At the same time I might have been less aware of alternative understandings and interpretations given my novice investigator status and my position as an educated

professional and nursing education leader with a perceived power differential. Concerns may have been partially assuaged given that the investigator shared no evaluation responsibilities or authoritative relationship with the participants. The investigator also strived as much as possible to stay open in the conversation between participants as well as between text and interpretation to mitigate unintentional consequences of domination. Yet inadvertent consequences can occur even within hermeneutic approaches reproducing institutional practices, such as social norms, power relations and particular language use (Allen, 1995). "Only by being given full play of our own prejudices can we "experience the other's claim to truth and make it possible for him to have full play himself" (Gadamer, 1975, p. 299). Habermas, however, refutes one's full awareness of prejudices claiming that "openness can only help the interpreter gradually become aware of his own structure of prejudice in the course of the interpretive activity" (McCarthy, 1978, p. 173).

Critical hermeneutics

Scrutiny of the texts from a critical hermeneutic approach was sensible given the phenomenon of interest. Critical hermeneutics brings to light the communicative conditions under which meaning is produced and power and justice dimensions of intended and unintended social consequences are examined (Allen, 1995). Habermas places critical hermeneutics in a domain beyond our interest in practical knowledge and understanding, utilizing critical theory for emancipatory knowledge and understanding (Demeterio, 2001).

Critical hermeneutics involves "subjecting the explicated meanings to an analysis that uncovers or makes more conscious some of the contradictions and hidden power relations that are embedded in the text (Diekelmann & Allen, 1989, p. 21). What is assumed is that any act of interpretation is invariably influenced by socially accepted ways of viewing reality. More often, socially acceptable viewpoints reflect the values of privileged individuals so the lived experiences and personal voices of persons who are not members of privileged groups become discounted. With grounding in critical social theory, such discounting is understood within a sociohistorical context of oppressive practices.

Therefore, a critique of the historical bases of dominant belief systems and analyses of how these ideologies shape and organize the daily lives of all students and of students learning English in particular was considered during the interpretation stages of this inquiry. Contrary to Gadamer, Habermas asserts that hermeneutic understanding must be conjoined with the analysis of social systems as language is utilized as a "medium of domination and social power" (McCarthy, 1978, p. 183). Exploring the lived experiences of students as English language learners lent itself to connecting both lifeworlds, the personal with that of the larger social system, or the social with the political.

A critical framework presupposes "the existence of power structures that shape our social world and produce and reinforce individual and institutional inequities" (Browne, 2000, p. 46). Salomone (2004) suggested that the social and communicative patterns of matriculated students could constrain them from speaking openly or

challenging authority, thereby extending traditional power relationships. The expectation of a particular level of English proficiency for matriculated students could also be regarded as a further reproduction of social inequities, given plausible inequities in students' earlier educational experiences and socioeconomic circumstances.

Assumptions in social constructivism, interpretive phenomenology, and critical social theory

Underlying assumptions, understandings, and perspectives further guided this inquiry. I approached this study from a constructivist perspective, that is, knowledge, understanding, and meaning is created by participants acting in concert with one another in a particular time and place. Multiple viewpoints were sought and valued. Understanding was considered in the process of being revealed within a particular context and time and was, therefore, subjective by nature. Learning was inextricably interconnected to historical context, to previous schooling, and to current teaching practices. Additionally, students and faculty were viewed as learning together within socioculturally situated and pedagogically contextualized schooling environments.

Faculty and students were seen as both teachers and learners. It is because I remain open to learning from students that this type of study came into being. By exploring the lived experiences of students within the actual classroom setting, new learning and understandings were anticipated. The understandings that I had as I began this investigation, were shaped by personal experience, influenced by educational practice, and guided by the perspectives gathered in the literature reviewed prior to interviewing student participants.

In hermeneutic inquiry the following positions are assumed. When probing "what it means to be a nursing student and an English language learner", what is considered important by the participant in the telling, shows up as mattering and as such is considered truthful and valid. Interpreting accounts are always tentative and reflect the researcher's understandings at the time of writing. The researcher contemplates how the scholarship is informed by the interpretive methodologies and philosophical traditions of phenomenology and critical social theory. The learning involved in designing, conducting, interpreting, and reporting continues on as a work in progress.

One correct interpretation does not exist as interpretations are always situated, historically, politically, and personally. Yet a position of total subjectivity or relativism is not assumed. The study was designed with the understanding that narrative interpretation of the phenomenon was the most satisfactory way to address the expressed concerns.

Although texts are open to alternative interpretations, hermeneutic analysis is a bounded practice. Interpretations are well thought out with careful attention to methodological processes. Remaining open to multiple ways of knowing, learning, and interpreting, crossing back and forth between participant to interviewee and between interviewee to other members of the research team was consciously practiced throughout the data collection and analysis stages. Putting forth a recognizable interpretation to others helped establish validity. Furthermore, valid interpretations would be familiar to students, educators, and scholars in nursing and education communities.

Additional key assumptions framed this study. Central to the investigator's reading of the word and world was Freire's (1974) concept that teachers and students are

both simultaneously learners and producers of knowledge. Concomitantly, Nieto's (1999) assertion that the purpose of education in an unjust society is to bring about equality and justice undergirded this study. By participating in dialogue and accessing the worlds of students as English language learners the hope was to create a space for their particular voices to be heard and the meaning of their experiences revealed. It was part of my fore-structure or my prejudgment that participants had relevant insights to offer. Furthermore, my foresight included the notion that possible issues of power could be exposed.

Brookfield (2005) posits that the world is organized around three core critical theoretical assumptions:

1. That apparently open, Western democracies are actually highly unequal societies in which economic inequity, racism, and class discrimination are empirical realities.
2. That the way this state of affairs is reproduced and seems to be normal, natural, and inevitable (thereby heading off potential challenges to the system) is through the dissemination of dominant ideology.
3. That critical theory attempts to understand this state of affairs as a necessary prelude to changing it (p. viii.).

Moreover, theoretical assumptions in Habermas' (1984) Theory of Communicative Action gleaned from readings during the interpretive phase bear further consideration. "Coming to an understanding" is aimed at achieving a valid agreement during communication. Communicative action supposes rationality in the interconnection between participants; a process of mutually convincing one another in which the actions

are coordinated on the basis of motivation by reason. Habermas (1987) describes "validity claims" as a truthfulness found in the combination of the "objectivity of experience and the claim to the intersubjective validity of a corresponding descriptive statement, the idea of the correspondence of sentences to facts with the concept of an idealized consensus (p. 72). In other words, "what we are saying or hearing is intelligible, is coded according to the usual rules, and what we are saying or hearing is true in so far as it implies the existence of the state of affairs"(Young, 1990, p. 75).

Furthermore, Habermas' claims that an "ideal speech situation" occurs when "persons speaking are being truthful or sincere and the things said are normatively appropriate considering the relationships about the people and between them and the situation they are in" (Young, 1990, p. 75). However, an asymmetry of power still exists "in the name of 'openness of communication' and 'problematizing' along with the presumption of equality, which is not true in the researcher-participant relationship" (Young, 1990, p 78). This was indeed the case with labeling and grouping participants as English language learners, drawing attention to a particular issue and requesting an open discussion by participants volunteering in a research study with someone considered outside this created categorization.

Overall, my concerns rested in keeping open the space to learn from students who by virtue of their economic, educational, and language backgrounds have been closed out of many U.S. higher education institutions. My attempt to listen and learn from students' voices not readily heard from was an action that could be seen as advancing democracy.

All of the aforementioned assumptions, understandings, and perspectives provided guidance at various junctures within particular phases of this study; and a critical theoretical framework outlined its development. The following section describes the details of the study's methods.

Methods

Heideggerian hermeneutic methodologies were adhered to in this interpretive phenomenological inquiry. These methodologies involve a particular approach in asking questions, conducting interviews, analyzing texts for themes and patterns, and writing interpretations (Ironside, 2005). An interpretation of texts from critical perspectives was considered during the analysis phase. Finally, understandings gained from additional readings and seminar participation, along with team members and participants' contributions, further guided and extended analyses.

Participant selection

To locate larger numbers of English language learners, this study purposefully sought out community college students, rather than university students, as participants. The participants came from an associate degree nursing program at an urban community college in the Northeast. A program that enrolled higher percentages of students who described themselves as English language learners was selected over other area programs. Identification of this nursing program involved the researcher's personal knowledge of regional schools. One informant in particular, the current nursing administrator of the program, assisted in writing a letter of support for this study. Permission from the

participating community college's administrative representative was subsequently requested and obtained.

Following institutional review board approval from the investigator's university, classroom visits to the community college nursing program were arranged. All potential participants had successfully passed courses in foundational arts and science courses, including two college level English courses, for a minimum of twenty credits. Having then been selectively admitted to the college's associate degree nursing program, those who demonstrated beginning success, defined as having passed at least one nursing clinical course, or the equivalent of the first semester of nursing coursework, were specifically sought. Visits were made to three classes which represented such student groups.

The investigator verbally presented the study's purpose to each class informing class members about the opportunity to participate. Potential participants were informed that anonymity would be assured by assigning pseudonyms to people and places and erasing tapes after transcribing. Furthermore, they were told that privacy would be maintained during interviewing and confidentiality would be respected throughout data collection, analyses, and reporting. These points were also written into the recruitment letter and consent forms.

Written materials describing the study were handed out, namely, a recruitment letter (Appendix B) and participant consent form (Appendix C). The inclusive criteria, defining who was considered to be an English language learner, were stated out loud. Students were then informed that if they self-identified as English language learners they

could become study participants. To consent, potential participants were asked to re-read the materials, keep the written study information, and follow all instructions on the permission or consent form. An envelope was then passed to collect the consent forms and extraneous materials. During the next month, the investigator then contacted individuals via the information provided on the consent forms. Interviewing procedures are presented as Appendix D.

Initially, fourteen students volunteered to participate. Three respondents requested to not be interviewed until after January 2007 following their graduation. Therefore, they were not initially considered. Three others did not respond to the email request for arranging interviews. Two respondents were not interviewed as subsequently noted.

All students who did participate were enrolled as fulltime, commuter students. Four participants were female and two were male; none were married or with immediate dependents, and ranged in age from twenty-five to thirty-eight years old, approximately. Two attended the college's day nursing program which enrolled about thirty students per class and four attended the evening nursing program which enrolled about twenty-four students per class. All identified themselves as English language learners, born in five different countries outside of the United States, in Central America, South America, and Africa, having come to reside in this country during their adolescence or early adulthood years. Although each stated learning English in their home countries during elementary school years, these experiences were described at varying degrees of adequacy; none stated that earlier English language instruction sufficiently prepared them for their present college experience. None discussed taking ESL classes since coming to America.

Participants were informed about the study's purpose and study question, *"What does it mean to be a student learning nursing and English in the classroom?"* by the investigator on multiple occasions. First, the interviewer informed all potential participants when the study was presented during class time. Second, all participants were provided the information in writing when consent was obtained. The information was also provided a third time via an email message when confirming the upcoming interview date. Finally, the information was repeated verbally at the actual interview.

Interpretive interviewing

Students who had agreed to participate were sent an individual email to arrange an interview. The first two respondents were then contacted by email and invited to participate in a face-to-face interview to last approximately one hour occurring at mutually agreeable times and places. The majority of interviews occurred at the participants' college in quiet, semi-private locations. One interview occurred at a participant's workplace. Prior to the start of each interview the investigator as interviewer, reiterated statements about anonymity and confidentiality. Copies of the consent form were also distributed to each participant.

Preceding the actual interview, I, as investigator and interviewer, reviewed the information and procedures and restated the study's purpose prior to introducing a question to elicit the dialogue. In keeping with Heideggerian hermeneutics, participants were asked to call forth a story that reminded them of what it meant to be a nursing student and English language learner. Storytelling or narratives play a key role in interpretive phenomenology methodology because as people structure their own accounts

of events they draw on their more immediate experiences; as it is important, it will be revealed (Benner, 1994).

During interviewing, particular means to bring forth stories, such as probing and penetrating, were attempted. Clarifying, validating, open ended questioning, and asking about experiences of the phenomena that may be described as negative or contrasting contributes to reliability and trustworthiness (Benner, Tanner, & Chesla, 1996). Being open to what may transpire during an interview is also ethically important as what shows up is what matters foremost and is considered the standard of conduct without regard to what the investigator may have had in mind.

Hermeneutic interviews are in a sense not conducted. Gadamer (1975, p. 385) refers to "falling into a conversation, becoming involved with it; the partners conversing are far less the leaders of it than the led." To stay true to the interpretive interviewing process, the interviewer became the listener, attempting to turn power over to the participant and focused on participants' experiences steering clear from directing the interview as much as possible. Ironside (2005) reminds us that the best we can do is to stay open and be mindful of the problematic concerns of interviewing. Mindfulness to behaviors that may limit and suppress expression of thoughts and feelings was observed. Additionally, to foster self-awareness brief notes were taken before each interview and reflections were written after each interview (Smith, 1999).

After the first two interviews were completed, texts were transcribed and initial analysis began. Then interviews were conducted with the next two respondents; text analysis continued after transcribing the subsequent two interviews. Based on the written

interpretations of these four transcribed texts, the decision was made to conduct two more interviews with two additional respondents. All interviews were conducted over a three month period, between November 2006 and January 2007. After the sixth interview was transcribed and analyzed by the investigator, no new findings emerged. Thereafter, no further interviews were sought. The volunteers not contacted for interviews were later informed by email that their participation was not needed and were thanked for their interest.

In interpretive phenomenological modes of inquiry, participant size is not generally pre-determined. Size is considered adequate when interpretations are visible and clear, no new findings come forth, and meanings for all narratives become redundant (Benner, 1994).Therefore, data generation continued until saturation was achieved, that is, new themes were no longer coming forth, which occurred after the sixth transcription and initial interpretation. Conversely, Streubert and Carpenter (1999) espouse an alternative perspective, reminding us that saturation can not realistically be achieved as research is bounded by time and particular group membership. In sum, the transcribed texts from the six interviews served as the inquiry's main data source.

Text analysis plan

The investigator/interviewer transcribed each audiotape verbatim and assigned anonymous numbers to the interviews with all identifying information, names and places, deleted from the transcription; pseudonyms were substituted. An advantage to the interviewer performing the transcriptions is that the interviewer is closest to the oral rendering; listening again while transcribing helps recapture particular expressions which

preserves fidelity (Weber, 1986). Within a few days of completing the interviews, I, as the interviewer and investigator, transcribed the tapes. Initial text analysis also began following the first two interviews. An adaptation of the phases of analysis described in Crist and Tanner (2003) and Diekelmann (1992) was utilized:

1. Texts in their entireties were read by the researcher to gain an overall understanding.
2. Portions of the text were named, or categorized, for central concerns and to portray exemplars of meaning and context. Multiple names were occasionally assigned to portions of text. Text with related qualities of meaning or themes were marked and named for future retrieval purposes. Benner et al. (1996) depict the process of establishing naming to mark text as dialogical with the text, investigator, and other team members (see below). In contrast, qualitative coding typically involves an objective recognition of some portion of text similar in all participants' transcriptions that is then abstractly coded. Summaries were then written along with written interpretations of the identified themes with supporting excerpts, exemplars, and paradigm cases. Relational themes or broad sweeping descriptions of what stood out were identified within each and across the named texts. Themes were re-worked multiple times. Interviewing participants a second time was considered but not found necessary as themes emerged; data appeared ample and without ambiguity.

3. Three nurse educators and scholars were invited to participate as team members and chosen to enhance trustworthiness. They included a local community college administrator and former nursing dean who had completed a mixed methods dissertation study on nursing student retention within the past five years. The second team member was a qualitative researcher who recently completed a dissertation study on immigrant nursing student experience utilizing descriptive phenomenological methods; she was also an experienced nursing professor from a community college in a different large metropolitan area. The first two team members were English-only speakers. The third team member was an experienced nursing professor of students identified as English language learners. She was also a doctoral student and nurse administrator; English was not her first language. Team members read texts in their entireties, read across the texts, wrote summaries and interpretations, and identified themes.
4. During the time team members began participating, the primary investigator continued interpreting. Additional resources were sought, and included works on critical theory by Habermas and Brookfield, on interpretive phenomenology by Heidegger and Gadamer, feminist readings by Anzaldúa and hooks, and by other interpretive researchers in nursing education. Attendance at two city-wide seminars on identity, achievement, and English language learning also illumined and extended earlier interpretations.

5. A composite analysis of the text was then written by comparing and contrasting texts; the composite analysis and identified themes reflected shared meanings and common practices. Any interpretation unsubstantiated in the text was not maintained and discarded. As themes were compared, patterns that linked themes emerged and constitutive patterns, which occur in all interviews, were sought.
6. Team members provided their summaries and interpretations to the primary investigator. Following the written draft of interpretation and composite text analyses by the investigator, interpretations were shared and discussed between the primary investigator and team members in order to affirm, extend, or challenge ongoing interpretations, and to build consensus. Team members' interpretations closely aligned with the investigator's findings and analysis and were included in the final draft.
7. A draft of the themes and patterns with supporting excerpts, exemplars, and paradigm cases was presented to the dissertation chair and committee member serving as methods expert.
8. Team members and participants were also sent a draft of study findings and invited to review the findings and comment. All team members and four participants responded, affirming study findings.

Different levels of analyses occurred throughout the process as exemplars, paradigm cases, themes, and possible patterns were explicated. Drawn from exemplars and paradigm cases, common themes were identified from multiple text readings and

interpretations. By reading across interview texts, new themes were identified, and previously identified themes were extended or re-visited.

Exemplars are collections of varied and distinct examples of particular practices that contribute to a more complete understanding. Paradigm cases are described by Benner et al. (1996) as strong instances of particular patterns of concern, standing out and grabbing one's attention. A paradigm case uncovers the possibility of changing our interpretation, thinking about, reasoning, or understanding in a new way. Themes are identified as related qualities, ideas, or notions which stand out and are named across the texts. Themes come from broader understandings of the phenomena and draw from the myriad of resources utilized, re-readings, new literature, and team dialogue. When presenting themes about the text, Benner et al. (p. 364) uphold "the importance of specifying the paradigmatic narratives that evidence those themes as well as the multiple exemplars that demonstrate variation in those themes." Lastly, patterns, or the highest level of hermeneutic analyses, occur by their presence in all texts and describe relationships among themes

To recap, the heart of hermeneutics is text interpretation. In hermeneutics, processes are considered circular and continuous, rather than linear, in nature. The hermeneutic circle involves writing, thinking, reading, and dialogue. Writing is shaped and reshaped by interview texts read and re-read. "By being open (Gelassenheit) readers are always changing their involvement with the narrative" (Ironside, 2005, p. 14). Reading again leads to new thinking with possibly new interpretations emerging.

Study rigor: Credibility and dependability

In hermeneutic inquiry the criteria utilized to establish rigor need to reflect the hermeneutic process (Ironside, 2005). Rigor is determined by positionality, with the community as arbiter of quality, voice, critical subjectivity, and reciprocity (Lincoln, 1995). Team members' contributions, new literature and findings, re-readings of texts, and further interpretation added to study rigor. Multiple interpretations at each stage of the analysis also attend to bias control (Diekelmann, 1992). Plager (1994) puts forth that evaluation of validity of an interpretive account is established by principles of coherence, comprehensiveness, penetration, appropriateness, contextuality, agreement, suggestiveness, and potential of the research.

Benner et al. (1996) remark, however, that in describing parallel concepts that address rational-empirical concerns for reliability and validity the interpretive project is rarely held with equal regard. Polkinghorne (1988) argues that such systems of rigor are ill suited for human science research that retains an emphasis on linguistic reality. Findings are significant in their importance at the time. Validity can be thought about as resting in the dialectic of thought, of the relatedness of the questions and answers during that particular time (Figal, 2002). The validity of an interpretation is based on the strength of the data analysis and the likelihood of it being a well grounded conclusion.

Additionally, Lincoln and Guba (1985) point to conventional measures of validity and reliability depending on "naïve realism" and straightforward causality, as notions not of interest to the interpretive paradigm, and further state that concerns for internal validity should be replaced with notions of credibility, given the complex ways in which people

construct their worlds. Findings are considered only partial representations of participants' expressions of meaning. However, given the chosen paradigm relies on Habermas' (1979) validity claims of human speech the dialogue contained speaks a sincere truth to the best of all of the participants' abilities; thus, credibility can be arguably established.

Dependability replaces empiricists' notions of reliability. Interviewer and participant undoubtedly influence one other; social acceptability, power differentials, previous knowledge and interactions all play a role. However, in an interpretive and critical theoretical framework, this influence is vital if meaningful data are to be gathered. (Fulton, 1997). The investigator as interviewer and transcriptionist listened twice to check the transcription accuracy. Accounts of differing interpretations and potential interviewer bias are addressed by team members' readings of transcripts and ongoing dialogue (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Member checks were undertaken by asking all team members to read the transcriptions in their entireties and participants were then asked to read the preliminary findings.

Trustworthiness is established in the details of the procedures, the quality of the interviews transcribed within their particular context and timing or sequence, and the uncovering of themes during data analysis. Having a team of three members read the texts and the use of informed consent helped establish trustworthiness. Internal consistency comes about by moving back and forth with the text, determining if an interpretation of particular statements matches that of similar statements made in another portion of the text. The interpreter is held accountable to the text itself. External

consistency comes from identifying the historic and linguistic context of the situation. Furthermore, Fulton (1997) stipulates that consistency can be assessed by how the findings compare and fit with findings from similar investigations, which is addressed in subsequent chapters. Lastly, in interpretive traditions, Lincoln & Guba (1985) remark that notions of generalizability and external validity are replaced with transferability, for other researchers who contemplate these findings in their own inquiries.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Chapter Four reports the study's findings, the gathered interpretations, and composite text analyses from the interviews. Four themes and one pattern, along with supporting exemplars and paradigm cases, are presented. Composite quotes also introduce and identify each theme. Findings are then summarized and a discussion of the findings follows.

Themes or New Learning along the Way

From analyzing and re-visiting the text multiple times, four interrelated themes and one pattern emerged. Questioning participants about everyday experience as nursing students and English language learners revealed concerns related to their own inner beings as learners in the classroom and as adult members of society. Additionally, concerns about what it was like to be class members learning and interacting with faculty and other students in community also came forth. Overall they spoke about what meaning these experiences held for them in their present lives together with thoughts and aspirations for tomorrow.

1. Making adjustments

"It's about making good use of your time. It's not sitting around wondering how you are going to learn. I know I have to do something. Actually being able to come back to it

again, reading it two or three times, I would say that's the main challenge, and also making time to look up those words."

For participants of this study, being a nursing student meant focusing on new learning. Participants entered the nursing program having already successfully completed science, math, and English courses, but taking nursing courses was described as more challenging than pre-requisite class work. A passing grade could no longer be anticipated with any assurance. Being a nursing student meant learning anew with a fresh focus on discovering ways to become successful. Students worked diligently to develop new and effective study habits, preparing for class and multiple choice exams, and sought help from instructors, classmates, and other resources. As English language learners the combination of learning nursing with the work of becoming more English proficient meant facing numerous additional challenges. Students created new strategies for learning concepts and developing health care language skills, making coherent patterns from disparate pieces. These adjustments, new habits, and strategies are subsequently illustrated.

Adjusting first involved an unlearning or letting go, discovering that previous study habits and ways of learning no longer worked. This meant not reading assigned content only once, devoting more hours for preparation for classes and exams, which also involved additional time for learning three languages: academic language, the language of nursing and health care, and English. Adjusting also involved replacing old ways with new behaviors, finding more time to comprehend readings by reading and re-reading, attempting to prioritize and synthesize, rather than memorize, vast amounts of new

information. Additionally, looking up new words in the medical dictionary, utilizing multiple resources for assistance, occasionally or regularly studying with others, not being able to work the same number of hours, speaking up in class, and seeking help were commonplace. Although many of these behaviors appear usual to all students as novice learners, taking the time needed to become familiar with new words and concepts, placing them in new contexts, and developing new strategies to enhance language development proved especially challenging to these participants as English language learners.

General strategies for enhancing overall English language proficiency included reading fiction, reading newspapers, watching movies and television, reading, reading, and more reading, and working in health care. Upon reflecting on his new circumstance Marcus soon discovered the adjustment he needed to be making in order to make progress.

> We have more than enough time to do our work. Because we only have a [class] block for a few hours. We don't really, don't use our time very well. I believe I wasn't really using my time well because I even worked more and I still made the grade. You understand what I am saying? Because if you make good use of your time, that is the piece you really need to pay attention to. What was my time? What and how do I read? I had to use my time [well]. Not just open the book and look at it but read and understand what you are talking. Think about if this might be a question on the next two or three exams. If you really understand it, it sticks with you. It is now part and parcel of you.

Developing new study habits and making better use of time, as illustrated by Marcus, may be considered normative for all nursing students. So too may be the individual ways students accommodate to their own learning preferences. Participants remarked that pictures, audiovisuals, videos, and CDs helped in learning the language of

nursing and health care. Lydia summed up the importance of visual learning as an essential classroom strategy.

> For nursing interventions, you know it's funny when they are talking in class and you don't see a real person, the words and everything. But when you *see* it and you are looking at a real human being, then the words become clear on your mind what it is. Maybe it has something to do with the English, maybe it doesn't. But I think it does. You have now *seen* the words rather than reading it. You know?

To develop academic and health care language proficiency, participants reported numerous innovative approaches, beyond looking up new words, underlining key concepts in readings, and reading multiple times.

Lydia described very elaborate ways to help further her English development while learning the new discipline of nursing. She detailed unique ways that aided her language development and learning, from using an on-line dictionary, taking notes sparingly during class, transcribing all taped class lectures into detailed texts, and creating mnemonics, pictures, and stories.

> Because my language comes from the Latin, somehow, it helps just knowing the Latin prefix, then I can look at the word, and go, Oh that has something to do with..., you know? That's where medical terminology comes in handy because I try to look at the Latin because that is how each word is made up. So then I can put it together. I make up little things. Like say for example, "parasympathetic". Parasympathetic makes everything slower, right? So "para", P A R A [spells out the letters] in my language it means "STOP". So when I am thinking of the signs and symptoms of parasympathetic, I remember, "slowing down, stopping." That's how I bring my language into it, you know.

Yet learning new terminology was but an early building block for developing conceptual wholeness. For Lydia developing heuristic methods from different media,

including the internet and television, were essential learning strategies discovered along the way.

> I do go on Wikipedia.org and sometimes that helps with pictures and the meanings of the words, you click on it and the meanings of the words come up so along with the pictures, Internet sites help a lot. You know I am just trying to make sense out of simple words. Not elaborate, you know, vocabulary, what the pathophysiology is of a certain disease- simple words.

Lydia further related how stories she created fostered conceptual integration.

> It can be a story; you can just make up a little story. I made up one for the thyroid. But it was a long little story. At the time I made up a bunch of little stories that I studied making those little connections, but then I don't go back and look at it. I just think it just helps me learn, to connect the stuff and it just helps me to process.

Additionally she associated processing new concepts with visual representations.

> I also use the Discovery Health Channel. You know it was funny because we were studying the Cushing's disease and I was just looking at "Mystery Diagnosis". They [the television program] don't tell you the diagnosis right at the beginning. They were talking about, you know, describing eating, the woman gaining weight, fairly quickly, she used to be fairly skinny. And then her obesity was more concentrated on the truncal area. And they said her legs and arms were thin. And she had a round face and that her skin was oily. And I said, "Oh, that's Cushing's, [smiles, pleased] that has to do with the adrenal glands." And it was funny because I picked up even before they said. But that is the visual part. The visual part that I am trying to connect- the visual, the language and I am able to process the information I learned.
>
> Now I can see it [the signs and symptoms related to the condition] because I have gone through it- Parkinson's and Lou Gehrig's diseases, all of the others, you know. Now it is easy if I have a mental picture of the brain, the body, then I can see where it affects, you know so I can pinpoint. So it's almost imaginary, the visual.

The language challenges for this participant were further expressed in her decision to tape all classes to have time during class to listen, jotting down only a few

notes, to comprehend, and think about pulling it all together. Just the process of writing in class and figuring out new words proved daunting.

> That's why I tape. The reason is because I have to think about the writing when I am writing it, the words. Sometimes I forget the spelling of words. And I don't know if it has to do with the English or, you know, or just part of who I am. And so when they [the faculty lecturing] are saying and I have to write I have to process what they are saying so either I have to pay attention to what [I am] saying or I have to pay attention to what I am writing...
>
> Thank goodness nothing goes wrong with the tape [laughs] because I don't take notes [laughs]. That's how I do it. I just listen and don't write. Sometimes I just write letters, [motions as if writing a letter of the alphabet] like, things so I can remember, just say –Oh this is important so I write a letter. Like words to remind me so when I go transcribe the tape, word by word [laughs]. Yea, I do. It takes up a long time. I just don't listen. I go through the tape and I have like, this semester I have a whole bunch of stuff, like I have this much [creates a motion for a large amount] of everything.

Transcribing five hours of lecture per week, likely fifteen hours or more, significantly extended learning time. Yet the combination of strategies was yielding positive results. Although this portrayal demonstrated the unique style of only one participant, the amount of additional time needed to be a nursing student as an English language learner was a familiar theme.

In particular, the amount of time required for reading multiple times for greater comprehension and for synthesizing large amounts of information was especially meaningful to these participants as evident by the following exemplars. Tanya expressed greater effort was required of them as she contrasted her experiences of reading multiple times and attending to vocabulary to those who came with greater English proficiency.

> Sometimes there are things being lectured to us and we will be reading textbooks and sometimes this word comes along and finding out about what this word means, and not just going along and reading when you have a *lot* of reading to do. I feel like maybe some people maybe who have grown up here, they have some

> expectation, I mean something that they are already used to it. Coming at it at this point in time for me, I have to correct it.

Kevin too perceived a difference with those who speak English as a first language, describing how focusing on nursing essentials came about with greater facility for native speakers.

> There is so much that is written and so much to read that it is not possible and that makes it very difficult...You then have to move on; there is so much...Where do you put the focus? And you realize for people who have English as their first and only language they can pick up faster they don't need to read it over again.

Both Kevin and Tanya shared similar concerns regarding the need to look up academic and English words in addition to reading multiple times.

> Yea, the dictionary, I'm intimate. Most of the time, I have to understand it. Otherwise, like I am reading something and not getting stuff. And it is just a challenge so. I have been speaking English for a while, so, it's nothing new to me so it's just a matter of trying to know the difficulties that are there but just trying to get through it...

> I mean the volume of reading is just [laughs]...challenging because reading it once you are not... I have to come back to it again and I forget. I see some words and I'm not sure what they mean. I may have seen them before I ignored them so now I am seeing them again and I don't know what they mean so I have to go look it up and come back and read it again two or three times and then you don't have the time to read it [laughs] even though you want to. But I would say that if I understand it, I would say that's the main challenge. And also making time to look up those words and seeing them on the exam because then you don't want to be stuck when I actually should have looked them up.

Here Tanya brings to light the challenges inherent in participants' current realities. Kevin echoed her concerns suggesting that the expectations for learning nursing, most noticeably in the voluminous reading requirements, when combined with English language development pose problems.

> I think that the program is set in such a way that they can't get to all of the key points, just the few things. You will never cover enough knowledge. There is so

> much to cover, but it is written so after you have to read once you now have it, you think you are there. And then this is the way, that it is not the way that it should be.

For those becoming more proficient in English, a principal challenge faced is the slower pace required in reading context-reduced texts impacting the overall time required for studying. Amongst these multiple concerns, however, Kevin expresses a universal truth- there will always be more to learn.

Discovering what is most salient at the time, along with coming to class prepared to engage in dialogue with openness to new learning, is considered relevant to all learners. Yet, those with greater command of English are likely to not experience Claire's unique language comprehension concerns.

> I always like to read first. That's make a difference when the teacher then explains it, it makes a difference. Sometimes I can tell when students haven't read and look blank sometimes and I wonder what it is related to. And it is really helpful to have read ahead because then you would know what she is talking about. Otherwise, like "Heartburn" What is it about it? If I hadn't read it, I'd say, What is she talking about?

Although an English speaker might come to class unprepared to discuss nursing assessment and management of heartburn, it would be unlikely he or she would have misunderstood the word "heartburn" itself. A native speaker would likely have come to class knowing that heartburn referred to a gastric, and not a cardiac, condition.

Overall findings demonstrated how participants perceptively observed their classmates' learning behaviors providing insights that can be helpful to instructors less familiar with assessing students developing language skills. Helen offered a glimpse into how to assess student progress in language development and comprehension in the

following classroom appraisal. Since her habits and language proficiency appeared more fully developed than many of her classmates', Helen shared her strategies with others.

> I think I always tell the other students that the key is to keep up with your readings. And I said that if you read something and you don't understand or you don't know a word, write it on the margin of your book and print the meaning either in your own language or whatever that you will remember. Then by writing it down and the next time that you see it in the context or in the book while you will remember you have to look it up. And keeping up with the readings, that's what I try to do, read, read, read.

Helen also keenly observed student progress offering insight to educators.

> Let's say that it takes me four hours to read a whole chapter. Let's say for her [another student with less English proficiency] it would take her maybe eight hours. She has probably sat down and read the eight hours, you know. Just doing it. One person that I can think of, especially when they were talking about seizures I think it was. She will know the different type of seizures. She will ask a question and she talks about the levels and the different medications for seizures. And I was like, Wow, isn't that impressive she has been reading. I heard her talking and I said, Wow, she is doing very well.

Participants keenly identified how student progress can be assessed, by listening to students, opening the classroom for questioning, and welcoming student feedback.

Coming to class well prepared was also especially important to these motivated learners. Entering the class having already looked up new vocabulary and having read the content once in order to participate and extend their learning was conveyed as key. Simultaneously, participants also spoke about what it meant for them to be among others who were less prepared, doing less to learn, adjust, and practice new strategies, or who participated less in the classroom. Claire ably observed engagement in the classroom, when it was present as well as when it was absent.

> I find it is helpful for the lecturers to know that [when] students are saying something, what they [the students] are saying makes sense. If they [the lecturers]

> don't get feedback they are just going through one topic again and again because everyone is looking blank.

Participants were keenly aware when others were reading, prepared for class participation and progressing, and when they were not. Lydia freely spoke about what it meant to be amongst those who came less prepared or committed by reflecting on classmates' comments.

> Well I don't know that, I don't know this." But they are not *doing* anything. They don't have a dictionary with them. They are just waiting for, I don't know what to arrive [laughs]. Yea, go ask. Ask, if you don't know this, use the computers. You know, just go, go; you have to know the material. You need to become familiar. That's why I use the Critical Hour, 'cause I hear the vocabulary. I hear the doctors on the Discovery Health channel. I hear them talking. Yes, you hear. That's why it's good, if you don't' know the words, watching a show like that. You might not know that later you know that you have heard a word that might come up later on the exam and it's like, "Oh, I remember from this." I mean the only way to help oneself out is to read as much as you can because that's the only way you are going to learn, if you don't know a word on the exam. And the more you read the more words you are going to find out

Participants saw themselves as being members of a learning community. Marcus elaborated on the personal and collective impact of others' behaviors.

> That is the only way for most of us. I mean most of the students are married and have kids and stuff like that but if we have to study as a nurse..., they never told us that it was going to be easy and they never told us we could work a lot. They told us we are in a program whereby you need a lot of time. So if you are told you need a lot of time it is your business to find out how to make good use of it. Most of the students don't put in enough time into the readings.
>
> There are some things that haunt me that I don't want to talk about because it will help them, those who didn't take the time, like students who don't take a test on the same day and say they are sick. They get to take the test in two or three days. It's not fair that they take the same test, so it's questionable.

Participants spoke freely about class members' behaviors. Lydia remarked about the need for self responsibility.

> I don't know how many times I have friends that didn't speak a word of English and I said to them, "Well, find something that you like to do that you know, if you like the Discovery channel, then you watch the Discovery channel. If you like to read the newspaper then you read the newspaper. If you like fashion then you read a fashion magazine. You know, and you look for words that you don't know and that's how you learn." And that's how in the book, then if I don't know the word then I have to go find and search the meaning of that word. That's me learning. It's not sitting around wondering what the word is but how you are going to know that word.

Lydia further opined that accountability for student learning does not fall solely on the instructor.

> Yes there is only so much that the teachers can do and there so much that the students, you know. You have to do your part. And you have to learn your part and I firmly believe that it's not all up to the teacher, you know. It's up to yourself and you going to find out and reading it and becoming knowledgeable. If it takes a video or if it takes something else for you to know then you have to do whatever it takes for you to learn. You know, if you don't know a lot of words in English then you need to learn, you know, seriously, you know.

Kevin too observed students using language and other concerns as "the escape and excuse" while also referring to personal accountability.

> The teacher can't understand when they give [academic warning] letters when they [the students] are not doing well...You have to look at others. English is very hard; I mean, I don't score well on my English papers but I've known the English language for a long time and you realize how difficult this language is, so it is about that...I don't think it is unimportant.
>
> But it is more the combination, more of everything. There are some other people in the program, I don't know how it is for them, but there are other things that require you to go out and then come back. I think most of the people in the class do work. So when you use it as an excuse then you go around and you realize it doesn't sound smart then you look for something else. There is always an excuse when you see you're drowning.

Adjusting to being a student meant facing many new challenges, given that the nursing program required much more study time and was more demanding than previous coursework. Many had heard these messages but not until they were personally

confronted with the harsh realities, with the "drowning", were tough choices made to adjust, stop out, or depart. Participants acknowledged that those with insufficient language proficiency, when combined with underpreparedness, often experienced greater difficulty comprehending classroom content and making conceptual connections, which further impacted learning and progress. Learning how to adjust by creating the additional academic learning time needed to learn all three languages, the new language of health care, the essential concepts of nursing education, and more English, was key to their progress.

Furthermore, the environment, representing the larger sphere in the context of learning, showed up in highly individualized ways. Unlike their classmates, all participants were single and without children; so they had fewer immediate family constraints. All worked varying number of hours while attending school as fulltime students. One female participant mentioned working fulltime, two mentioned working part-time, and one made no mention of any particular personal or familial financial concerns. Both male participants particularly spoke of working many hours and the strain of trying to find new ways to balance work and school along with the need to send money back home to their families of origin.

Participants accounted for their classmates' academic struggles as partially due to their inability to reconcile increased academic learning time with the need to work to financially provide for themselves and/or their extended families. Participants, however, did accommodate increased learning time with outside working hours. Adjustments varied and ranged from foregoing sleep for creating time to study, to focusing only on

exams putting papers and other responsibilities aside, to working fewer hours, and to foregoing bill payments. One participant spoke about sending home less money to his family in his country of origin.

Helen spoke directly about the necessity of working while being a fulltime student. Together with expressing her pleasure in learning nursing, the need to remain employed was revealed "I really enjoy it [school]. I wish I didn't have to work and I could be at the library and my employer would just send me the check" [both laugh]. The need to work impacted each of the participants differently, exerting a greater influence on learning for some but less for others. All were keenly aware how easily work demands could trump personal academic achievement.

Yet even considering the personal and environmental issues contained within the larger sphere of learning, these participants held themselves and one another accountable for their own learning within a community of learners. Each participant deeply thought about their own learning and adjusting. Marcus expressed this thinking by questioning himself out loud.

> Was it my reading? Was it something I was doing? Or was it my job taking up my time? because I understand that they told us that we cannot work more than sixteen hours. But the question is, if I didn't work and I didn't pay my school fees then I would be kicked out. I didn't have any other option! So I had to work and I had to mesh these two together. What do I have to do? Do I have to reduce my hours of sleep? When after the second test when I didn't make a 75, they wrote me a letter. That letter, since I have been going to school, I never had a letter like this. How could I be on academic warning? I knew I had to do something. I couldn't cut down on my work. I have to put these two things together. So right from work I began to go to the local hospital and began to read with other students over there at night and I come back in the morning to sleep two to three hours and even after that you just see your progress and make the fit.

Findings illustrated complex interactions at play at multiple levels- the individual level of language proficiency and ongoing development, including study skills and habits, the classroom level, including pedagogies, faculty, class members, and classroom dynamics, and personal, institutional, and societal levels. The adjustments made by participants to accomplish their goals, such as creating new purposeful activities and increasing academic learning time, indicated a high degree of intrinsic motivation.

Learning how to utilize time more efficiently and effectively, practicing improved study habits, and creating new strategies to learn nursing concepts, while developing greater English proficiency, constituted new ways for learning how to progress and succeed. At the same time, making adjustments and learning new ways closely connected to ways participants learned to overcome doubts and related concerns.

2. Overcoming doubts

"We don't know if we were getting it down correctly, so you lost it forever. You see how that can really hold some of us back? You don't really know what we don't know. We are scared and don't want anybody to laugh at you so that you feel stupid, so we just let it go."

Participants spoke of universal psychological and emotional concerns, including stress, anxieties and fears, and specifically shyness, embarrassment, shame, and awkwardness in attention to self. These concerns showed up while thinking and communicating orally, in writing, and on exams. Frustration over missed or lost opportunities and a desire to save face were common. Issues about others' limited understandings related to cultural variations and concerns in appearing less than able because of language abilities, as reflections or misrepresentations of intelligence, and a desire to be seen as capable and whole, were particularly meaningful.

Participants' narratives revealed specific concerns associated with English language capabilities. Participant voiced concerns about how limited verbal skills impacted the clear expression of thoughts. Less developed English proficiency, along with differing cultural views, also impeded comprehension of nursing content in readings and on exam questions. Tanya recognized the importance of academic language abilities and its impact on comprehension and performance.

> I'll say language is one of them [her concerns]. ...Spending more time trying to find out words which takes time when you have this humongous volume to study. So that takes up time. Also family too, living conditions, that's one of them. Stress. I'll say that the most important would be... is being able to understand. So that would then be affected by how much English that you have or not.

Tanya also provided two new insights about different ways of thinking.

> I have a lot of friends that had that problem with their English and even though they are very intelligent but just being able to process these words at a certain rate makes it very hard; and for the exams it take two minutes, two to three minutes, to read the question when it really would be a little bit better if they could read it in a minute, and you have to go back to it again and that's one thing that makes it hard. They just don't know how to put it out, so...

> They [students] may just understand it in a different way. Sometimes the way of thinking is different because of their language and what you feel is the best. In nursing they always ask, "Now what is the priority?" Sometimes priorities may be different, it's different. It's important to know they don't know. It's just what they feel. It's a different way to come, culturally, and it's OK.

First, Tanya informed educators that they may conflate intelligence with language and cultural variations. Even as students strived to do their best she recognized that they may get thwarted as their ways of being and understanding may emphasize different concerns. She suggested that faculty see beyond their own ways, one "correct" way extending horizons to appreciate multiple perspectives.

Second, she disclosed the notion that students are more intelligent than what may appear on first glance. Concerns regarding language as reflecting one's intelligence may not be a part of everyday consciousness for English-only speakers, but Tanya was clearly mindful of its presence. Her awareness extended to how being seen as less capable further impacted communication and performance abilities.

What stood out were communication challenges and concerns related to self-expression. Marcus reminded educators that communication abilities, both verbal and written, provide at best an incomplete and often inaccurate assessment of students' thinking processes, knowledge, and understanding that may then lead to negative perceptions about intelligence.

> [During] the lectures in class, there are sometimes some use of words, some of us are ashamed, you don't ask that word, because you don't understand it, you don't want someone to look at you as if you are stupid. If you ask, then they [the faculty] might explain it but we don't want to ask that question because we don't want our peers to look at us as if we are stupid though we know what that will mean. Because I remember one or two occasions when a peer asked a question because she wasn't having the answer in the American language and they looked ...down [on her].
>
> The faculty responded in a positive way because we see that the faculty understand that we are from a diverse area in the universe so the world we are coming from, one word may mean something different for us. So most of us were laughing which was a word we never heard before, so when we put it in a sentence, I say, "Oh God what is it?"

Marcus pointed to the impact on the learning process when the numerous components of language acquisition do not come easily together.

> The first thing I want to get the pronunciation right. I want to get the spelling right. We may be taking notes, we don't know if we were getting it down correctly, so you lost it forever. You see how that can really hold some of us back? You don't really know what we don't know. We are scared and don't want anybody to laugh at you so that you feel stupid, so we just let it go.

Marcus' remarks bear repeating. Marcus referred to all that was let go and lost forever when a student's shame takes precedence to asking the instructor to slow down, repeat, or clarify. The consequences of learning opportunities missed and progress impeded are abundantly clear.

Furthermore, participants' everyday experiences of shame and doubt illustrated the classroom as a culturally unsafe place for speaking or erring aloud. Participants were asking for permission, security, and confirmation as they took new risks exposing their developing abilities. "You really don't know what we don't know" will continue to hold true without educators capably providing safe spaces for student voice, self expression, and feedback. Learning gains by students are likely to remain largely thwarted or narrowly gleaned.

A lack of self confidence to varying degree can be expected by any adult developing a new repertoire of knowledge, skills, and attitudes However, English language learners have the additional challenge of expressing themselves accurately and understandably with newly attained language skills, accentuating feelings of doubt, embarrassment, and awkwardness of attention. For Helen, a classmate's public attentiveness towards her brought forth mixed concerns.

> I remember one day a student said out loud: She has a question. Let's all listen. I was so embarrassed... And I said to the instructor, "Where do you draw the line? You know when a patient has substance abuse and is coming to you for pain medication and you are seeing that there is some drug-seeking behavior here. When do you draw the line?" And I said, "I would start making referrals to pain clinics or you know to something and sit down and talk to the patient and see if that patient had some information to tell me and he or she admits having an addiction problem." Well we ended up having a whole argument, a conversation about it.

> And the next day the students they were telling me, "Wow, you really know your stuff very well!" [Both laugh] So it is interesting to talk about these issues that arise. I think that they take that as a learning experience. One of the students one time was telling me, "That is the same question that I have but I was kinda shy to ask". And the other one said, "That was a good question."

Helen expressed conflicting emotions, pleasure in finding her voice, speaking out loud, taking a position, and helping classmates, along with shyness and awkwardness in self attention. Participants explained that they encouraged one another and learned from each others' experiences and strengths, such as those with more highly developed language proficiency when they had the chance to dialogue in class. Some asked questions and spoke aloud, which in turn helped others. For others who remained silent, learning likely occurred by active listening.

Feelings of doubt and stress overwhelmed a growing confidence, which for Helen hindered performance.

> It's more like sometimes because I am shy too and I need to talk to more than two people like in a presentation when I notice. I may forget or I may do the grammar incorrectly. I never want to be in charge because when you are in charge you always have to speak in front of other people. Like I needed to do a presentation..., and they told me five months in advance. They know how shy I am. I wanted somebody else to go up front to do it. They wanted me to do it. But, I did it, and after I did it, it was like a sack of cement [lifted] from my shoulders. Still, I realize that I am so bad at it. It is exhausting [laughs]. I don't' know.

Participants also harbored deep concerns about their academic writing, as well as their performance on written exams, again remarking that both were not accurate depictions of their abilities. Lydia recounted the strenuous task of capably expressing one's thoughts, ideas, and knowledge.

> My biggest [challenge] is the writing. And I don't think I'm good, *but* ... [laughs] I am very critical, so I get very nervous when I am writing. When I have a

> paper... immediately I can start thinking of what the topic is going to be about. And the funny thing is that when I am in school, I am thinking in English. I have friends who write their papers in their home language and then translate them. I don't do that.
>
> Sometimes I can't come up with a topic. I can come up with a topic and then I can't get it out of my head. So when I am writing the nursing papers, I just *stare* in front of the computer waiting for ah, ah, ah, miracle, or a word. Or you know, something to... kinda, open up my mind saying, "Now I can start writing." You know, but words... It's like my thinking and the words that I know. I wish that my words were in a higher level than my thinking, you know. Because I feel that I can, when I read my paper, I feel like it's e*lementary*. I don't know if you can understand?
>
> I think that is an important part of it because if I just talk and I, you know, people are going to see what else I have but when writing...I used to do the papers you know, 3,4,5 times. I would never do my papers the day before it was due. Always like three weeks you know, and a lot of going to the Writing Center, you know. I think my words, the way my words come up on the paper, they are kinda twisted. I feel like it's not quite right, you know. I feel even though I know the English somehow I twist it all up. The way it comes out is weird; it's grammatically corrected because the computer picks it up. Sometimes I feel a little frustrated. But, you know I don't feel like my writing is that bad. But I wish it was better [laughs].

Some of Lydia's thoughts may be commonly shared by all students experiencing academic writing challenges. However, what is likely different is the additional time required for translation and using the English language to write well, along with the degree to which she considers her writing to be an inaccurate reflection of her thinking.

Participants' stress also centered on multiple choice type exam questions as is typical with many nursing students. The linguistic and cultural challenges posed by exams for participants as English language learners, however, were particularly noteworthy as exemplified by Marcus.

> It is very different, the words, the use of this terminology because we are not always smart enough to know, and to look up all of the words in the dictionary, we try to take some of them the one that you left behind might be the one that is

> coming up so that struck you, and you say, What do I do then? You have the question right but then after the fourth option you are just doing guess work and then at the end you finally say, Oh my God, I wish I had just looked up. I wish I knew how to use the simple language in order to understand this way. That it is different [American English] than in Europe.

Lydia considered the breadth of concerns.

> You know any word can come up and if you don't know it. You know and I think you have to be quick and you have to be fast, and you just need to do it. I think then the wording sometimes on the multiple choice test, they are quite difficult. You have to know the stuff much closer. You know people think multiple choices are easier than a regular. I prefer talking and writing although my English is, I am very critical. You have to know precisely what you mean and when you are reading the multiple choice questions and you need to know your English and you need to know what the words mean. Because it is very important, and if you don't know a word then you know it might throw you off completely.

Even well prepared students experienced difficulties as educators were unaware which words or phrases would pose particular difficulties for them on their exams. Participants met this challenge in different ways. Claire overcame her doubts and decided to try something new, demonstrating her determination. She risked asking for an explanation during an exam.

> I did not know what "... Ambu bag is". I said, What is that? I knew what the other three choice were not the answer. I didn't know what the Ambu bag is. I may choose it but I didn't know, so I asked and she said something about not getting too much oxygen so I asked. *I asked.* So I had that even though I hadn't known before [sighed, relieved]. And the second one was ...it was...MAO inhibitor...that was something new. It wasn't part of the reading and she told me it was a medication that...

> I start doing this [asking questions] when I got to nursing because I didn't have a choice. Like I have to have, I have to get it. If I don't I don't know what is going to happen I'm just going to fail so. So I have to. I start asking the teacher in class when I got to the nursing program but I never asked before. Before it was easy, because I have to work everything there out, I just, can't just [fail] [animated]. Some students don't ask; they hold back. "*That was me*! [Laughs] I don't ask. I don't speak in class. I can go out and ask her in her office but now I have to ask in class because to wait, it is too late to do that.

Claire's imperative to do well came from deep inside as was evident in her resolve to speak aloud as her hesitation subsided with time.

> I may ask a stupid question. Well, what really helped was the instructor who said, "There is no stupid question". I have that always on my mind. I'm not really good at it but I am trying. It's a fear .It's just a fear. But now, I do think because we know each having longer experiences and classes, the longer I have had and we get to know each other; it is different and I can speak up. .

Claire also gained confidence in the presence of an educator who publicly stated the classroom norm, that is, questions were expected and encouraged. Such support helped Claire to work through fears by encouraging risk taking and the development of new academic behaviors, such as asking questions.

Furthermore, doubts and anxieties were expressed as differences in culture during the learning of new nursing concepts. Claire first reflected upon cultural variations in nonverbal communication. She simultaneously expresses both her doubts together with a growing confidence in raising questions to seek new meanings.

> When we were studying communication, in Fundamentals, like "eye communication" that really, that's why I think this is a cultural thing. Eye to eye in my country is a fight. You don't look at a person eye to eye. If you do that means you are fighting with them. So when I was reading eye to eye contact and communication that was like, "What does that mean?" It can't be a fight because you can't fight with your patient. So I asked one of my classmates and she explained what eye contact means in communication, "You're making sure he understands what you are saying and doing." So when she said that, I said OK, but I still have that; I grew up with that concept so I still have a hard time but I am trying.

Student learning was impacted by cultural variation likely unknown or invisible to many educators. Findings suggested that students were expending a good deal of effort in learning nursing concepts in the midst of less inclusive learning environments. Learning

was also impacted by cultural concerns related to what going to college and being a nursing student meant to those with family connections in other countries. Marcus mulled through his uncertainties about family back home.

> Everybody at home knows that you are in the nursing program. Are you going to tell your people that you didn't finish it? because you can't tell your family that. There are certain things you cannot let family know. Is it the language? Even though they speak English language in (my home country) it is not like here, so you learn English here. They believe that if you put your mind to it you will be able to do it.
>
> If you are having difficulty you have a lot of resources right here. Like I say I want to talk to our professors; they will listen to me. I ask a question until I get what I need, I am not leaving. So, what is stopping me from getting my needs met? Every time I ask myself this question I assess myself, "What am I doing wrong? What didn't I do? What can I learn in this process?" I should be able to put my qualities together to get a good picture and that is what I am doing.

Marcus carried along with him the support of his family as he gained new confidence in his abilities. Both Marcus and Claire's narratives uncovered powerful places of inner will and strength. Deep motivating forces aided students to overcome doubts and to discover determination.

3. Demonstrating determination

"I have to join the work. I know I need to do this to get to where I am going. I know that this is something I can do. I must be able to do this." Every day is like a castle, each block matters. Every step I make matters."

What it meant to be a nursing student extended beyond addressing the technical academic adjustments that needed to be made to focusing on the motivational life forces at work. What it meant to be a nursing student included drawing deep from within, finding personal courage and commitment and connections to a greater whole. From overcoming doubts, acts of determination, diligence, and persistence came forth.

Being a nursing student meant facing family concerns and potentially upsetting strong family ties. Claire's "having to do well" as a nursing student came from standing up to her father back home. She risked family relationships by challenging her family's decision about suitable career choices.

> But I *wanted nursing*. I wanted nursing and I wanted to get involved in a nursing program. In my country... they consider nursing a lower class job. So my father didn't want me to and I said OK. If your parents say, you will. So OK I said I will be a business woman. But when I came here I also started in business administration I took all of the classes but I really wanted nursing. So I called him and I said, "No, I am changing to nursing and he said OK," so I started. And after that I applied also to other places and I came here. But I am looking to go on to get my bachelor's.

The obligation to not let one's family down became an additional motivating force in achievement for both Marcus and Claire. Marcus's fortitude was further encouraged in the company of his peer as he shared his step by step daily preparation

> Yes, [this facility for studying] is open 24-7 and I don't have any other facility that is open so most of the time when you are doing this reading alone you find that you fall asleep or don't pay attention and cannot focus. But when you have other students sitting there reading that motivates you. You say I can't fall asleep I can't be the odd one here I have to join the work. I know I need to do this to get to where I am going. I know that this is something I can do. I must be able to do this. If I cram I will not remember it for the next time. I am thinking about one test, one step at a time.
>
> So if you decide to read [just once before] an exam, the next day the question will come up and you will flunk it, so what's the point? So I believe every day is like a castle, each block matters. That's what I think my life to be. Every step I make matters to me. No matter what I am doing now, because I want to get up there, for me to get up there, I know I have to work. It's a matter of, it's a directive; it is not over.

His determination to do well extended outward to his classmates as an additional obligation. Perceiving himself as a class leader and seeing a greater whole served as a new motivating force.

> Someone said, "Oh you can fail once". I said, No. no, I didn't come here to fail; I'm here to lead. Whether you guys like it or not, I'm going to the next class. That's what was on my mind and I don't' care; I am going to make it to the next class. They were surprised, I read, and I said for the final exam, no matter what, I will be in the next class. I found out that I was in the next class. It was like a yoke having been pulled away from your neck. I didn't know where to start from.

Marcus's words illustrated the depth of his strength, character, and perseverance. Without being in his shoes one cannot fully appreciate the weight lifted "from the yoke around his neck." Yet in Marcus' words one can hear a universal drive, the "have to's", the determination, an intentionality of taking one step at a time, successfully completing one assignment, one exam, one course, moving on to the next task at hand.

The freedom experienced in passing the course, and in its completion allowing passage to the next, also speaks of the future. Keeping open to what is beyond and yet to come, to get to where one is going, speaks to the journey in becoming a nurse and other unnamed future possibilities. Through speaking aloud, "It's a directive and it is not over", Marcus displayed his determination and inner drive in traveling the path to get to where he is going.

Both Marcus and Kevin raised issues of employment, of having to work while in school fulltime, and decisions made about both along the way. Many challenges showed up which Marcus referred to as "hauntings" The first challenge related to how difficult his situation had been along the way in coming to this country and how those thoughts stayed with him in the present as he recounted, "You really can't have peace of mind". He keeps his past very close at hand in the present moment. Previous hauntings were with him as he pondered his future plans.

"Hauntings" also described the weight of the present environment, the economic challenge in needing to work to pay college fees while simultaneously engaged as a fulltime student. Marcus adjusted by creating more time for study by sleeping less and studying late into the night with fellow students. The main dilemma was squarely faced- without the ability to work the ability to pay school fees could not be met. For some ineligible for further financial assistance the option to work additional hours was seriously weighed.

Kevin's inner determination in the midst of economic struggle came forth as he considered the complexities involved in combining studying nursing and developing English language skills with working to survive.

> There are so many opportunities to learn and to pass in this program; there is also the computer lab and there are so many questions [to practice]. But for me it is not so much the English as the primary reason. If I fail or if do well, I would like to think that English is not the cause. It is more how much material I manage to read. I work so much, so do other students. When you are outside the school you are a regular person; you have to work and pay your taxes. You have to work it out with your boss and tell them you are in a program; but I cut down on my work; and I have said to other students you can't work so much. You know I have to work days but I know what is important. I have the time for myself. I leave this place at 11 o'clock.
>
> People are trying to get the meaning and the content. You use the English you have and see if anything, any word can help you to relate. You need to work a lot toward that, that "Having to pass". But there are so many things in the way. Like having enough for the tuition and some of the letters [bills] you get you have to ignore them. [Laughs]

The impact of the larger world hit hard for Kevin and Marcus. Choices were made to not pay bills and to reduce hours at work for greater study time. Both attempted to keep their lives as college students in balance, discerning how to adjust and take the small steps needed to attain each goal. A deeper understanding of economic reality and its

powerful impact on students' lives as a substantial impediment to academic progress was elucidated.

Kevin's narrative about determining which bills to pay or not as part of one's daily lived experience provided a paradigm case, or a particularly vivid opportunity to gain new insights. My response to Kevin's day to day challenges came from my middle-upper middle perspective. The response made to him during the interview had been one of thinking that this was overwhelming, of being "a lot". Yet Kevin's response was surprising, providing an opportunity for re-shaping and opening up new understandings previously limited by class identity. Kevin countered this way of thinking about the enormity of challenges some students face, with multiple stressors, including economic and personal hardships by framing the issue in the larger context of his life world.

> It's not a lot, having the world that you come from coming into this program. That world doesn't really let you go; it remains stuck to you, that world, you pull yourself out to come into this program. The bond between you and that world remains very strong. You remain whole even with bills that keep coming, and the rent, and the bank gives the warning letters. You have to work with it you know. It's another program very different from when people are taking care of you [in one's home country] and you have to take care of it but it all comes worth it and you say "You have to and you have to" take this knife and cut at this bond [displays a chopping motion] before it gets in too deep [laughs]

Kevin's response made developing new understandings possible to more fully appreciate and respect the daily concerns and decisions some students face, including which bills to not pay. In general, findings suggested that the impact of being a nursing student trying to maintain balance and wholeness meant paying more attention at times to life demands and less attention to being a student.

From a particularly limited worldview, maintaining such a balance appeared delicate, extremely challenging, and signified enormous sacrifice. Kevin refuted this understanding- this naming of his adjustments he made "a lot". He called this perspective into question. What was viewed as "a lot" was viewed as much less by one who had faced great challenges along the way. His way of thinking maintained a focus on strengths, capabilities, and wholeness.

Kevin's narrative serves as a paradigm case for thinking about how daily challenges are perceived and faced from a fresh perspective. An inner strength and wholeness carried deep within was revealed. Wholeness came from accessing the past, carrying along family and community into the present moment. Wholeness was sustained in the midst of letting go that he determined needed to be made to successfully meet his classroom goals. From somewhere deep within wholeness persisted, while being newly situated in a society where the dominant view calls for one to look out for oneself, individually and separately, without the immediate experience of caring for one another within a supportive community.

In further confronting his fear of not passing a course or successfully completing the program, Kevin again provided an alternative perspective. In contemplating his fears and "potential course failure", he spoke with determination maintaining wholeness.

> Even if I don't make it I think I am a very good person. I have gained an understanding more deeply. It's been very good. I have really learned a lot from my reading, from my education, from the lectures. There is a lot to learn. I have really learned a lot.

With little regard to whether he eventually succeeded or not, Kevin focused on the learning he had attained.

His positive outlook and holistic perspective serve as a second paradigm case. In drawing attention to his well being Kevin reminds us that he has remained whole and psychologically healthy regardless of the eventual academic outcome. Beyond educators' day to day emphasis on unit objectives and upcoming exams, his perspective provides an opportunity to find new meaning, being mindful of creating and maintaining wholeness in the midst of daily stressors, personal concerns, and life demands.

Helen too has reminded us that being a student holds different meanings for each person as a unique being in a specific time and place. She too has asked us see one another individually, each with a particular set of circumstances.

> You know I actually, sometimes I think back and I am going to kick myself only because I lacked the time and I was dealing with some other stuff. I should have my license right now. That was more related to personal issues at the time. Probably because this is my second time around, it's either you do it this time or you know, there's not going to be another chance basically. And remember that the first time you fail it's not that you are not able to, but because there were too many other things that occupy or doing too much of other stuff and not doing exactly what you have to do. So I have reasoned that now I am more concentrated on what I have to do. To know that I am able to do it, I have to do it. I have to do it because I want to do it and there's not going to be another chance, and I am getting old too [laugh together].

These findings draw our attention to the everyday challenges faced by students, challenges that extend beyond passing exams and coming prepared for class to not paying bills and personal and familial crises. The strengths and bonds that students possess drawing upon life experiences may be barely visible to faculty in the classroom. Students possess assets and capabilities not immediately recognized or until now appreciated.

Being a nursing student meant expending a good deal of psychic energy related to language, cultural, academic, personal, and environmental concerns. The psychosocial

stress associated with the multistep processes of learning was heightened for those with less developed English language proficiency. A deeper understanding of the interplay of learning and language and its development over time also comes forth.

Participants emphasized personal strengths and also drew from those around them, on relationships, on being a part of a community, and on a greater wholeness. What it meant to be a nursing student included their learning community. Participants appreciated each other and helped one another academically and socially. Moreover, they offered numerous suggestions for enhancing learning in the classroom environment. They pointed out aspects of the learning experience wanting for improvement, seeing themselves as co-creators of community.

4. Co-creating community

"At the end we will have a very good product. That is what I believe. You know ...going to school I feel like we are all in the same boat. You know this is a family."

Despite their commuter status and full adult lives, participants focused on connecting, sharing and helping each other as peers, and creating a responsive and caring community. Participants spoke of co-responsibility in teaching and learning. The "we" came through in numerous excerpts as exemplified in "We will have a good product". Participants remarked about how students needed to do their part also suggesting that faculty needed to as well. Participants also freely offered suggestions for helping faculty create enhanced learning experiences within the context of creating community, speaking frankly, distinguishing those who appeared to do this better than others, and revealing which classroom practices did and didn't work.

By offering numerous specific suggestions participants became the teachers. A degree of trust had been established during the interview process as they freely took risks asking educators to become innovative, offering different strategies to improve the learning environment. Through their narratives, participants critically but respectfully, requested educators to teach from a place of greater awareness and to become more culturally receptive, responsible, and responsive. Ideas ranged from ways to frame concepts in the context of developing higher order thinking, to more visual learning, class demonstrations and presentations, and to greater dialogue instead of lecture.

Lydia vividly reiterated all that is lost when faculty lectured and plowed ahead.

> You know I have a better understanding of what other students went through when they [faculty] say, "Write this, get this, Are you writing this?" to give them [the students] enough time to write it and think of the words because not everybody can write and think at the same time, sometimes especially with English second learn, you know people learning a second language, they just have to think about it before they write. They have to think about the spelling, they have to think about how to put the words together and it is not as easy as 1, 2, 3 or it's not as easy as saying, "Are you writing this?"... You know she wouldn't repeat, you know, wouldn't repeat. Well, I am still on the first one [laughs].

Lydia raised concerns that may be invisible to the educator teaching from a monocultural perspective. Here the power faculty hold in influencing the direction of learning in the classroom was revealed. This passage can help English-only educators to cross over language boundaries and experience the classroom from a different perspective.

Lydia shared both her insights about tackling complex steps in thinking, comprehension, and writing, and experiencing ineffective teaching and learning. Lydia illustrated less effective teaching and learning in the faculty practice of cramming in more content.

> I have to say sometimes with one of the professors, she just goes on and on and on and on. She moves on from one topic to another. And I say "Oh I'm still on the other one [laughs]. And so with her it's kinda difficult because she says something and then she goes back and then it's like, I am still processing the words from the topic before [laughs]. I have to go on into the next one and...The visuals help a lot and sometimes she doesn't have any visuals and you are left wondering [laughs]...What? She goes on and on and...That's why I have my tape. I get very touchy when someone touches my tape [laughs].

Less learning is clearly evident as the consequence of such a teaching approach.

In tandem, participants ably offered numerous ways for enhancing the learning experience in the classroom. Lydia suggested faculty utilize different methods, including visuals and demonstrations remarking about two professors, one who spoke English as a native language and one for whom English was not the first language, as implicitly having understood this.

> Hands and gestures are important, the other form of language which is the body language [laughs]. I think that goes along very well and one professor has a great way of [laughs] [motions with her hands] and does a great job. Um, Prof. [name] does too; maybe because English is not the first language...She has a little bit of understanding of what it means to be a second [language learner].

Tanya also found that educators who relied more so on lecture than other methods disadvantaged English language learners. She articulated fresh points, including her concerns about English-only educator accents as she also requested more visuals and student presentations.

> When I came here, up to now, I've had a hard time understanding some teachers, you know their accents. I'd say that being able to see something makes it a whole lot easier for me and for often other people to help their understanding, more so than talking. So maybe whoever is talking can also point at what she is saying something so the visuals help. Yea, the pictures; and the teacher that has the main topic and words can elaborate on the main point. That aspect, I don't know if they will change but it will go a long way to help. That's one good thing. Asking students to do presentations helps, for all of us. Some people don't' like it but I

think it is very good, to make you be in that position and learn from it. You have to be able to do that.

Participants implored educators to attend to multiple ways of learning and give up lecturing. Without hesitation, participants saw themselves as purveyors of ideas for enhancing the learning environment for all. Without restraint, Marcus placed himself in the role as teacher.

> If I were to be a teacher of nursing, I would take it to a different level. Why I say that is, If you had been talking about, let's say, "Assessment", you could pick one of the students in the lecture, to demonstrate with somebody right there. You see everything we see we will not forget, like in the lab.
>
> Yes, most of the time we don't really know, like upper digestive system- Why do you call it "upper" digestive? All we know is that it is a digestive system- Why is it called "upper" and "lower"? But if you come up with a model and can say here is the upper and here is the lower. This will happen I think. I bet you any student who learns that way will never forget. Yes you would get it, take a mannequin, if you talking about the digestive system, then let's see what is going on, you can say pose a question and say, "What did you understand? Do you understand me?"
>
> [I would] ask for more interactive teaching. That will really boost our effort in this school. I know it could consume a lot of time but at the end we will have a very good product. That is what I believe.

Participants also reiterated that providing only new content in the classroom was not enough, declaring that something was missing and more was needed, asking faculty to provide opportunities for scaffolding learning activities. Moving beyond utilizing the classroom for presenting only new content their suggestions highlight attending to different learning preferences, including demonstration and visual styles. Students also suggested smaller groups and more student presentations. Most importantly, Marcus asked for ways to prioritize concerns and to distinguish relevance.

> Well, let's say the nursing process, and we are talking about assessment, then plans and diagnosis, and interventions before you evaluate. You know the first

> thing you have to do is assess. But most topics they talk about nursing management. You get what I am saying? They will say, "The nurse will do, the nurse will do," They never say what is the *first* thing the nurse will do? But what we are talking about nursing in terms of priority. So at the end of the day you didn't let the student know that, this is what the nurse can do, maybe four important things for the nurse to do.
>
> I didn't get the question right because it is not prioritized- I don't know which to do first. And I say, Oh my God, we talk about this and this but which do I have to do first? That is a big set back. At the end of the day most of us are thinking one way because what we learn is missing from the street and from class. Also we were talking about diabetes and sliding scale, we didn't know we were talking about insulin directly and we didn't talk about it much in class. At times you can be very lucky and others times not.

Beyond comprehension and classroom discussion of important concepts, participants asked for opportunities for building higher order thinking skills through applying nursing concepts to new situations, such as working on case studies, and onto analysis, working on real situations, constructing different scenarios with multiple and different outcomes, creating numerous "What if's?". Participants' thoughts also turned to making meaning and drawing relationships, in other words, to developing analysis and synthesis.

These are important learning concepts common to all learners. Helen pondered both thinking and language skills development.

> I think it can be that English is a second language but also I feel that we get thrown, you know we get thrown. And you think like if you have not heard or seen it before and this is linked. You don't know and this is what happens in the classroom when they talk about Coumadin levels and anticoagulants and why is it important to check the level before you give medication...Some of the students would still ask, What's Coumadin? What's the PTT [partial thromboplastin time]? What's the INR [international normalizing ratio]? And I was kind of shocked so that's what, it's not a language problem- it's more like they didn't have the experience to learn the meaning. So they are good at doing the things, but probably knowing why this, the relational, that's a problem.

Helen reiterated the importance in building relationships among important concepts related to caring for patients with particular illnesses and their related therapies, such as the patient with diabetes, taking insulin with sliding scale dosing or caring for the patient taking anticoagulants, such as Coumadin and the need for evaluating related lab studies, such as PTT and INR. Helen requested faculty link learning to real life, to learning from actual clinical experiences, requiring faculty to move beyond taking classroom time to present new content to utilizing the time for higher order thinking skill development.

Furthermore, behind Marcus' and Helen's "setbacks" and "getting thrown" is a realization that opportunities for making connections and building relationships as vital learning experiences were not available, either missing or denied to them in the classroom. Participants, whether describing their own struggles or those of their classmates, suggested enhancements for creating new learning opportunities together in order for all to succeed. Moreover, they directly informed us that not all learning environments provided students with experiences that fostered language and higher order thinking development.

Beyond the classroom, Helen suggested that language development can be enhanced through part-time employment in health care settings. Helen found this to be an additional location for developing language proficiency.

> I think what has helped me the most is all the years that I have working in the hospital. I can read the terminology and all; I have an idea of what is going on. If they tell me "rule out bilirubin", whatever I pretty much know what is going on. So I think all of the years I have worked at the hospital has helped me the most with the language. So in the classroom I can fit it all together.
>
> Every day is a learning. You never stop learning a language. I learn everyday. Sometimes I read and I say what does this mean? I have one word but I don't

> know what that means let me write it down or I will ask somebody what this means. I usually look it up or I turn around and ask my colleague at work, she's younger than me. She's been living here twenty years she went to high school here.

Tanya also commented that students needed more opportunities in community with others to develop language skills and suggested that students perform class presentations. While self evaluating her own presentation, she also offered insights for faculty.

> One of the ones that I'd like to bring up is that I had to do a presentation for the [nursing] honors program. What I found a little bit hard at that time was, you know, I thought that bringing up some humor you know, while doing that presentation. You know that was the first presentation that I did in the nursing program. So I would say that I was trying to find ways to make it a little bit easier and more interesting. So I tried to bring some humor.
>
> And I found it difficult because I felt that people, you know... [the students] found me not really... [humorous]. [What I take and see] as humor, [they] may not see it [as] funny, because of different perceptions, except those who were from my own country. So I found that I can't really rely on that. You know, I have to be sensitive you know depending on, I have to know the group before I think of using that approach. So I thought about, you know, maybe in the future, if I have to do something like that again...

Tanya presented numerous insights worth considering. She called attention to engaging with her classmates needing to make changes in her presentation to better connect. She considered how to make a presentation more appealing, desiring to add humor to promote learning. Tanya articulated her sensitivity to classmates' needs and considered improvements for future presentations discerning innovative approaches. Perhaps most importantly, she insightfully voiced the need to know your audience. Furthermore, she was fully aware that others may have understandings different from her own, demonstrating a high degree of caring and sensitivity. To know the group, the

present community members and to provide meaningful learning experiences requires reflection and collaborative actions.

As Tanya reflected on her own teaching, sophisticated beyond her age as a young adult, she discovered that teaching in the classroom today required pedagogical understanding from multiple perspectives and innovative strategies. Here was a student acting as teacher pondering a special moment in her learning, seeing how one needed to adapt instruction to meet students where they were, to cross over and expand one's own boundaries, and to admit unafraid when errors were made and improvements were needed. Tanya embraced hooks (1995) pedagogical perspectives seeing classrooms as locations of possibility where each had the opportunity to demand of self and one another an openness of mind and heart allowing each person to face reality even as the group collectively imagined ways to move beyond.

The notion of community as caring for one another was evident, along with a desire for a learning environment that provided nourishment, both intellectually and socially. This place to care for each other inside and outside the classroom and belong for awhile was eloquently conveyed by Helen:

> I feel like I have a family [among the students and faculty in the nursing program], you know. Right now I am all alone. I don't' have family here. You know like coming to work and going to school, I feel like we are all in the same boat. I am very close to three of the students. You know this is a family...

Participants show us that their everyday experiences and time shared in the classroom hold multiple meanings, individually and communally. Beyond making adjustments, overcoming doubts, and demonstrating determination, a sense of belonging, social connection, wholeness, and desire to co-create a more highly engaged and culturally

responsive learning community comes forth as participants learn together, being nursing students, becoming nurses.

An Emerging Pattern: Staying Open to Possibilities

Revealed in co-creating a community of learners and the "we will" was a staying open to new possibilities. "Staying open to possibilities" emerged as a pattern from the interconnection among the four themes. Specifically, the first theme, making adjustments, related to matters of knowledge and the mind, the second and third, overcoming doubts and demonstrating determination, to matters of the soul, and the fourth, creating community together, to matters of the heart and hands. "Staying open to possibilities" revealed an inclusiveness among the themes and a potential for change and growth.

Participants readily saw themselves in the present, at a particular place in time along the way reflecting on where they had come from but also where they were headed, keeping possibilities open. Being a nursing student was seen as a step in one's life journey. Some spoke of being thwarted before with other life issues impeding goal attainment, realizing that now was a different time, their time with the real possibility of program completion in sight and with thoughts turning to future aspirations.

Participants see where they have been, some working very hard for a long time, delaying gratification and wanting for more, yet not having the opportunity to participate in higher education until today. Marcus spoke directly to the meaning of his present experiences reflecting on his recent past and with thoughts towards the future. He reflected upon a universal concern about life's purpose:

> My goal is not just to come here to work. Moreover since 1995 I have been working, that is, nothing like sick leave or that. So what am I going to do with my life? I have the intention of helping people. I have to put my mind to this. I knew I had to do something. You just see that you progress and make the fit. Because if you make good use of my time, that is the piece you really need to pay attention to. If you really understand it, it sticks with you. It is now part and parcel of you. So I believe every day is like a castle, each block matters. That's what I think my life to be. Every step I make matters to me. No matter what I am doing now, because I want to get up there, for me to get up there, I know I have to work. It's a matter of, it's a directive; it is not over. I know where I am going.

The common concern in reaching one's goals and in bettering one's circumstances came forth. Participants brought with them different experiences, some starting out with particular educational and economic advantages, some coming with greater English language facility, some working longer hours, and some carrying greater familial and financial obligations revealing commonalities with others as students and adults. Among common societal advantages and disadvantages, participants sought out opportunities to study and work, specifically in nursing. Moreover, future possibilities and aspirations were part of their present thoughts.

Considerations for the near future, such as the next assignment, or for the future beyond, for life after becoming a nurse, were revealed by all participants. Both Lydia and Claire aspired for more formal higher education in nursing, baccalaureate and master's degrees in nursing. Lydia contemplated education as a lifelong journey.

> Getting yourself familiar with things and words- everyday is a learning day. You know, even after I graduate and go on to having a master's in nursing and you know, when I am really old and I am retired.

The everyday experiences of being a nursing student and English language learner first and foremost focused on being-in-the-world, in the present day, carrying the past, yet looking forward. Above all, amongst all of the concerns in everyday experiences,

expressions of newly found confidence were revealed. Keeping open to what was yet to come, participants spoke to the journey in becoming a nurse, in participating in a professional career, and in other unnamed future possibilities. Excerpts, such as "it's a directive and it is not over", "I learn everyday", "you never stop learning a language", and "every day is a learning day", portray a profound sense of hope. From making adjustments, overcoming doubts, demonstrating determination, and co-creating community, to considering new possibilities in the classroom and beyond, anticipation and optimism resound.

Summary

In summary, to answer the primary research question, *What does it mean to be a student learning nursing and English in the classroom?* four themes and one pattern emerged. The four themes, making adjustments, overcoming doubts, demonstrating determination, and co-creating community, synthesize participants' concerns. Staying open to possibilities emerged as the one pattern connecting all four themes with one another in a unified whole.

As part of the hermeneutic circle new understandings were sought along the way, following the interviews and initial analysis, to further inform and extend ongoing interpretation. Insights came from many sources, including seminar attendance and new readings, particularly within the phenomenological, critical, and feminist genres, and the written summaries and text analyses by the three team members. In concert with re-reading the original texts and earlier literature reviewed, new appreciations were gained

and meanings uncovered keeping critical theoretical perspectives in mind. Team member and participant responses validated the interpretation set forth.

All of the aforementioned sources enriched the ongoing dialogue. Concerns about English language learners bear consideration. However, as the findings demonstrated, what was meaningful in the participants' everyday lives included much more. As participants were interviewed for this study about their everyday lives as English language learners in the nursing classroom, their pasts, futures, and whole selves were ever-present. Participants saw themselves not solely as English language learners but through multiple identities, as nursing students, future nurses, individuals, group members, family members and friends, teachers and learners, working adults, members of this society, and other societies as well for some. What started out as a query related to a notion of identity extended to one's being-in-the-world, moving back and forth from being situated in a specific location and time, to significantly connecting with one's full self, to wholeness and larger relationships, creating the pattern, staying open to possibilities. Discussion of the findings for each of the themes and pattern is now presented.

Discussion

"To be capable we must before all else incline toward what addresses itself to thought-and that is what of itself gives food for thought. What gives us this gift, the gift of what must properly be thought about, is what we call most thought provoking"

(Heidegger, 1968/1993, p. 381). A discussion of the findings, or "that which is most thought provoking", involves fluidity, moving back and forth between the whole, the pattern identified as "Staying Open to Possibilities", and the parts or the four themes. Additional reading in feminist, phenomenological, and critical works and understandings gathered from English language learning seminars further illumined the analysis of the texts and informed the discussion of the findings.

Learning to learn anew

Learning anew involved fresh ways of thinking about and adjusting to new language, new academic concepts, new demands on time and effort, and the multiple influences impacting learning and academic progress. "Learning to make adjustments" by developing new study habits and extending learning time can be considered normative for all nursing students. Yet the amount of additional time required being an academically successful nursing student together with developing new habits for purposefully learning English was familiar to all study participants. Participants indicated that greater effort was required as they contrasted their experiences to those who came with greater English proficiency.

Effort and time manifested itself in many forms. Effort included additional time for specific activities for enhancing English language learning, such as reading from many sources and use of multimedia including CD-ROMs, a health related television program, and internet resources. The amount of time required to read for greater comprehension and for synthesizing multiple sources of information was particularly meaningful. The additional academic learning time and effort to continue learning the

English language in addition to the new language of health care and essential concepts of nursing education was crucial to their academic progress. Added academic learning time was intentionally designed to meet immediate learning goals, in consideration of the overarching goal of becoming a nurse and beyond.

Findings indicated that nursing students as English language learners were meeting with success in their courses and making academic progress. Making progress in learning English and making academic progress was inextricably linked to learning in its larger context. Connecting English language acquisition to academic progression and success was viewed in conjunction with effort as evidenced by additional academic learning time, preparedness, and determination, amongst other considerations.

Complex interactions were occurring. Participants developed heuristic knowledge and new behaviors, figuring out how to build into their busy lives additional language learning time on top of academic learning time and improved study habits; they came prepared for classroom participation having already read the assigned readings and having already looked up new disciplinary and English language terms. Participants also witnessed classmates' behaviors, declaring that progress was impeded for those with limited English when combined with under-preparedness. Preparing for class and reading multiple times, or increasing academic learning time, strongly related to achievement as has been previously reported by Wlodowski (1999).

Additionally, the complex interplay of learning with agency, culture, and environment came forth in this inquiry. Throughout the texts, participants spoke not only of themselves as individuals but also as members of learning communities, interacting

with classmates and faculty. Participants drew attention to class members' behaviors and the need for self and collective responsibility. Participants remarked how students use language and other concerns as "the escape and excuse" indicating the influence of self agency and motivation on learning. English language learning itself, therefore, represents but one aspect of culture impacting learning.

The degree to which participants expressed discomfort in others' behaviors within their learning environment was unexpected and particularly revealing. From individualistic points of view, thinking is often less focused on other's behaviors with little regard paid to being a group member learning together. Voicing concerns in such ways shifted attention to alternative perspectives and to thinking about the learning community in its entirety and from individualistic to collectivist perspectives.

In the current education milieu with its emphasis on outcome measures, such as individual grades and licensure scores, the nursing education community arguably pays less attention to group processes and the experiences of members belonging to groups learning together. Perhaps participants in this study carried with them traditions emphasizing an awareness and importance to caring for others that generally is left unspoken or unnoticed in the classroom environment. Wlodkowski (1999) has advised educators to consider group needs in the classroom by creating culturally inclusive learning environments, attending to both individual or self directed learning and collective or group learning. Perhaps because participants brought with them perspectives from different cultures valuing community connections, they were more acutely observant of their classmates' language abilities, level of preparation, and participation,

ably articulating the impact of classmates' behaviors on their own learning and learning for the whole.

New understandings also surfaced with regard to the degree in which some participants were actively making numerous adjustments to increase study time in concert with the environment's impact on learning. As an educator with a background inclusive of a reasonably steady income and class identity often considered culturally normative or dominant in society by many, it was understandably difficult to appreciate the degree to which economic strain impacted some of the participants' lives. The adjustments made, ranging from foregoing sleep, to creating time to study past midnight with others, to focusing only on exams, putting papers and other responsibilities aside, and to foregoing bill payments, were equally incomprehensible. Being forced to attend less to the needs of families in countries of origin, sending a reduced amounts of money home and jeopardizing livelihoods, was similarly unfamiliar.

Participants ably read the worlds of their classmates accounting for classmates' academic struggles as partially due to the need to financially provide for themselves and their families. Yet their concerns and related adjustments can not be considered uncommon to others in similar socioeconomic circumstances. But the aforementioned concerns provide insights to issues of power and privilege revealing how social inequities can thwart some and not others from making academic progress. Furthermore, what are uncovered are nuanced, complicated, and diverse portrayals of concerns and adjustments even within this small group.

Looking anew at what it means to be a student learning nursing in the classroom takes into account the larger context of learning. A love of learning sobered by economic realities brought forth the expressed wish for the former without the latter. How often do educators consider students' love of learning and desire to do better while witnessing underperformance as students provide for their own and their families' well beings? As revealed in the texts, educators might gain a deeper understanding about the larger context of learning and its impact in students' lives by more closely reading their worlds, in other words, by more closely attending to students' whole selves, perhaps by purposefully engaging in greater interaction, in and out of the classroom as suggested by Williams & Calvillo (2002) and others.

Learning in the midst of uncertainty

"Making adjustments" incorporated concerns and responses far beyond English language acquisition. Participants' concerns ranged from thoughts about intelligence, capabilities, and cultural variations, to academic writing, presentations, and multiple choice testing issues. Furthermore, matters about uneven classroom practices, the presence of oppressed group behaviors, and the impact of larger social and economic systems surfaced.

The second and third themes of "overcoming doubts" and "demonstrating determination" were thus considered within a psychosocial context. A deeper understanding of the interplay of emotion, language, motivation, and culture, with learning and its development comes forth over time. Findings indicate that participants were expending a good deal of effort, including psychic effort, in new sociocultural,

linguistic, and disciplinary learning. The everyday challenges and associated psychosocial stress associated with multistep learning processes were particularly informative. Participants articulately expressed specific doubts and anxieties about their abilities to communicate, orally and in writing. Findings suggest that students were asking for greater time to speak and write, err aloud, ask questions, and try out new ideas in comfort and safety, seeing, and finding at times, risk taking as positive movement toward intellectual growth.

Findings of shyness and silence masked deeper feelings of anxiety, embarrassment, shame, and fear; which have been consistently reported in related studies (Chamberlain, 2006; Gapper, 2006; Skinner, 2005). Perceived shyness, lack of self esteem and confidence, together with an eagerness to have one's voice heard, have also been viewed as expressions of oppressed group behavior (Fulton, 1997). Unwelcoming and discouraging, or hostile and unsafe, learning environments created by certain classmates and faculty within the classroom also came forth.

Furthermore, such perceptions led to thoughts of unintelligence. Participants' notions about how classmates and faculty perceived limited language proficiency as less intellectual capacity had previously been hidden from view or left unspoken. Actions that diminish, demean, or disempower the cultural identity and well-being of individuals have been defined as unsafe cultural practices (Spence, 2005). Classroom climate affected participants' willingness to participate, thus impacting their learning. Students' hesitancies in asking questions or challenging faculty may have related to cultural differences, or worse, acts of injustice. Underperformance or lack of progress resulting

from discouraging behaviors cannot be ruled out. The notion of harm, therefore, has to also be seriously considered as both thinking and learning gains would be unattainable.

Perhaps educators have unwittingly or wittingly created unsafe dwelling places for students as English language learners; this finding corroborates previous research findings of classroom experiences of students from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds (Hassouneh-Phillips, 2003). Narratives also suggested that students with "poor" language skills have been too easily dismissed as being less capable thinkers confirming Jalili-Greiner & Chase's (1997) findings of significant differences in faculty and ELL nursing student's perceptions in the classroom.

When difference is encountered greater uncertainty prevails (Spence, 2005). Perhaps educators cannot see students' potential to learn as students' perceptions related to limited or inadequate English language proficiency abilities, coupled with mounting anxiety and negative behaviors of others, get in the way of more fully participating. Embedded within participants' exemplars depicting shame and embarrassment was a particular form of oppression, cultural imperialism. Caught within the injustice of cultural imperialism, one's being is defined by two cultures, the dominant and the subculture, or the "paradox of experiencing oneself as invisible, at the same time one is marked out and noticed as different" (Young, 2000, p. 45).

While other participants were left unsure, wondering about how to safely participate without being perceived as less intelligent, findings also revealed that some participants found that educators deliberately addressed making mistakes as part of the learning process. Creating safe learning environments, therefore, includes encouraging

student expression of newly formed thoughts without repercussion. Adequately assessing students' developing thinking abilities and language skills, and understanding of relevant concepts can be fostered through greater communication.

Participants previously silent found strength and confidence in expressing thoughts in class in the presence of supportive faculty. Silence can signal many messages, perhaps deep listening, or a lack of preparedness; but silence can also portray a personal decision to not engage as a counter-hegemonic action (hooks, 1995). Yet participants keenly observed that thinking and learning were also occurring in within the community of learners, through deep listening to those whose abilities to express their thoughts had more fully developed. Findings highlight that even those who first appeared awkward and shy and silent made strides by participation. Educators can help students overcome psycho-emotional concerns by encouraging questioning and promoting greater class dialogue. Linguistic experts suggest that faculty need to call on all students, including English language learners, providing them an opportunity to engage out loud.

Zamel (2006) has recommended educators utilize specific strategies for encouraging diverse student voices in the classroom. She suggests that learners are waiting to be called on, and that a respectful approach is to ask, "Would it be OK? Can you share with us?" Most often, Zamel has found that the response will be "Yes". Participants encountered faculty who "just didn't stop and kept on lecturing" exemplifying monocultural rather than culturally responsible practices. Findings confirmed that students often wanted to participate but by the time they did, it was too late and the topic had already changed (Wlodowski, 1999; Zamel, 2006).

Wait time in the classroom was also addressed. Faculty who intentionally wait for students to formulate thoughts for expression and resist calling on the first hand demonstrate sensitivity to English learners. Zamel (2006) has advocated for faculty to create time for students to write down responses as rehearsal for their thinking, which can also be viewed as a safe practice, rather than calling on anyone unexpectedly. Students can often be self-censoring as they work on both their language development and thinking within the discipline. Not only did participants' self censoring come forth but censoring of classmates' expressions surfaced as well.

Concerns about writing were also raised in addition to verbal expression. Certain concerns noted about writing ability were common to all students developing new writing skills, such as the need for multiple drafts and use of writing resources. Yet the additional time for translation and development of communication skills was particular to participants as English language learners.

Educators often voice concerns about students' writing abilities, particularly bemoaning poorly developed mechanics. Yet how often to educators create spaces for thinking and writing abilities to develop? Rather than focusing first on mechanics which often is lacking, experts recommend opportunities for expressive and other forms of writing, beyond academic writing, building on previous learning and current experiences. Zamel & Spack (2004) have suggested that multiple forms of writing- writing about readings or clinical experiences, writing letters, and writing to find one's voice bolster confidence. Students are able to see themselves as good thinkers first and as good writers second. Such actions promote important skill development and provide for more

equitable environments through full group participation. Consequently, all students, including English language learners, could benefit from more writing opportunities throughout nursing programs of study.

Findings also indicated that even as participants strived to do their best they also were hindered at times. Their ways of being and understanding emphasized different concerns not considered "normative" by dominant viewpoints. Can faculty expand horizons to appreciate different perspectives, recalling how Yoder (1997) advocated for faculty to become bridging rather than limiting classroom influences? Engaged, inclusive, and narrative pedagogical practices, including more writing and speaking aloud, makes sense, especially for educators less familiar with multiple linguistic expressions and varied cultural perspectives, Opening up the space and valuing all voices can shed new understandings instructive to all learners.

Participants' concerns regarding family connections, for example, were less familiar and likely unidentifiable to faculty and students without such customs. Findings brought to light new understandings about the sense of duty to family, helping those less familiar with this cultural value gain a deeper appreciation of variations in lived experience. Connecting to student experience through the larger lens of learning calls for educators to consider understanding what it may mean to be a student whose concerns reach beyond providing economically for one while attending school to providing for extended families. Connecting to new perspectives calls for educators to consider what it means to be a student whose concerns reach beyond disappointing and shaming oneself through academic underachievement to shaming one's family.

Although not all participants expressed economic or familial concerns, most were challenged by teacher-made exams. Student stress over teacher-made multiple choice exams is a recurring and common theme. Findings suggested, however, that linguistic expressions and differing cultural interpretations were added concerns impacting exam performance for English language learners. Teacher-made multiple choice exams appear as objective measures of learning; yet findings in this study support concerns raised by Bosher (2003). Findings suggest that exams possess a subjectivity which unintentionally privileges certain students over others. In this inquiry reading challenges and exam difficulties were experienced by well prepared participants. One participant summoned up the courage to ask clarifying questions during exams, in the presence of a supportive faculty member sensitive to cultural and linguistic variations. Permitting students to ask questions during exam time, related to sentence structure and unfamiliar vocabulary unrelated to assigned content students, might lessen anxiety, improve performance, and enhance equity in the classroom Through such actions, faculty can minimize not only performance impediments but also enhance their own individual awareness about potential or actual cultural and linguistic biases.

The national licensure exam (NCLEX) and other commercial comprehensive assessments and examinations are reportedly checked for multiple forms of bias. Yet how consciously faculty work towards eliminating cultural and linguistic biases by taking action to simplify sentences and minimize errors on teacher-made exams remains unknown. If students experience ongoing multiple concerns related to multiple choice type test-taking, questions linger as to why this type of exam is the primary form of

evaluation chosen by educators. Whose interests are foremost considered and whose are discounted when choosing this type of testing? Perhaps by not taking the extra time to check for bias or to write culturally inclusive, linguistically sensitive exams, faculty are contributing to students' underperformance and perpetuating less fair or democratic practices.

Answering language-related concerns during testing can contribute to fewer students' frustrations and anxieties as findings demonstrate. Given concerns expressed about exam taking, perhaps providing a modest allowance of extra time for English language learners who continue to translate and process each question would provide a semblance of equity. To not take the time may mean more than answering a question incorrectly, unknowingly contributing to lost opportunities, diminished learning, and underperformance. Perhaps students are thwarted in part from successful course and program completion because of such behaviors.

Might students' perceptions be altered and learning outcomes improved if faculty evaluated student learning differently, given the complexities involved in culture, language, emotions, testing, and learning? Concerns about multiple choice type exams speak to dominant perspectives regarding testing, evaluation, and licensure practices and the power regulatory practices wield over teaching and learning practices. The notion of learning as achievement defined by test scores and grades calls into question numerous unchallenged understandings (Diekelmann, 1992). Equating learning with grades also brings up inequitable access to learning and denies enormous variability in previous

experiences (Nieto, 1999). Test scores and grades offer at best a small and uneven slice of the learning pie.

To educate students who can cross borders and think from different perspectives, new forms of evaluation make sense today in preparing students for nursing practice in the 21st century. Living within multicultural environments, how can educators *not* be offering evaluation for readiness and competency for beginning nursing practice in alternative forms addressing knowledge, skills, and values and engaging different perspectives? As the findings suggest, participants' being-in-this-world was significantly impacted by current evaluation methods dictated by regulatory bodies within the larger social structure. Perhaps educators too need to overcome doubts and practice determination in keeping open the dialogue, thinking and responding anew about the problematic nature of classroom and disciplinary practices, including testing and evaluation.

Furthermore, faculty may too readily consider a student who performs less well on multiple choice exams as less intelligent, thereby reinforcing deficit thinking. Participants question whether educators can see students' potential for achievement as notions about adequate language proficiency get in the way. Perceptions about being too easily dismissed and being seen as less capable thinkers were present.

Concerns regarding language as reflecting one's intelligence are likely not part of the everyday consciousness of English-only speakers. Student psycho-emotional concerns about being seen as "less than", or having an awareness of their vulnerability to negative stereotyping, may further impact exam performance, learning, and sense of well-

being (Bain, 2004). Are judgments about language concerns and "failing" too readily made without gaining more complete understandings? A more curious and caring stance can be adopted by asking, "I wonder what else is going on here?" Perhaps then educators could see students as individuals, seeking to remain whole when doubts, fear of failing, and being seen as less than pervade their everyday.

Overall, findings exposed how new actions, such as discovering one's voice, asking questions to clarify meaning during an exam, offering one's perspective in class, or developing new disciplinary writing skills, as intentional responses to overcoming doubts, carried psycho-emotional weight experienced in different ways. Emotions influence engagement and learning and hold different cultural meanings (Wlodkowski, 1999). The "yoke of the outside world", and "cement on the shoulders", two excerpts expressing the weight of its presence, can likely be lifted by faculty connecting more deeply with student and their everyday concerns.

Participants' everyday experiences included making decisions beyond the classroom, for example, which bills to pay or not pay. What comes to mind are certain perceptions about schooling and outside employment. Economic need has consistently been a part of nursing education and practice throughout its history. Participants' narratives bring to light current realities, social inequalities, and understandings about how students can be fully committed to learning while meeting financial obligations. Within the narratives class identities and differing economic perspectives were exposed providing opportunities for extended awareness and sensitivity. Well-prepared participants were meeting goals while facing numerous challenges personally and in the

larger environment. Within structures of inequity, pride, determination, and wholeness prevailed.

Learning in the midst of wholeness

Wholeness came from speaking about the past, carrying families and communities of origin into the present moment. As Tagliareni (2001) and Gapper (2006) also recently found in similar interpretive inquiries, the past, in the context of the present and the future, was close at hand in the everyday, providing a source of strength for students. The paradigm cases present in this inquiry challenged heretofore limited ways of thinking. New perspectives shifted the focus away from grades and personal challenges to communal ideas, considering the classroom and others interaction as spaces shaping wholeness. Through connecting closely with students faculty may be better able to provide daily encouragement, nurturance, and inspiration for overcoming doubts and fears and for staying strong and whole within safe and caring environments.

Participants' narratives revealed their being-in-the-world, or "Dasein", as a presence residing amidst daily concerns, they were able to see things as they were becoming, in an everydayness, a taken-for-granted unawareness, including past, present and future, all at once, with temporality as a horizon of understanding (Lindsay, 2006). As Heidegger elaborates in *Being and Time*, the Being of Dasein finds its meaning in temporality: "the question of the meaning of Being is led to understand itself as historical in accordance with its own way of proceeding as the provisional explication of Dasein in its temporality and historicity" (1962, p. 65). As participants reflected on their current place in time in being in the program, they noted that this time was their time to do well.

Previously, other concerns had possibly gotten in the way; some sensed that this time was most important, and "being a nursing student" would likely not present itself again.

Learning to create something better

"Being-in-the-world" also extended beyond concerns as students and individuals to the learning community as a whole and to teaching and learning within a group, thematically presented as "co-creating community". Desiring more equitable spaces, participants shared thoughts turned to breaking down divisions and power gradients. Most revealing was a yearning to become agents in their own learning. Participants aspired for greater participation in fair and democratic learning environments. Participants asked faculty to listen and respond to their everyday concerns and consider new ways to enhance learning and community building on many levels. Beyond identity and individual differences that too easily distract and divide us, participants shared a commitment to co-learning and co-responsibility.

Given the myriad of suggestions offered by participants, it was evident that faculty were underprepared to teach students with varied language abilities. Hemphill and Brode (2007) have remarked that learning how to teach students as English language learners needs to be a part of every educator's preparation in the 21st century. Through their work with English language learning students labeled initially as underachieving, significant improvements in reading comprehension and higher order thinking skills were attained. Recommendations for designing new instructional strategies included scaffolding activities, extracting key information, categorizing information, and most importantly, synthesizing information.

Participants too advocated for moving beyond comprehension, for entering into dialogue, formulating ideas, making arguments, reflecting on practice, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and interpreting, validating findings by English language acquisition experts. Participants perceptively recommended ways for faculty to gauge student progress by encouraging greater student dialogue and engagement during classroom time. They also encouraged enhanced teaching by greater engagement with resources, visually and kinesthetically, discussing, presenting, and writing about actual clinical experiences, and exploring ways to construct new meaning from clinical and personal life experiences. When given voice, participants freely offered numerous ideas for enhancing teaching and learning. Their exemplary and thoughtful recommendations confirm that learners who are self-conscious about the process of teaching and learning tend to be more successful (Hutchings, 2005).

Embedded within their suggestions for fuller participation, however, were notions of marginalization. Everyday experiences included unrealized learning opportunities either unavailable or denied to them in the classroom. Findings reveal that learning environments remain uneven and unequal, with some fostering learning and the development of higher order thinking skills and others not. Furthermore, findings suggest traditional and monocultural practices, representing acts of power and dominance, impede learning, with the possible consequence of contributing to student underachievement.

Ongoing assessment of student learning, such as monitoring the development of new nursing, language, and thinking skills, was also not regularly occurring. What

accounts for its erratic appearance? Given the complexity of individual learning backgrounds students bring to the classroom, how can faculty properly and regularly assess progress in students' language and thinking development and attainment of new nursing knowledge, skills, and attitudes? Such questions provide much food for thought for predominantly English-only speaking faculty teaching in the multicultural, multilingual classroom. Without questioning and assessing student understanding, "You really don't know what we don't know" will continue to hold true and exam scores will remain the lone restricted indicator of learning gain.

To create responsive classrooms, participants encouraged educators to know the individual and know the group. Participants became the teachers offering much for educators' own education. Consistent with findings by Yoder and Saylor (2002), participants reminded educators to take time to create more meaningful, lively, and even humorous learning environments, rather than to continue to instruct from limited, ethnocentric positions. How often do educators admit narrow perspectives or errors to students to better journey together or make the time to sit with students or peers reflecting on classroom practices, sharing teachable moments, admitting gaffs aloud? To say out loud that there is so much to learn especially from students can be new and frightening. Yet the power gradient traditionally held by faculty can be partly diffused by doing so.

Findings show that everyday experiences and the time shared in the classroom hold different and common meanings at individual as well as communal levels. Participants keenly observed and connected with one another in ways to enhance each others' learning valuing relationships with one another- "You know this is a family". The

free flow of suggestions by participants for enhancing learning environments revealed a desire to engender community. They readily delved more deeply into learning offering multiple ways for engagement..."to really boost our efforts in this school, [so that] at the end *we will* have a very good product."

Perhaps the time spent with students holds meaning on levels yet unknown. Beyond learning together, the sense of belonging, of family, social connections and wholeness, bind teacher and student in ways not readily imagined. Moreover, the "we will" speaks to "staying open to possibilities", to imagination and potential yet untapped for creating more responsive, equitable and democratic learning spaces.

Well-prepared participants met success despite facing numerous challenges brought on by encounters with less effective pedagogical practices, monocultural perspectives, and larger sociocultural, economic influences. While exposing missed opportunities they centered on what could be, in the classroom and beyond. Within a myriad of inequalities, hope presented itself as participants stayed focused on new possibilities. Study findings revealed this universal notion, contemplating the future, towards new thinking, new learning, and new goals. Future plans were part of participants' horizons, a finding consistent in studies by Gapper (2006) and Skinner (2005).

By framing "what it means to be" conceptually within this larger context, possibilities presented themselves for students learning nursing as English language learners. Participants' suggestions for improvement revealed an underlying critique of current circumstances and hopefulness for what can be created. Despite uneven learning

environments, participants' thoughts turned to co-creating community and desiring a greater role in teaching and learning processes. Despite the environment's substantial hold on everyday lives, participants overcame doubts and remained determined in reaching immediate goals and envisioned new ones. Possibilities for the future, such as addressing inequities in access, can be newly envisioned for even potentially greater numbers of students entering nursing programs as English language learners.

Even within this small group of participants the inequities present in the larger social environment was largely a shared experience yet uniquely expressed. Some lived and worked under conditions that to some may be considered oppressive- working many hours for many years with limited pay and little to no benefits, bearing the weight of economic survival. Student learning, academic achievement, and educational systems are inextricably linked and must be understood within their sociopolitical context as "power, race, and class, significantly 'complicate' language concerns" (Nieto, 1999, p. 165). Linguistic development is relevant to what it means to be a nursing student as an English language learner. So too are other concerns which influence goal attainment. Rather than focusing on the distinction of a single identifier, participants suggest attending to interconnections.

Participants' aspirations for co-creating community and enhancing learning environments give faculty the gift of that which must be thought about. By reflecting on current practices faculty might consider unlearning the traditional ways of teaching that may have helped a few but not all, some but not the whole. Finding time for reflection provides the space to think about adjustments that can be made for providing learning

opportunities more culturally inclusive. Co-creating community can open up opportunities beneficial to all. Findings point us to other directions, away from differences towards commonalities and possibilities. Findings bring to light much food for thought, for creating more purposeful, equitable, and hopeful teaching and learning practices. From such perspectives, there is much to ponder.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Chapter Five presents the conclusions which can be drawn from this inquiry. Study limitations are also addressed. Additionally, implications and recommendations for nursing education and for students, along with recommendations for future research are proposed. Thoughts about new beginnings are offered as final remarks.

The phenomenon of interest for this dissertation study was the lived experience of students as English language learners in the nursing classroom. What became evident was the complexity and commonalities of concerns that shaped students' realities, far greater than issues of language proficiency and learning. Findings revealed the interplay of learning with culture, agency, structure, environment, and circumstance. Time and being converged. Personal concerns, particularly doubts, effort, and determination, considerations about the past and future, along with classroom practices, community, and the larger social system merged to form the present moment.

Inquiring about the lived experience of students as English language learners in the nursing classroom revealed new understandings. This study involved listening to students lived experience and evolved into students desiring relationships as partners in learning and beyond. Four themes emerged- making adjustments, overcoming doubts, demonstrating determination, and co-creating community. An overarching pattern

connecting all themes came forth as "staying open to possibilities". These four themes and one pattern were revealed by participants as adult members of society striving to improve selves and circumstances, as nursing students, and as English language learners. The findings bear consideration by nurse educators and other constituents whose interests rest with enhancing education programs and systems.

As participants expressed the importance of improving English proficiency while learning nursing they also brought up other considerations impacting learning; illustrating common and equally relevant day to day concerns. Therefore, language was primarily viewed within the larger structure of concerns impacting learning. The range of concerns expressed by participants revealed distinct differences but more so striking similarities.

When thinking about shared meanings that make up the daily lives of nursing students as English language learners our attention is drawn first to commonalities, to universal human concerns of being and becoming, and second, to common matters of nursing students in concert with classmates and nurse educators in the classroom learning environment. Lastly, particular issues relevant to students as English language learners come to light.

The significance of these findings rests in discovering the meaning of lived experiences for those whose voices have been less heard, helping to keep the concerns of all students alive. Concerns highlight the impact of the environment on individual psyche, goal attainment, and daily life. By applying a critical hermeneutic framework to the findings the interplay of larger social forces with the everyday lives of the participants is illuminated. Such an approach provides an important lens for uncovering conditions

through which meaning is constructed in the context of existing power relations and structures, thereby demonstrating how power imbalances and ideologies limit and distort interpretation (Hassouneh-Phillips, 2003).

Perceptions that some students were better suited for learning, academic progress, and by extension the nursing profession, was revealed in participants' lived classroom experiences. Contrary to dominant thinking these same participants readily articulated personal triumphs and academic achievement. The related economic conditions and realities evident in some participants' lives may be perceived as incompatible with nursing student success or becoming a nurse, yet these participants persisted. Moreover, admission policies commonly practiced in many nursing programs would likely have excluded participants' entrance, given the normative perception that students without a greater command of English are not ready for the rigors of nursing education; participants' experiences showed something else.

The everyday lives of participants playing out multiple roles as nursing students, English language learners, and adult members in society may appear constraining or ill suited for academic achievement to some, but findings suggest otherwise. The attainment of personal goals and academic progress, as evidenced by the expressed themes in the midst of linguistic, cultural, and economic concerns, helps shift our thinking and expand previously held understandings. This study highlights participants' adjustments, determination, participation, achievement, and potential. Accordingly, we are summoned to make room for new insights, enlarging our educational, sociocultural, and political views.

Students applying to college-level nursing programs have either attained a high school degree or its equivalent and as such possess the requisite credential as well as the intention and potential, or even a readiness and desire, for further study. Current college admission policies and nursing program admission practices, therefore, can fairly be called into question. Exclusionary acts show up as stratification policies routinely discriminating against those with common yearnings to do well, to have similar opportunities, and to more fully participate in society. Speaking, reading, and writing the English language can be viewed as an inherent societal privilege (Nieto & Cowhey, 2007). This privilege revealed itself in participants' everyday lives through classroom experiences, faculty interactions, and disciplinary practices.

A critical theoretical framework as an empowerment paradigm can be thoughtfully applied to common practices and policies in nursing education programs today. Critical perspectives were illumined in the space shared between interpreter and participant, between thought and text. Through this guiding lens new meanings were discovered, suggesting that we hold open and problematic previously held perceptions.

This inquiry began by highlighting one difference amongst students learning in the nursing classroom. As Kutz (1997) so insightfully remarks, "differences can help us to understand commonalities as well the ways in which the things we know as human beings and language users can support a concept of a common language that does not deny our differences but includes and transcends them" (p. 28). What showed up as mattering crossed over boundaries, revealing common concerns, commitments, and passions for learning and future aspirations. With new eyes we see students motivated to

perform as best they can, seeing one another as members of a community sharing responsibilities for learning, desiring different ways to bring greater meaning to learning, and to more fully participate in the teaching-learning process.

Participants also articulated considerable impediments along their way. What is made visible is that without greater attention to innovative, inclusive, and democratic practices, injustices will continue to be perpetuated with learning diminished or denied. In sum, participants ask us to adopt what Nieto (1999) sees as our only option, an attitude of hope and critique. Participants affirm they will do their part and ask us to do ours by improving classroom environments to enhance learning for all.

In the broader policy sense implications for admitting, retaining, and graduating larger numbers of students, from various backgrounds to diversify the health care workforce and health professions, are paramount in this first decade of the new century. Major national agendas, including Healthy People 2010 and NACNEP's Third Report to the Secretary of Health and Human Services and Congress provide the impetus for tackling the pressing issues related to program progression and completion experienced by underrepresented groups. Findings from the Third Report, for instance, revealed that the most important factor in this effort was an effective, caring learning environment which promoted high standards (Rami, 2003). This growing body of evidence for shifting the emphasis from student or group identifiers to educational environments provides the requisite validation to encourage changes in current policies, practices, faculty development, and resource allocation.

With a particular focus on one small group of learners, this study began with a concern about difference and moved to commonalities, expressions of hope, and possibilities. Although the participants in this inquiry cannot be considered representative of all learners within a subgrouping of learners in the college population as a whole, the findings, nevertheless, hold relevance. Relevance rests with future readers who will determine its potential worthiness. This study answers the call for greater understanding of student experience in the classroom highlighting those working successfully to meet academic goals while continuing their English language development. This inquiry also brings greater attention to diverse student populations and adds to the growing body of interpretive work in nursing education research, thereby lending support to rigor and future meta-analyses.

Limitations

This inquiry centered on a small group of participants within a particular context. Specifically, this study included nursing students in an urban community college in the Northeast whom identified themselves as English language learners and who had found early success in their nursing academic program, defined as having passed one nursing clinical course in the first nursing semester. This study did not draw participants from pre-licensure RN diploma programs, university settings, or suburban or rural community colleges, or urban community colleges in other regions of the country.

This inquiry focused exclusively on the perspectives of nursing students within an urban community college setting to shed light on the phenomenon of the ELL experience

and related concerns about learning and learning environments. This study recruited participants who self identified as English language learners, defined as meeting the federal government's definition of having limited English proficiency, that is an individual who has limited ability in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language, whose native language is a language other than English, or who lives in a family or community environment in which a language other than English is the dominant language (U.S. Department of Education, 1998). These learners have been infrequently called upon for participation in studies about student experience in the college classroom or for exploring the meaning of enhancing language proficiency while studying an academic discipline. Their voices have also rarely been heard from as students preparing for future health care careers and beyond, further formal education, and future professional and leadership opportunities.

Learning about the everyday experiences and concerns of nursing students acquiring English language proficiency who are meeting with success was the inquiry's primary focus. Learning from successful students, defined in this specific study as students who had progressed in their program beyond the first semester nursing course, was considered especially relevant given reported departure rates. The experiences of students who were just beginning or had left a nursing program were not considered. Perhaps concerns may have showed up differently for those with greater immediate family responsibilities in parenting or marital roles or with different English learning backgrounds in their earlier school years, either in the U.S. or abroad, as all study

participants were immigrants within the past fifteen years from different communities within various countries.

Furthermore, students who stated a willingness to participate self-identified as English language learners for study inclusion within particular classes. Self selection or de-selection occurs for various reasons. It is possible that those who self-selected hold certain views different that those who did not choose to volunteer. It is also recognized that other nursing students may have English language issues impacting learning yet they may not identify or categorize themselves as such. What this brings to mind is that such categorization and marginalization often occurs and is subscribed to within English-majority learning environments.

The concern for separating students by language abilities and separating them from the whole of learning can also be considered problematic. A non-dominant group, such as English language learners, that is isolated and identified as distinct and somehow different from an invisible and more unspecified norm belies the range of language usages within the group (Gutierrez & Orellana, 2006). Assigning membership to a particular set of students by a specific identifier also potentially denies consideration to the complexities of commonalities and the interconnectedness of many issues within the larger context of learning. Separating students from instructors, and students from other students- English language learners from those students not identifying as English language learners, when all are both co-learners and teachers, can also be placed at issue. However, by employing a hermeneutic methodology this concern was minimized as the concerns that matter in student's lives were revealed. Interviewing students in groups,

such as focus groups of English language learners, or with others not identified as English language learners, or with all classroom members, including faculty, in community with one another, may bring forth additional findings representing collective rather than individual perspectives.

Implications and Recommendations for Nursing Education

These findings bring attention to the everyday concerns from those aspiring for greater participation in nursing education, in the nursing profession, and in society. These findings also challenge categorical thinking about who can be a nursing student and who can become a nurse. Implications for educating students and preparing nurses for practice in the 21st century thus can be drawn.

This study began as an opportunity for sharing and expanding understandings by requesting participants to reflect on their own learning experiences. In so doing, participants' attention turned to aspirations which included a desire for a larger role in the teaching-learning process as their numerous suggestions for enhancing classroom environments implied. Their knowledge and understandings direct faculty to consider new possibilities in classroom practices. Moreover, their insights compel administrators and policymakers to keep the doors to higher education wide open for the ever-increasing numbers of younger members of U.S. society entering and completing high school as English language learners.

This study was conducted within multiple realities, including the nation-wide nursing shortage, the underrepresentation and continuing lag of students, nurses, nurse

faculty, and leaders from diverse backgrounds, and the growing ELL population. By listening to the voices of those who occupy these realities current instructional and nursing programmatic practices have been called into question. Educational structures and policies currently in place bear re-consideration as well. This study, furthermore, advises greater attention to the future, contemplating nursing student populations in the near future, and imagining nursing education and nursing practice in 2050.

Findings suggest that today particular pedagogical practices impact student progress, thereby limiting learning opportunities and obstructing goal achievement. In other words, pedagogical practices which maximize learning potential for all students in nursing classroom environments are not yet commonplace. Findings guide faculty to think anew. Accordingly, these three recommendations for nursing education practice urge faculty and other nursing education leaders to enhance learning with inclusive classroom practices, to connect to students as individuals and group members learning together, and to keep possibilities open for new educational practices and policies.

1. Enhancing learning with inclusive, integrative classroom practices

The following four specific suggestions are put forth to faculty for developing inclusive, universally designed classroom practices and integrative learning opportunities. These suggestions integrate understandings which have been gleaned from participants' narratives in conjunction with current findings and practices across multiple disciplines:

a) Provide for engaged, integrative learning within the nursing classroom. Engaged practices encourage dialogue, student participation, and inquiry. In such a milieu classrooms can become more personally meaningful and likely livelier. Cultural

receptivity and responsiveness by both faculty and students can follow as a result of greater participation, listening and learning from one another, and appreciating and challenging multiple perspectives. Such spaces call for negotiation, collaboration, and a willingness to re-consider previous thinking. Narrative pedagogical practices, for example, call forth conversations that are respectful and move beyond particular politics of difference to shared practices, leading to an understanding of commonalities and differences of students' and educators' experiences (Ironside, 1997). Additionally, through dialogue, whether in small groups or the whole class, either in-person or on-line, greater connections can be drawn between theory and practice. Posing thought-provoking questions can also promote assessment and integration of conceptual understandings across courses. Furthermore, such spaces promote intellectual rigor and encourage risk taking. Integrative learning gathers learning from all previous courses, such as the arts, sciences, nursing, and ethics, to the present moment. Instructors cross boundaries to help students make connections, allowing for divergent perspectives, and providing for structured reflection, moving from theory to practice or from the classroom to the clinical setting (Carnegie Foundation, 2007).

b) Call on all students respectful of wait time.

Space for students to discover their own voice is created when all students are expected to respond, whether in the traditional or on-line classroom. By publicly stating aloud this intentionality a respectful learning environment can be created, where listening to others is anticipated, questions are welcomed, and ideas can be challenged. By asking students to first write their thoughts or wait awhile before verbally responding, time for thinking

and linguistic development is also created. Time allows students to integrate new language usage with cognition. Providing time for students' questions to come forth encourages linguistic and conceptual integration. Providing opportunities for students to write more often and in different formats throughout the program facilitates this development; progress can then also be assessed.

c) Present multiple, inclusive, and universally designed strategies for instruction to scaffold learners' higher order thinking skill development.

Inclusive practices encompass purposeful, welcoming, equitable, and universally-designed environments. Universally designed practices support optimal instructional approaches for maximizing outcomes for all learners (Rose & Meyer, 2007). Scaffolding includes building from a foundational base, extracting key information, categorizing, summarizing, and synthesizing information. Strategies include visual representations, practice, and demonstration, along with greater integration of universally-designed technologies in group and individual learning experiences. Additionally, written assignments and oral presentations can advance linguistic development. Portfolios can be utilized for assessment of student work and for structuring new learning activities in subsequent courses. Lastly, alternative and multiple text and resource usage for accommodating different reading levels for developing reading comprehension and expanding cultural and critical literacy are recommended.

d) Alter exam practices.

Publicly informing and encouraging students to ask questions to clarify meaning during exams signals a supportive climate. Extending the time for exam completion also

demonstrates sensitivity to learners' abilities. Exam reviews expand learning opportunities for both students and faculty; exploring different exam review formats with students collaboratively honors student choice and promotes equity. Furthermore, promoting the collective work of faculty to create exams that eliminate cultural and linguistic biases indicates a commitment to justice.

2. Connecting to students as individuals and group members

When considering the everyday lives of students and faculty, there is no doubt that "time" presents itself, more often than not, as limited and barely available. Therefore, connecting to students in new ways may yield new insights, strengthen student-faculty relationships, and deepen understanding of students learning within the larger context of environmental or societal influences. Three specific suggestions are explicated:

a) Encourage students to co-present with program directors or course coordinators at programmatic activities, such as orientation sessions to clinical courses.

In recognizing the commonalities students share with one another, senior students can publicly share with novice students heuristic knowledge, such as the need to purposefully increasing academic learning time for learning nursing concepts and intentionally extending learning time for developing greater English proficiency.

b) Expand perspectives to see all learners as capable and whole.

New understandings drawn from this study include recognition that abilities for speaking and writing are in constant development and often provide incomplete evidence of thought processes. Findings demonstrated the full commitment to learning that students

brought to their nursing education in the midst of social inequalities and personal issues. Faculty are advised to identify student strengths, value differences, and keep options open for designing experiences, asking too for student input, to meet learning objectives in multiple ways.

c) Interact with students more often inside and outside of class.

New understandings of students' larger worlds, including how socioeconomic circumstances connect to everyday life decisions, can be particularly revealing. By interacting more closely with one another, an awareness of others' "being in the world" can develop, thus providing opportunities to respond accordingly, for example, to familial and financial concerns, which may subsequently lead to students accessing scholarships, grants, loans, or other resources earlier. Purposefully providing large doses of encouragement, promoting diligence, and praising persistence indicates genuine support.

3. Imagining new educational practices and policies

The everyday concerns expressed by nursing students brought forth numerous new insights. New understandings offer the promise of fresh possibilities not only for students and faculty in attendance today but also for those who will follow. The following four specific suggestions to nurse education administrators, leaders, and policymakers are put forward as options and opportunities:

a) Extend access to nursing education at all levels.

Recognizing that admission criteria based solely on quantitative measures, such as GPA and standardized test scores, are limiting, imprecise, and exclusionary is a first step in changing processes to open up the doors to nursing education to students from diverse

backgrounds (Sullivan Commission, 2004). Admission criteria which are inclusive and evidence-based, as recommended in the *Missing Persons: Minorities in the Health Professions* report by the Sullivan Commission (2004), include letters of recommendation, active community service and leadership, applicant experience with diverse populations, compassion, perseverance, intention to serve underserved populations, motivation, self-discipline, and social support structure, amongst others. Educators are also called upon to provide students with ongoing language development before and during nursing program attendance. Building collaborative relationships with local health care institutions, families, and community groups could lead to language development support and innovative programming opportunities.

b) Try out multiple forms of assessment and evaluation for pre-licensure students.

Alternative formats, beyond multiple choice testing, may better address different ways of knowing and understanding, assess higher order thinking skills, and measure competence and safe and effective performance for entry level nursing practice. Suggestions include pilot testing varied evaluation methods, including interactive case scenarios, clinical simulation performance, and electronic portfolio assessment, in different locations with different groups of learners for meta-analyses.

c) Develop a role for students as active agents in teaching and learning processes.

Roles may include co-creating classroom strategies and learning activities, presenting and leading together, or acting as participant observers. By inviting students to observe

inclusive teaching and exemplary learning practices and report findings to faculty groups, student representatives have an opportunity to work collaboratively with faculty on improvements. By acting and responding together, mutual responsibility and commitment to change is encouraged and expected.

d) Prepare all students and faculty for proficiency in two or more common languages and cultures.

Competence is a second language assists in the development of multicultural appreciation (AACN, 2008a). Furthermore, the skill set required for entry level nursing practice includes communication abilities in multiple languages, whether attained within the nursing program curriculum itself, in classroom, lab, or clinical experiences, or in external educational, health care, or community agencies. Preparing nurses today for future practice in providing safe, quality patient care in the 21st century requires no less.

Recommendations for Students

With the four themes and one pattern in mind, the following two recommendations, committing the time to learning and creating new ways of being, are offered to students gaining English proficiency.

1. Committing the time to learning

A healthy respect for the time commitment required for academic success in a new endeavor is a first step. Allotting additional time for acquiring and developing new language skills while learning nursing is a key suggestion. Furthermore, students should allocate the time for seeking or requesting new learning resources. Instructional experts

recommend and the students in this study confirm that universally designed resources can eliminate barriers imposed by restrictive teaching practices and materials. These new learning resources provide multiple means of representation, or the various ways of acquiring information and knowledge, and multiple means of engagement to tap into personal interests. Such resources offer appropriate challenges, increase motivation; and may be internet, digital, or video-based (Rose & Meyer, 2007). Students are also advised to craft opportunities to obtain feedback, monitor progress, and assess mastery by utilizing other resources, such as study guides, practice exams, and study groups.

2. Creating new ways of being

Seeing oneself as fully capable when entering a nursing program of study, with life experiences, strengths, and assets needed for nursing practice, including speaking multiple languages, bolsters identity development and confidence. Students should seek learners who can collectively offer a supportive community for learning together and can provide a group support system for reaching mutual goals. Finding a few advocates to interact with on a regular basis also provides valuable advising and mentoring opportunities. Involvement in local chapters of associations, such as the National Association for Hispanic Nurses, also offers networks of support beyond the immediate environment. Finally, standing strong and resolute in pursuit of educational, career, and personal goals is especially urged.

Recommendations for Future Research

As this study was approached with a specific group of learners in a specific place and time, recommendations for further research include expanding and building upon the themes which emerged. Further inquiry is warranted in exploring faculty and student experience together, along with pedagogical practices and correlations to learning and academic success. Future faculty-focused inquiry could include self awareness activities and professional development in inclusive and integrative teaching practices, along with investigating the impact of altering teaching practices. Exploring strategies that make a difference in altering faculty disinterest and resistance in changing from traditional modes to inclusive, engaged, and alternative pedagogies could also be incorporated.

Additional inquiry includes meta-analyses of current teaching practices of faculty members teaching in the multicultural classroom across multiple sites in different types of nursing education programs. The experiences and characteristics of faculty as reflective educators, intentionally responding together as learners and scholarly-focused practitioners could be also considered. Investigating relationships between classroom environment and student and faculty experience, learning, and success, across multiple regions and varying program types from different theoretical perspectives adds quantitative and supplemental qualitative dimensions together with multisite, multiparadigmatic value.

Furthermore, investigating alternative practices in nursing education is recommended. Examining student agency and activities which promote greater student involvement in teaching and learning practices is one such avenue. Research in

alternative testing and evaluation is also suggested. Investigating alternative evaluation methods include simulated performance in nursing concepts with multiple responses and portfolio assessments based on demonstrating understanding of interrelationships among nursing concepts and multiperspectival thinking. Examining alternative and multiple types of testing and measurement for nursing licensure requirements providing for student choice in testing methodologies and could include simulated experiences of complex case scenarios representing clinical judgments expected for beginning level nursing practice. Investigating ways to evaluate cultural and language competencies for initial and continuing licensure requirements are also recommended.

Implications and recommendations presented herein primarily address a nursing education audience. Yet these suggestions extend beyond disciplinary limitations. Thinking beyond boundaries, crossing into other academic circles within healthcare, higher education, linguistics, and sociology, to name a few, extends opportunities for future interdisciplinary studies. Collaborating in interdisciplinary research can potentially create new understandings and connections yet unconsidered.

New Beginnings

Previous notions about students acquiring greater English proficiency while attending a college-level nursing program have been called into question. As we are all essentially "becoming", we too can locate ourselves somewhere along a continuum, continuing to expand our abilities in understanding, speaking, and writing the English language. A developing, yet limited, command of the English language by second

language learners is considered by dominant society to be a deterrent to college learning, academic success, and career development, and is indeed worthy of attention and commitment to improvement. A limited or developing command by English-only speakers of other languages, however, does not carry the same societal stigma.

Monolingualism, or speaking only one language, specifically English-only, has generally not been seen as a cultural weakness; yet this mainstream perspective may be changing. Glimpses of this shift are beginning to surface. In the not too distant future, America will likely envision itself differently, viewing multilanguage abilities as assets, thereby breaking down another barrier that has up to now divided us here and abroad. Such potential is on the horizon in education, health care, and society as a whole.

Indeed, I see myself less advantaged living in today's world for not possessing multilingual fluency. As part of my path, *mi conocimiento*, my new awareness and connection, I now call myself a Spanish language learner. Confronting limitations, wrestling with frustrations, seeking opportunities, I see the work ahead. It is an open invitation.

In this new beginning, there is *nos/otras*, an alliance between "us" and "others", divided in two with the slash in the middle representing the bridge- the best mutuality we can hope for at the moment (Anzaldúa, 2002, p. 570). But Anzaldúa asks that we envision the time when the bridge will no longer be needed, when we will have shifted to the seamless *nosotras*.

APPENDIX A

PERSONAL REFLECTION

As an educator, administrator, and researcher, my interest in a deeper understanding of how students as English learners experience the nursing classroom has grown over the years. I predominantly work with adult students who are learning nursing in an English-speaking classroom; many will work in predominantly English-speaking work environments. Many speak a language other than English at home and come to the nursing classroom having received varying levels of English language instruction here and abroad. Although many have spoken some English for a number of years, formal English language study has been described as insufficient.

I have witnessed students with limited academic language proficiency despite fairly well developed interpersonal communicative skills experience learning challenges. I have provided students with support, encouragement, and grammatical and contextual language assistance that I daily take for granted as primarily an English-only speaker. Simultan ously, I have observed students working with diligence to achieve their academic goals. Some succeed; others struggle and depart. Concurrently, I have wrestled with concerns related to learning and self awareness, identity, difference, and what can be named as crossing borders or exploring borderlands. Borderlands can be described as "physically present wherever two or more cultures edge each other, where people of different races occupy the same territory, where under, lower, middle, and upper classes touch, where the space between two cultures shrinks with intimacy" (Anzaldúa, 1999, p. 19).

An early encounter as a nursing student illustrates one such awareness of borderlands. As a nursing student in my community health rotation, I recall being in the home of a family who predominantly spoke Spanish yet their first grader was attending an English-only elementary school. She brought home a school informational sheet for her parents who expressed their dismay at being unable to read it. As I attempted to provide translation, taking on the role as the go-between, I became aware of an educational system that did not reach out to meet students and families where they were, expecting only them to change.

Living between cultures results in 'seeing double', first from the perspective of one culture, then from the perspective of another. I am drawn to living in *nepantla*, a Nahuatl term meaning "in-between space", which Anzaldúa (2002) proposes as an opportunity to see through restrictive cultural and personal scripts. "Removed from that culture's center you glimpse the sea in which you've been immersed but to which you were oblivious, no longer seeing the world the way you were enculturated to see it" (Anzaldúa, 2002, p. 549). Seeing many sides, living between different worlds, spanning boundaries, and considering identity and difference and connections to learning and success continues as part of my everyday being.

Furthermore, my personal religious beliefs, valuing the inherent worth and dignity of all persons and searching for truth and meaning are also an integral part of who I am and are foundational to my thinking. Valuing student voice and living amongst multiple perspectives are part of a larger whole; connecting and learning together is part of our shared history. Within this milieu I gravitate to places of discomfort, tension,

vulnerability, and ambiguity, where concerns, such as greater or lesser English language proficiency, are often considered marginal, and not frequently addressed within the larger realms of positive and not so positive learning experiences and unequal social contexts.

These concerns, along with one more recent student-faculty interaction, illumine this study's meaning for me. During one of my office hours a student came by for extra help to better understand her multiple choice exam results. As she sat down she remarked in a matter-of-fact sort of way, "Well, you know, I *am* ESL." Although I told her that I had not known of her language background until now, I really didn't ask her much about what that meant. I hadn't heard much of an accent or noticed much variation in her writing. We went on with reviewing the exam and content from class.

I began to think about this simple statement, considering it as something so obvious but which now strikes me as something very profound. I began to think of all of the students I had been teaching and how I really had not thought seriously enough about what it might be like for them, being students who were working really hard to not only learn nursing but also to, write, speak, and understand more English. So I began to consider that I really did not know much about what it meant to be a nursing student and English language learner. I wanted to better understand its meaning for them.

I believe that fresh possibilities arise when we remain open to being students ourselves and when we as educators encourage our students to be our teachers. It is in the sharing, in the in-between world, that the possibility for new learning and transformation takes place. For Anzaldúa, *conocimiento* is to place oneself in a state of resonance with the other's situation and to give the other an opportunity to express her or his points of

view; it is an awareness and connection (Keating, 2006). We have much to learn from the experiences of students, from our students' stories as lived in the classrooms we inhabit together.

APPENDIX B

RECRUITMENT LETTER

Fall 2006

Recruitment Letter for Participation in a Nursing Education Study

Introduction

This nursing research project is about exploring the experiences of nursing students who are also English language learners and their everyday concerns in the nursing classroom. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. For the purposes of this study, you can participate if you:

- have a native language other than English, and
- come from an environment where English is not dominant, or
- mostly speak or read a language other than English at home.

If you consider yourself an English language learner (others sometimes use the name English as a second language or ESL), I am interested in understanding more about your experience as a nursing student in the classroom- what it is like to be a nursing student learning nursing while at the same time learning more English. I am a nurse educator and believe teachers have a lot to learn from our students! Thank you for considering participation in this study.

The following interaction I had with a student helped me to understand why I think this study is important:

"During one of my faculty office hours I visited with a student who had come to me for additional help in reviewing class notes and in understanding the questions she got wrong on a recent multiple choice exam. At the beginning of our time together, she stated in a matter-of- fact sort of way, "Well, you know, I *am* an ESL student." Although I then told her that I hadn't known for sure until now, I really didn't ask her much about what that meant. I hadn't listened or seen much. I hadn't heard much of an accent or looked at her writing. We went on with reviewing the exam and content from class."

I began to think that I really didn't know much about what she meant by this statement and that faculty members had much more to learn about the experiences of students who are working hard to learn nursing and are also working hard to understand, listen, write, and speak more English. Therefore, to improve teaching and learning I'd like to interview you to understand more about your concerns and experiences in the nursing classroom. Please know that privacy will be maintained during interviewing and that confidentiality will be respected throughout the process.

How to Participate

If you agree to participate in an interview, please sign the consent form and return a signed copy of the consent form to the envelope which will be immediately sealed and returned to me. A copy of the signed consent form will be given to you at the time of the interview. If you choose not to participate, please place all papers back in the envelope.

Thank you. JoAnn Mulready-Shick,

Student, Higher Education Doctoral Program
University of Massachusetts-Boston

APPENDIX C

CONSENT FORM

Fall 2006

Consent Form

University of Massachusetts Boston
Graduate College of Education
Higher Education Doctoral Program
100 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, MA 02125-3393

Consent Form for the Research Project: *The Lived Experiences of Students as English Language Learners in the Nursing Classroom*

What is this study about?

You are invited to participate in a nursing education research project about exploring the experiences of nursing students who are also English language learners and everyday concerns in the nursing classroom. Your participation is completely voluntary. The researcher is JoAnn Mulready-Shick, RN, a doctoral student in education at UMass-Boston. Please read this form and feel free to ask questions. If you have questions later on, Dr. Tara Parker, her academic advisor, can discuss them with you. She can be reached at the college at 1-617-287-7601.

What will you do as a participant?

You will be contacted in the next two weeks to set up the interview time and place. You will be interviewed on tape for about one hour by the researcher who is interested in nursing education. The purpose of her study is to more deeply understand the everyday concerns of nursing students who are also English language learners in the nursing classroom.

You will be asked to tell a story about a time in the nursing classroom, one that stands out for you or one that you'll never forget because it reminds you of what it means to be learning English and nursing at the same time. Your story can be one when nothing was

going right or when things went well and something really made a difference. What is of interest are the details of the story and in your telling of it.

Any little thing you can remember belongs with your experience, whether it is short or long.

What matters is that it is important to you! After you have shared the details of your story (or stories), please describe why this story was important to you and what it meant to you as a student. If possible, please leave out specific names and specific places.

It is possible that the researcher may contact you one more time after the interview by phone or email to review or clarify parts of the interview. If you would prefer not to be re-contacted, please place your initials here___.

What are the risks?

The risks are minimal but it is possible that through telling your story some unpleasant memories could occur.

Are there any benefits?

It is possible that telling your story can be satisfying to you or that you will feel a sense of fulfillment for participating in a nursing research study and in helping a fellow student and nurse, but otherwise there is no direct personal benefit to you.

Where and when will the interview be done?

The interview will be scheduled at a time and place convenient for you within the next two to four weeks.

Who will have access to the taped interview? How is confidentiality maintained?

Your part in this project is confidential. Information gathered in this research study will not be published or presented in a way that would allow anyone to identify you. Information is stored in a locked file cabinet and only the research team has access to the data.
The audiotapes are transcribed into written form by the researcher. The transcripts are only shared with others on the research team and are identified with numbered codes and changed names, or assigned pseudonyms. That means that any identifying information from the interview will be removed or changed on the written transcript. All audiotapes and identifying information will be destroyed at the end of the study date, or no later than December 31, 2007.

Is participation voluntary? Can a volunteer participant change one's mind about participating?

The decision whether to take part in the research study is voluntary. If you do decide to take part, you are free to withdraw from this study, without consequence, at any time including choosing not to be interviewed and refusing permission for use of your interview or transcript. If you choose to withdraw, please phone or email the researcher. Whether you decide to participate or not will not affect your status as a nursing student.

What are a participant's rights?

You have the right to ask questions about this research before you sign this form and at any time during the study.
You can reach JoAnn Mulready-Shick at or her advisor, Dr. Tara Parker, at 1-617-287-7601. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact a representative of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, which oversees research involving human participants. The Institutional Review Board may be reached at the following address: IRB, Quinn Administration Building-2-015, University of Massachusetts Boston, 100 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, MA 02125-3393. You can also contact the Board by telephone or email at 1-617-287-5370 or at human.subjects@umb.edu

I HAVE READ THE CONSENT FORM. MY QUESTIONS HAVE BEEN ANSWERED. MY SIGNATURE ON THIS FORM MEANS THAT I UNDERSTAND THE INFORMATION; AND I CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.

AUTHORIZATION: I have read the information and have decided to participate in this research project.

Please place an **X** in the two boxes. Please also sign your name and provide contact information.

I give my permission for participation in this research project. ☐

I give permission to be audio taped and the information I provide in the interview will be written down or transcribed. The transcript may be used for publication in research articles, books, or teaching materials, as well as used in presentations. ☐

Please SIGN your full name here

_____

Today's date _____

Please PRINT your full name here

_____

Please indicate a preferred method for contacting you:

Phone(s) _____

Email address (s) _____

Address _____
(street) (apartment number) (city or town) (state) (zip code)

Please place the signed consent form (page 6 only) in the envelope.

A copy of the consent form will be given to you at the interview. Keep pages 1-5.

If you do not wish to participate, kindly return the materials.

Thank you.

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEWING PROCEDURES

Restatement of introduction and study purpose prior to the interview:

"This study centers on the experiences of students as English language learners and the concerns that shape their lives in the nursing classroom. Experts report that English language acquisition learners are a distinct group with specific needs (Szelenyi & Chang, 2002). This study focuses on the perspectives of students who are continuing to learn English as they also learn nursing in the classroom setting."

Interviewer:

"I am interested in knowing more about your experiences as a nursing student in the classroom, what it is like to be learning nursing while at the same learning more English. I am a nursing teacher and I believe we teachers have a lot to learn from you. Thank you for participating in my study.

Please consider a time that stands out for you or one that you'll never forget because it reminds you of what it means to be learning English and nursing at the same time. Your story can be one when nothing was going right or when things went well and something really made a difference. I am really interested in the details of the story and in your telling of it. Any little thing you can remember belongs with your experience, whether it is short or long.

What matters is that it is important to you! After you have shared with me the details of your story (or stories), please describe why this story was important to you and

what it meant to you as a student. If possible please leave out specific names and specific places."

The following specific leads may be utilized:

These questions may be utilized to help students probe meaning- the significance, if any, that students place on these meanings; also how these meanings shape the choices students make about their own learning.

- "What does it mean to you to have experienced...?" or
- "I know how hard it is to find words to describe this situation - As you reflect on this situation and its meaning for you as a student, how would you tell someone who has not had this experience what it means?"

These questions may be utilized to probe into the ways or practices of faculty that students may describe as hindering or facilitating learning:

- "Sometimes we have stories- like "never again" that teach us about something that happened in the classroom about an experience that didn't work out well in our learning from someone, like a teacher, friend, or someone else, that didn't work. Do you have any "never again" stories?"
- "What does it mean to you to have experienced...?"
- "Can you give me a for instance that would show me how I would know that a teacher was..."
- "What was it that told you it wasn't going right? Can you tell me more about what was happening at that time?"
- "How were you making sense of it at the time?"
- "But we don't only have stories about what doesn't work; sometimes we have stories about times when things went well. Do you have any of these stories, of what worked well that you tell people to help them to understand what it is like?"
- "What does it mean to you to have experienced...?"
- "Can you give me a for instance that would show me how I would know that a teacher or someone else was helping you with this learning of nursing and English..."
- "What was it that told you it was going well? Can you tell me more about what was happening at that time?"
- "Can you describe your thinking at the time?"

These questions may help to probe at how students facilitate their own learning, how they transform their environments to learn both English and nursing, how they experience success in learning, and how students transform their environments to enhance success:

- "Can you give me an example where you "did something that really helped you get better at learning English? When the light bulb went on and "you got it", like "Ah Ha!"
- "What was running through your mind as you came to this understanding?"
- "What would you like to share with new students to help them succeed who also are learning English while learning nursing?"

During interviewing, the following helpful ways to bring forth stories, probing and penetrating may be tried:

- "Can you describe a time that stands out for you?"
- "You mentioned ...Can you tell me more about what you mean by that...?"
- "Can you give me a "for instance" or an example of..."
- Comments of participants from previous interviews help illuminate, to increase or challenge understanding: "Some people use X to describe the situation you are referring to. Does that seem like a good term to you? Does that get at what you are describing?" or
- Clarifying: "Many of the students I've talked to have described similar experiences and how it was like "being _____" I wonder if "being _____" describes how you experience learning English and nursing at the same time?"
- "Is there anything else you'd like to add...?"

These hermeneutic interview questions were presented at the Institute for Heideggerian Hermeneutical Methodologies (Ironsides, 2005).

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