New Pedagogies for Teaching Thinking: The Lived Experiences of Students and Teachers Enacting Narrative Pedagogy

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ABSTRACT

The need to prepare students for a rapidly changing health care system sustains teachers' interest in developing students' thinking abilities at all levels of nursing education. Although significant effort has been directed toward developing efficient and effective strategies to teach thinking, this study explores the underlying assumptions embedded in any approach to teaching and learning and how these assumptions influence students' thinking. This study, using Heideggerian hermeneutics, explored how teachers and students experience enacting a new pedagogy, Narrative Pedagogy, and this article explains how enacting this pedagogy offers new possibilities for teaching and learning thinking. Two themes emerged from this analysis and are discussed: Thinking as Questioning: Preserving Perspectival Openness and Practicing Thinking: Preserving Fallibility and Uncertainty.

Nurse educators have spent significant effort developing strategies and resources to help students learn to think critically in complex and evolving situations (Alfaro-LeFevre, 1999; Vanetzigian, 2001). Despite these efforts, there is little empirical evidence in the nursing literature suggesting these approaches are effective, and some authors indicated nursing students' abilities to think critically may actually decrease during the course of their programs (Ducheser, 2003; Facione & Facione, 1997). Although definitions of critical thinking abound (Cody, 2002) and the construct remains ambiguous (Ducheser, 2003), preparing students for a rapidly changing health care system demands and sustains teachers' interest in developing students' thinking abilities at all levels of nursing education.

This study shifts the issue from one of finding more efficient and effective strategies for teaching critical thinking to considering the underlying assumptions embedded in any approach to teaching and learning and how these assumptions influence students' thinking abilities. For example, in outcomes education, teachers assume content knowledge is the foundation for thinking and the teacher's role is to help students increase their knowledge base as a prerequisite to learning how to think. When students apply their knowledge in practice situations, it is assumed they provide evidence of their thinking ability by, for example, deriving particular nursing diagnoses for assigned clients, completing care plans or maps documenting how those diagnoses could be addressed, or correctly answering specific questions regarding a particular client situation. The outcome of students' thinking (e.g., the diagnosis or interventions selected) is of central importance. Embedded in this approach are the assumptions that:

* There is a direct and corresponding relationship between content knowledge and its application in clinical contexts.

* The selection of the "best" answer or the designation of an "appropriate" diagnosis is clear and uncontested.
Students' ability to provide such evidence in a contextual situations reflects their ability to draw on this knowledge in actual clinical situations (i.e., in context).

Clearly, content knowledge is necessary for practice, and conscientious teachers spend a great deal of effort designing learning activities that encourage and assess students' thinking. However, knowledge itself is not sufficient because the complexity of current clinical situations belies the linear knowledge-application model this approach assumes (Cody, 2002). In other words, competent practice requires more than content knowledge applied in clinical situations. It requires an engaged understanding of and persistent thinking about both the context of care and clients' experience of health and illness (Benner & Wrubel, 1989; Ironside et al., 2003).

THE NEW PEDAGOGIES

Although interest in teaching thinking continues to captivate the attention of nurse educators and researchers, teachers are increasingly exploring the ways new pedagogies inform and extend students' thinking in classroom and clinical situations (Andrews et al., 2001; Dahlberg, Ekebergh, & Ironside, 2003; Hartrick, 1998; Ironside, 1999a, 1999b; Swenson & Sims, 2000). New pedagogies (i.e., critical, feminist, postmodern, phenomenological), developed in higher education, are contributing to substantive reform in nursing education by addressing the limitations of outcomes education and providing alternatives. This is not to devalue conventional approaches to teaching and learning. Instead, the new pedagogies extend conventional approaches and are available for teachers to use in addressing specific problems, such as teaching thinking in rapidly changing situations. The issue is for teachers to be aware of the pedagogical commitments and underlying assumptions embedded in any approach enacted in their courses.

Despite philosophical and theoretical differences, all the new pedagogies share a commitment to improving the relationships between teachers and students, as well as challenging, or rethinking, the nature of schooling, teaching, and learning (Ironside, 2001). For example, critical pedagogy helps teachers and students think anew about issues of privilege and power and the ways these intersect in educational (Apple, 2000) or practice (Ekstrom & Sigurdsson, 2002) encounters. Readers interested in more fully exploring the ways new pedagogies are being used in nursing and higher education are referred to the following sources: Banister and Schreiber (1999), Freire (1998), Ironside (2001), Ironside et al. (2003), Kavanagh (2003), Popkewitz and Fendler (1999), Ropers-Huilman (1998), and Sinnott (2003).

New pedagogies based on nursing research and designed for nursing education are also being developed (Dahlberg et al., 2003; Dieckmann, 1995, 2001; Dieckmann, Ironside, & Harlow, 2003; Ironside, 2001). These discipline-specific pedagogies are responsive to the pressures and contingencies of nursing practice and, as such, hold promise for substantive reform in nursing education. In addition, because these new pedagogies are being developed in contemporary contexts, they reduce the conflict among the commitments of pedagogies developed decades ago (Kliebard, 1987) and the current context and commitments of nursing education. As one teacher in this study stated:

The problem is that the predominant pedagogy being used in schools of nursing today was developed by nursing scholars who are now retired for their students that's us!

No wonder reform is necessary!

The new nursing pedagogies emphasize engendering safe, fair, and respectful learning communities, from which thinking can flourish and within which teachers and students can work together in new partnerships to fundamentally rethink nursing education and practice (Ironside, 2001).

Narrative Pedagogy

One example of a discipline-specific pedagogy, Narrative Pedagogy, was discovered by Dieckmann during the course of her 15-year study of the experiences of teachers, students, and clinicians in nursing schools. Her longitudinal, hermeneutic analyses of these experiences revealed the common experiences of nursing education. Dieckmann named these experiences the Concernful Practices of Schooling, Teaching, and Learning (Dieckmann, 2001). Like Benner's (1984) domains, the Concernful Practices illuminate what matters in nursing education and provide teachers and students with a new language to describe their experiences. The language of the Concernful Practices shifts teachers' and students' attention away from an emphasis on issues of knowledge acquisition (i.e., cognitive gain) and application to thinking as a practice. In other words, how nursing practice is being learned is as important as what is being learned.

Narrative Pedagogy is enacted when teachers and students attend to the Concernful Practices by publicly sharing and interpreting their lived experiences (Andrews et al., 2001; Dieckmann, 2001; Ironside, 2001). In addition, engendering community by working together (i.e., community reflective scholarship) gathers the collective wisdom of teachers and students toward creating new site-specific pedagogies to address existing challenges. Therefore, Narrative Pedagogy is an approach to teaching and learning, a community practice, and a way of thinking about what is possible and problematic in nursing education.

This nursing pedagogy is always site specific and contextual, but the process of enacting Narrative Pedagogy is generalizable. The emphasis in Narrative Pedagogy is not on creating an ideal, romantic, or nostalgic classroom or curriculum, but on gathering teachers and students into converging conversations wherein many perspectives can be considered. In this way, Narrative Pedagogy gathers all pedagogies (Dieckmann, 2001) as teachers and students interpret their experiences from various perspectives, including conventional, critical, feminist, postmodern, and...
phenomenological. Because of the commitments to multiperspectival thinking created when Narrative Pedagogy is enacted, it creates new possibilities for teaching thinking in nursing classrooms and clinical situations (Andrews et al., 2001; Dahlberg et al., 2003; Diekelmann, 2001; Ironside, 1999a, 1999b, 2003; Swenson & Sims, 2000).

This study was part of a multisite project, the Distance Desktop Faculty Development in the New Pedagogies in Community-Based Care, funded by the Helene Fuld Foundation. In this project, teachers increase their pedagogical literacy and implement new pedagogies in their teaching. Specifically, this study used Heideggerian hermeneutics to explore how teachers and students experience enacting Narrative Pedagogy, and this article explicates how Narrative Pedagogy influences students’ thinking. By explaining the common experiences of teachers and students in Narrative Pedagogy classrooms and clinical courses, teachers can extend their understanding of what is, and is not, helpful in promoting thinking and how new pedagogies enhance, or detract from, teaching thinking. Two themes emerged from this analysis and are discussed: Thinking as Questioning: Preserving Perspectival Openness and Practicing Thinking: Preserving Fallibility and Uncertainty.

**METHOD**

**Design**

Participants for this study were recruited from the seven nursing schools participating in the Fuld project. Institutional Review Board approval was obtained from each participating school. To date, 18 students and 15 teachers have been interviewed for the study. This sample includes teachers and students from all levels and types of nursing schools, ranging from small liberal arts colleges to major research universities and from associate degree to doctoral programs. Both clinical and classroom faculty were interviewed.

During audiotaped, unstructured interviews that members of the research team conducted face to face or by telephone, participants were asked to “tell about a time that stands out for you because it shows what it meant to you to teach a class using [or to take a class in which a teacher used] Narrative Pedagogy.” If further probing or clarification was needed it was in the form of the question, “What did that mean to you?” or “Can you give an example?” These questions were intended to keep participants engaged in their stories without directing them to particular aspects or events (Benner, Tanner, & Chesla, 1996; Sorrell & Redmond, 1996).

Interviews were transcribed verbatim by an experienced transcriptionist. All names and other identifying information contained within the interview text were replaced by pseudonyms by the investigator. Following the investigator’s verification of the accuracy of the transcriptions, the original interview audiotapes were destroyed. The transcribed interview texts were considered the data for this study.

**Data Analysis**

Interview texts were analyzed using Heideggerian hermeneutical phenomenology by a research team consisting of the investigator, two experienced interpretive nurse researchers, one nursing doctoral student, and two nursing master’s degree students. Working alone and collaboratively, the team used the hermeneutic method for analyzing texts to identify the common experiences (i.e., themes) and shared meanings of teaching and learning with new pedagogies. Directed toward explicating meanings and significance, the hermeneutic method reveals what is, rather than what could be, should be, or was intended. The hermeneutic method is briefly described in this article. Readers interested in examining the philosophical underpinnings of this method more thoroughly can refer to the following sources: Benner (1994), Diekelmann, Allen, and Tanner (1989), Diekelmann and Ironside (1998), and Grondin (1994).

The investigator undertook the initial analyses of texts, beginning the process of analysis by reading each transcribed interview text to gain an overall understanding of the text. As subsequent texts were analyzed, common themes or recurrent categories, reflecting the common experiences and shared meanings within and across texts (Diekelmann & Ironside, 1998), were named (i.e., coded) and explained in detail. Each theme identified by the investigator was supported with excerpts from the interview texts. Vague, unclear, or conflicting interpretations arising during analysis were clarified by referring back to the interview texts.

With the analysis of subsequent interview texts, the investigator shared the identified themes and supporting interpretations with members of the research team. The research team analyzed the texts and the interpretations offered by the investigator for coherence, comprehensiveness, and thoroughness (Plager, 1994). The investigator and the research team worked collaboratively to ensure the themes and interpretations were warranted and demonstrated the richness and complexity of the experiences described by participants.

As the analysis of the interview texts continued, emerging themes were challenged and extended using critical, feminist, and postmodern literature, philosophical (i.e., phenomenological) texts, and literature from higher education. Bringing this variety of texts to bear on emerging themes was not to derive one correct interpretation but to extend and enhance the richness and complexity of the experience being investigated (Diekelmann & Ironside, 1998).

During the analysis, two themes emerged that are discussed in this article—Thinking as Questioning: Preserving Perspectival Openness; and Practicing Thinking: Preserving Fallibility and Uncertainty. These themes describe how the teachers and students experienced thinking in the context of Narrative Pedagogy and how Narrative Pedagogy influenced their thinking.
RESULTS

In this study, many of the stories teachers and students shared about their experiences in Narrative Pedagogy classrooms and clinical courses reflected a recurring shift from thinking as problem solving or an activity to produce a certain product to thinking as a practice. In outcomes education, the outcome of students’ thinking (e.g., the selection of the “best” answer) is salient and privileged. With outcomes as the focus, the ways students attend to the meanings and significance of their interventions and decisions may be inadvertently obscured.

In Narrative Pedagogy, thinking is considered a private and individual, as well as community, practice of scholarship that includes more than just problem solving or correctly answering a series of questions. Teachers enacting Narrative Pedagogy do not predetermine the purpose or outcome of thinking but instead engage students in a type of thinking as questioning that preserves openness to multiple perspectives. In other words, the structure of outcomes education is challenged by students and teachers when a new pedagogy, such as Narrative Pedagogy, is enacted.

Thinking as Questioning: Preserving Perspectival Openness

Many of the teacher and student participants in this study related experiences in which questioning was a salient practice in the classroom or clinical situations where Narrative Pedagogy was enacted. Questioning, as described by these participants, was differentiated from questions, or those interrogatives that called for a particular answer. Rather, thinking as questioning involved persistently questioning the meanings and significance of learning experiences and making visible that which had “not been thought of before.” Bell, a master’s degree student described her Narrative Pedagogy experiences this way:

[The teacher] seems to have a style where she’ll ask a question, and I have a desire, when some question is asked, to come up with an answer... But [when I do I realize]...it’s not always a simple answer that I thought it was. It’s [often more complex], something that I hadn’t thought before, so then you have to think about it. A lot of the times when teachers pose a question, they also have an answer to it right away. And so you don’t have to really think about it. And I suppose, if I don’t have to think about it, I [haven’t] really learned it...

Bell’s description reveals the extent to which teachers and students often are steeped in outcomes education, wherein thinking is evidenced by providing the most correct or “best” answer. When taking a course in which Narrative Pedagogy is enacted, Bell found the questions posed by the teacher required her to think differently and expand her usual practices of “coming up with an answer. In this case, Bell described how the thinking evoked by the teacher’s questioning fostered her thinking beyond the “simple answer” toward thinking about the complexity of situations and into areas she “hadn’t thought of before.”

As Bell recounted her experience, she related how her experience with Narrative Pedagogy encouraged her to rethink the relationship between coming up with answers and thinking when she stated:

A lot of the times when teachers pose a question, they also have an answer to it right away. And so you don’t have to really think about it. And I suppose, if I don’t have to think about it, I [haven’t] really learned it.

Therefore, what mattered to Bell was questioning that compelled her to think, rather than merely find an answer.

Similarly, teachers enacting Narrative Pedagogy reported how focusing on the Concernful Practices provided a new language for their thinking and teaching that involved devising compelling questions in preparation for their classroom and clinical courses. In other words, teachers described preparing for class differently when using Narrative Pedagogy. For example, one teacher described preparing for class by:

coming up with 3 or 4 questions that [are] really so interesting that they really grab their [students’] attention and mine too. I know if I can hook their thinking by showing them complexity or the problems with what we think we know, then it will be a good class, and we will all be thinking a lot.

Participating teachers similarly described classroom encounters in terms of creating thought-provoking experiences for practicing thinking with students. One teacher related how, with Narrative Pedagogy, she uses class time as a place for “thinking about thinking” with her students (Andrews et al., 2001), rather than for presenting content or answering questions. One clinical instructor asked students to describe not what they did with their patients that day, but what they were thinking about when they cared for their patients. In postclinical conference, students shared their thinking experiences and identified common concerns. In doing so, students and teachers enacting Narrative Pedagogy also attend to how they are thinking in particular contexts.

The Concernful Practice of Questioning: Meaning and Making Visible (Dielke, 2001) describes how the nature of the questions being asked matters to both teachers and students. Bell described how the teacher’s style of questioning helped her consider complexity, rather than provide a simple answer. The teachers quoted above strive to pose questions they themselves find compelling and that “hook [students’] thinking,” such that teachers practice thinking together with students.

One classroom instructor described presenting students with two possible clinical interventions. This teacher asks students to select one and write in three sentences their thinking related to making their choice. Then students read aloud their thinking to each other. This teacher also selects one intervention and shares his thinking with his students. Over time, this teacher intro-
duces students to situations in which nurses must choose among only inadequate or poor choices for their patients. He discusses what this means to practicing nurses when they feel adequate care is not available for patients and their families. Therefore, questioning, as a practice, is directed toward exploring meanings and significance, making visible what is known, as well as the "problems with what we think we know." The change in pedagogy calls forth different kinds of thinking, in this case, thinking about questions that cannot be easily answered or that are, perhaps, unanswerable.

This is not to say that such thinking is esoteric and not grounded in the contingencies of contemporary practice. Rather, because Narrative Pedagogy attends to students' and teachers' sharing and interpreting their lived experiences of learning and practicing nursing, it necessarily reflects current practice as it is experienced. In this case, the emphasis shifts from students' acquiring an expert's perspective (e.g., the teacher's or preceptor's) to the teachers, clinicians, and students collectively exploring the perspective each brings to the situation, which requires openness to and inclusion of multiple perspectives. For example, embedded in thinking about "the problems with what we think we know" is questioning what teachers and students assume to be true. This kind of thinking can reveal insights, oversights, misunderstandings, assumptions, and biases. In Narrative Pedagogy, the task is not for students to necessarily answer questions (although answers may be posited) but to persistently explore the meanings and significance of practice and to make visible the underlying assumptions embedded in practice and education. One teacher participant said:

I usually help my students with their thinking by asking questions like, "What do you think you should do next?"

But in Narrative Pedagogy, I ask things like, the best practice here is "X." What could possibly be wrong with this practice or intervention?"

This is not to say that teachers enacting Narrative Pedagogy never ask questions to ascertain students' knowledge or guide their thinking. For example, to keep students and patients safe in clinical practice, teachers often ask students questions to determine their knowledge of information such as medication side effects. However, in Narrative Pedagogy, the Concernful Practices, such as Questioning: Meaning and Making Visible, become equally important. Therefore, questions such as "What does suffering a side effect of a medication prescribed to alleviate suffering mean to this patient?" accompany questions of knowledge. In other words, content knowledge is extended and enhanced when exploring the meanings and significance of nursing practice. Enacting Narrative Pedagogy invites teachers and students to create places for and preserve thinking together in ways that explore what is known, unknown, and taken for granted. This requires teachers and students to collaborate in new ways that preserve perspectival openness.

Practicing Thinking: Preserving Fallibility and Uncertainty

In this study, many students described the difference between the kind of thinking they did in classes that used Narrative Pedagogy and the kind they did in their "usual" classes. In outcomes education, thinking is often viewed as a skill or logical (i.e., analytical) process directed toward finding a solution to a particular problem or an answer to a posed question. As such, thinking is seen as something that is imposed to an end. This kind of thinking is a central part of nursing practice and should continue to be enhanced and investigated. However, enacting new pedagogies fosters a broader conception of thinking and creates new possibilities for nursing education (Dahlberg et al., 2003). For example, research has shown that thinking about what constitutes, and who decides what constitutes, a problem to be solved, as well as the meanings and significance of posited answers (e.g., interventions) to both nurses and clients often remains obscured in outcomes education (Irons side et al., 2003). When enacting Narrative Pedagogy, thinking shifts from being a means to an end to cycles of interpretation in which uncertainty and fallibility are preserved.

Teacher participants in this study continued to use outcomes education, as well as Narrative Pedagogy. Their stories reflected how they work tirelessly to teach and assess students' thinking. For example, they often construct clear, concise test items and case studies through which students can be differentiated by their analytic thinking skills. Although distracting information may be included to divert students' attention, the nature of the activity requires that the information students need to answer the question is provided by the teacher within the case study or question stem. However, this approach obscures how students read situations and ascertain when and how to intervene in the situation. Intervention is assumed (i.e., students select the best intervention), and not intervening is rarely an option (Duchcher, 2003). This assumption of not intervening as a meaningful and significant intervention itself is often invisible to nurses, and nursing students, while it is obvious to some clients. For example, in a recent study of the lived experiences of people with chronic illnesses, students and teachers heard many people describe not wanting nurses to intervene, but rather to listen to or to seek to understand what their experiences were like on a daily basis (Irons Side et al., 2003). Relying solely on pedagogies directed toward outcomes or changes in behavior (Irons ide, 2001) obscures what is to be learned by challenging the emphasis on intervening (Duchcher, 2003) and emphasizing the importance of nurses' listening and keeping their practice open and problematic (i.e., preserving uncertainty and fallibility).

Like many student participants, Tia, an undergraduate nursing student, described her experiences in a Narrative Pedagogy classroom by emphasizing how the teacher made her think about things she "hadn't thought about before." In her description, this practice was
opposed to experiences wherein teachers are “feeding you facts and not actually making you think.” While acknowledging the “facts” would be important later in her career as a nurse, Tia described the classroom in which Narrative Pedagogy was being enacted as “amazing” because:

[The teacher] would just like set up, like a story [or] something that happened in her nursing career,...and she would ask what we thought, and like,...she would guide us into thinking of different ways we can think about it. It’s never that she came out and told us, like, exactly what we could do. She was like, “...What would you do?” And, like, we all...had to think.... She didn’t, like, tell us. She just made us, like, actually get involved and think about what would happen.... We all had different opinions on how we would handle situations,...so it made me think more along the lines of what I would do, as opposed to my other class. [where] it’s much more facts.... But in [this class], she [the teacher] would bring up an issue, and there would be four of us,...and we’d all have different viewpoints on it.... Before, I guess, I thought nursing was more focused on just the medical side, like patient symptoms, diagnoses, like doing things.... And now after I took the course, I realize it’s much more. It’s much more like talking with the patients, finding out what’s really going on in their lives, just being able to listen. I never really thought that was as important before as I did after. My ability to listen to the patient, because there might be more going on than they’re letting on, and you have to be able to try and have them talk about that, because that might be part of the problem.

Tia’s description exemplifies the common assumption that nursing practice is equated with “doing.” What stands out in Tia’s experience with Narrative Pedagogy is how students were not “told” but “guided” into “thinking of different ways we can think about” nursing practice. Rather than being confused or frustrated by the various viewpoints offered, even as a beginning student, Tia recognized the importance of what she had “never really thought was important,” of hearing “differing viewpoints,” and of considering how these viewpoints would influence her nursing practice. In this kind of thinking, the teacher guided Tia to listen to the situation, decreasing the emphasis on identifying problems and intervening.

Embedded in Tia’s description is a focus on reinterpreting practice. In other words, Tia described the importance of listening “because there might be more going on than [the client] is letting on” and of not letting listening “might be part of the problem.” Tia demonstrated emerging insight into the ways nurses think when they read situations and the unique contributions they make to patient care. The teacher helped Tia learn to read situations as a nurse and interpret the many meanings that are present and significant. Acknowledging that more may be occurring in a situation than she initially understands, Tia thinks beyond problem solving and in ways that preserve uncertainty and fallibility. That is, Tia “unlearns” what she initially believes nursing practice to be (i.e., doing) and gains new understanding of the centrality of nurses’ listening. Tia “becomes” a different kind of thinker.

The Concernful Practice of Interpreting: Unlearning and Becoming (Diekelmann, 2001) describes how teachers and students read and understand the situations they encounter. Embedded in the practice of interpreting is the awareness that the way a situation is initially read may not be correct and that other perspectives are plausible. When Tia’s teacher helps students see there are different ways to think about situations, Tia begins unlearning what she initially taken to be true (i.e., nursing is doing) and stays open to many interpretations. That is, Tia learns the importance of generating many perspectives to understand a situation and sees complexity and uncertainty in situations nurses encounter. She understands the fallibility of her preconception and envisions entering situations in new ways.

Teaching thinking in ways that preserve uncertainty and fallibility decreases the dissonance between academic situations in which students must persistently select the “best” answer and practice situations that are unpredictable and complex. Research shows that clinical teachers often tell students there is “no one right answer” and that it “all depends,” although their pedagogical practices in both classroom and clinical situations reflect and reinforce the opposite (Ironside, 1999a, 1999b). Perhaps the issue for nurse educators to consider is how new pedagogies foster among students comfort in the uncertainty and fallibility of contemporary practice. Acknowledging uncertainty and fallibility leads to reinterpreting practice situations and approaches to teaching and learning.

Teachers enacting Narrative Pedagogy described reclaiming an emphasis on the importance of always questioning best practices of nursing care and of finding ways to teach beyond “one right way.” But more than just critiquing nursing care, an important practice of thinking, they described how enacting Narrative Pedagogy fostered thinking broadly about the tentativeness of answers in clinical practice and the importance of persistently questioning, holding open and problematic everything currently assumed to be true (Cody, 2002). The shift is to not simplify or reduce the complexity of nursing practice but to bring that complexity, complete with conundrums and uncertainty, into nursing classrooms and clinical situations, inviting students to think anew about nursing practice. Practicing thinking in this way preserves the uncertainty in clinical nursing practice and the fallibility of current nursing knowledge within nursing schools.

This does not mean the shift to teaching thinking using new pedagogies was easy for students or teachers. Although enacting a new pedagogy helps teachers challenge the assumptions of outcomes education, students in this study frequently reported that the appeal of new types of thinking was tempered by the fear that “something would be missed.” Throughout her interview, Bell
described the courses she had taken in which Narrative Pedagogy was used as "mind opening," "freeing," and "thought provoking," but she also experienced confusion and doubt. Bell stated:

I think that the hardest part of taking a class [using Narrative Pedagogy], is fighting my old...ways...[In] My first class I really was confused as to what I was supposed to be doing or how I was supposed to be doing it. Even though I think [the teacher] described it to us, I didn't know if that was true or something, and there was some sort of doubt there, that is "this really what we're going to be doing?" And then I wasn't sure that I liked the idea of somebody not telling me what I needed to know. I like it...if [teachers] tell me what I have to know, so that I can then tell them what they told me... But I find it so much more freeing to take a class where there are no boundaries to it. Well, there are boundaries...but...it's not as restrictive. It's not making me a puppet of someone else.... And I never thought of...you know, me being a puppet... I just thought that [the teachers] were the experts. 1...mean it's true in this day and age, when everything seems to be changing so rapidly, it's important not to limit what you can learn.... So...I think the hardest thing is giving yourself permission to not feel...limited by your learning [and]...making sure I have enough time to learn all the things that I want to read or do, or look up. I still don't feel like I know enough solid, I don't know, something. I'm still searching for more. And...I know that's good. I just want to make sure that when I get done, I've had enough information... I know there's more out there. So I don't want to limit myself either.

Like many participants, Bell described how "freeing" the course was and how Narrative Pedagogy made her "want to learn more." Yet, embedded in this description is also the confusion she experienced when a new pedagogy was enacted. Although Bell recalled the teacher explaining the pedagogy being used, Bell was "confused as to what [she] was supposed to be doing or how [she] was supposed to be doing it." She wondered what would really happen in the course and if the teacher's description was "true." Bell recalled how the "hardest" part of the course was "fighting [her] old ways" of learning. That is, she described how she used to like having teachers "tell [her] what [she] had to know, so that [she could] tell them what they told [her]." Although this was comfortable, Bell now compares it to being "somebody's puppet."

Stories like Bell's show how often repeating to teachers "what they told me" is taken as evidence of thinking and learning. As Bell learned to practice thinking, she learned "not to limit what you can learn" and to plan enough time to "learn all the things that [she wants] to read or do, or look up." However, even this is tempered by her worry that she does not "know enough solid." Bell equates her worry about having more to know than can ever be known with the pedagogy (i.e., this realization is seen as a deficit of the pedagogy). But is it?

Students in this study frequently shared how comforting it was when teachers specifically delineated what was to be learned. Without this delineation, students worried they were not getting what was needed. In other words, having teachers describe what was needed removed students' uncertainty that something would be missed or that there would be deficits in what they knew or could do. Few educators would argue that the amount and complexity of information students "need" is growing faster than teachers can incorporate it into courses. This study indicates how new pedagogies challenge the reliance on conceptions of thinking that overemphasize content knowledge and outcomes of thinking. Instead, new pedagogies, such as Narrative Pedagogy, reveal how the current emphasis on outcomes may inadvertently obscure the uncertainty within and complexity of nursing practice, as well as the multifaceted problems facing nurses and clients on a daily basis.

**DISCUSSION**

As teachers enact Narrative Pedagogy, that which inadvertently accompanies outcomes education and existing approaches to teaching thinking become apparent (e.g., What are students learning that teachers do not mean to teach?), and new possibilities for teaching thinking emerge. Perhaps in outcomes education, students have been inadvertently led to believe they were safe to enter practice if they knew what the teacher told them to know. The underlying assumption of this practice is that the information students need to know in any situation is clear and uncontested and that safety in practice is merely the application of this content knowledge in clinical situations. Narrative Pedagogy, with its focus on thinking as a practice, reveals how thinking is necessary for knowledge and theory application in practice to have any meaning. Perhaps in the future, being safe in practice will require nurses to think in ways that persistently question practice. For example, despite positive outcomes, was the procedure experienced as having been dangerously invasive or exceedingly painful?

Participants in this study shared how enacting Narrative Pedagogy created thinking that preserved openness to many perspectives, as well as fallibility and uncertainty. For example, the stories shared by students and teachers revealed that an important aspect of practicing thinking is not answering questions but persistently questioning everything known and unknown in nursing practice. Similarly, this study showed that perhaps navigating the uncertainty and fallibility embedded in current, and future, practice has become as important for nurses as content knowledge and skill mastery, and that interpreting (i.e., learning to read) situations is as important as intervening (Benner, Hooper-Kyriakidis, & Stammard, 1999). Finally, this study demonstrated how new nursing pedagogies, such as Narrative Pedagogy, hold promise for the future of nursing education by revealing aspects of thinking, teaching, and practice that have been inadvertently obscured by the predominant use of one pedagogical approach.
REFERENCES


