The need for nurse educators to teach skills of inquiry in pre-licensure baccalaureate nursing programs has received increased attention over the past six years. The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN, 2013) and the recommendations by the Institute of Medicine (IOM, 2011), address the need for skills of inquiry as essential outcomes to be gained from a baccalaureate nursing program. According to Merriam-Webster (2016), skills are defined as “the ability to use one's knowledge effectively in execution or performance” and the ability to “do something that comes from training, experience, or practice.” Inquiry is defined as the “act of asking questions to gather or collect information” (Merriam-Webster, 2016). Within nursing practice, skills of inquiry include the ability to make observations, classify them, and develop inferences or predictions as they relate to patient care. Integrated skills of inquiry reflect the nurse’s ability to problem solve, interpret data, creatively or critically think, or clinically reason. These essential skills of inquiry are inherent to the provision of safe patient care as described by the American Nurses Association (ANA, 2012) Professional Nursing Practice Scope and Standards of Practice and should be an integral part of nursing education learning environments.

The recommendations for nursing education reform by Benner, Sutphen, Leonard, and Day (2010), emphasize clinical reasoning and multiple ways of thinking to promote a student's ability to learn skills of inquiry. To optimize the student’s ability to learn skills of inquiry, nurse educators must use learning strategies to engage students in the process of inquiry. Various active learning strategies such as problem-based learning, inquiry-based learning, and appreciative inquiry, have been identified within nursing education as pedagogically sound approaches to promote student inquiry (Adhikari, Tocher, Smith, Corcora, & MacArthur, 2014; Chan, 2013; Farid, Naz, Ali, & Feroz, 2012; Ling-Na, Qin, Ying-qing, Shao-yu, & Hui-Ming, 2014; Spence, Garrick, & McKay, 2012; Yu, Zhang, Xu, Wu, & Wang, 2013). Inherent to the implementation and use of active learning strategies is the nurse educator’s ability to engage student intellectual curiosity. Berlyne (1960) defined curiosity as a variable of motivation and engagement of curiosity can result in exploratory behavior and a desire to acquire new knowledge. Engagement of intellectual curiosity promotes development of skills of inquiry but the concept has not been investigated fully within the context of nursing education (xxxx, 2013). The findings from a principle-based concept analysis on intellectual curiosity in nursing education suggested the situational context of the learning environment and the nurse educator’s ability to model curiosity held a strong influence on engagement of student intellectual curiosity (xxxx, 2013).

The traditional, face-to-face, classroom and clinical learning environments have provided multiple opportunities for nurse educators to employ various teaching strategies and pedagogies known to promote skills of inquiry (Chan, 2012; Chan, 2013). However, when researchers examined the effectiveness of these active learning strategies, it was the relationship of the strategies to student critical thinking and clinical reasoning investigated and not the student attribute of intellectual curiosity. Active learning strategies have also been empirically examined in the context of the online learning environment (Carpenter, Theeke, & Smothers, 2013; Guzic et al., 2012; McClain, Biddle, & Carter, 2012). But these studies focused on instructional strategy effectiveness, course redesign, or student satisfaction and not on skills of inquiry or student intellectual curiosity. With the ever-shifting knowledge base of healthcare and evidence-based practice, it is important nursing programs produce graduates who are flexible and intellectually curious to sustain continuous, lifelong learning and, ultimately, positively influence patient health outcomes.

Therefore, given that: it is essential nursing students gain skills of inquiry during their educational preparation; online learning has been proposed as a solution to both the nursing and nurse faculty
shortage (AACN, 2012); and intellectual curiosity as an isolated concept and phenomenon has not been fully explored across the various contexts of nursing education learning environments; this study sought to better understand intellectual curiosity in the context of the online learning environment and from the perspective of the experienced nurse educator.

Under the assumptions of philosopher Max van Manen (1990, 1997) and Martin Heidegger (1962), the purpose of this qualitative, hermeneutic phenomenological study was to understand the lived experience of baccalaureate nursing student intellectual curiosity for the experienced nurse educator teaching within the online learning environment. The research question was: What does intellectual curiosity mean to experienced nurse educators teaching in the online environment? A total of eight participants from three different institutions of higher education in the southeastern United States were interviewed through a socratic approach (Ironside, 2005). Diekelmann, Allen, and Tanner’s Steps for Data Analysis (1989) were utilized for data analysis. Three constitutive patterns and seven relational themes emerged through the data analysis process with one hundred and thirty-three key narrative text excerpts identified by the researcher and data analysis team to support the thematic and pattern analysis. The five expressions of rigor for interpretive phenomenology, proposed by de Witt and Ploeg (2006), provided assurance of study transparency and rigor of the process that yielded the study findings. The findings of the study revealed many shared practices and provided several implications for nursing education. This study extends the discipline of nursing education with its emphasis on the faculty experience within the context of the online learning environment.

Title:
Culture of Curiosity: The Experienced Nurse Educator and Intellectual Curiosity in the Online Learning Environment

Keywords:
Hermeneutic Inquiry, Intellectual Curiosity and Online Nurse Educators

References:


**Abstract Summary:**
What does intellectual curiosity mean to experienced nurse educators who teach in an online environment? In this hermeneutic phenomenological study, that question was explored among experienced nurse educators across three different institutions of higher education. The findings, implications for nursing education, and proposed areas of future research will be presented.

**Content Outline:**

A. Introduction
   Overview of Phenomenon of Inquiry and Context
   i. Intellectual Curiosity and Nursing Education
   ii. Learning Environments and Intellectual Curiosity
      1. Nursing Education and the Online Learning Environments

B. Body
   a. Overview of Philosophical Framework and Methods
      i. Interpretive Inquiry and Hermeneutics Method
      ii. Participant Selection and Data Generation
   b. Data Findings and Analysis
      i. Diekelmann, Allen, & Tanner Steps of Data Analysis
         1. Data Analysis Team Members
      ii. Constitutive Pattern 1: Relational Reciprocity
         1. Relational Theme 1: Commitment
         2. Relational Theme 2: Reflexivity
      iii. Constitutive Pattern 2: Creative Inquiry
         1. Relational Theme 3: Inquiry
         2. Relational Theme 4: Challenging Boundaries
         3. Relational Theme 5: Creativity
      iv. Constitutive Pattern 3: Quality Improvement
         1. Relational Theme 6: Transformation
         2. Relational Theme 7: Compassionate Intentionality

C. Conclusion
   a. To Foster a Culture of Curiosity: Effective Communication in the Online Learning Environment
   b. Shared Practices and Meanings: Developing Relationships and the Online Learning Environment
   c. Shared Practices and Meanings: Communication Challenges and the Online Learning Environment
   d. Evaluation of Rigor
      i. de Witt and Ploeg’s Expressions of Rigor
   e. Implications for Nursing Education

First Primary Presenting Author

*Primary Presenting Author*
Professional Experience: Certified Nurse Educator (CNE) with 15 years experience in nursing education with teaching, service, and scholarship at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Primary and single author for several peer-reviewed publications related to the concept of intellectual curiosity, online education, and innovative teaching strategies which have been cited by others both inside and outside of nursing education. Several national and international peer-reviewed presentations on student engagement, metacognition, and concept and theory development.

Author Summary: Dr. Bedelia Russell is an Associate Professor with the Whitson-Hester School of Nursing at Tennessee Tech University. She is a Certified Nurse Educator with over 15 years experience at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Her scholarly work centers on student metacognition, concept and theory development, and online education. This work has been published in the Journal of Nursing Education and Advances in Nursing Science and presented at both national and international proceedings.