

GRADUATE COLLEGE

DEFENSE NOTICE

Please Post

The following dissertation presentation is scheduled and open
to those in the University Community

Linda Hunter, Candidate

Cynthia Gerstl-Pepin, Ph.D., Advisor

Doctor of Education

Educational Leadership & Policy Studies

February 19, 2007

2:30 – 4:30 p.m.

Phi Beta Kappa Room 527
Waterman

Title: Exploring the Benefits of Storytelling in Undergraduate Nursing Education

ABSTRACT

Nursing has long been described as both an art and a science. More recently referred to as holistic practice, many nursing faculty have sought innovative teaching strategies, such as storytelling, to facilitate understanding of these two critical dimensions.

As one of the oldest methods of communication, storytelling has been used in a variety of ways to facilitate learning in health care. In fact, there is a myriad of literature demonstrating the use of stories in nursing research, practice, and education. Despite these many examples however, there are no studies that analyze the actual content of students' stories from a scholarly perspective.

This dissertation seeks to further explore the benefits of storytelling and add to this dialogue by lending scholarly support for its use as a teaching strategy in nursing education. Using Carper's (1978) original four Fundamental Patterns of Knowing as a guiding framework for narrative analysis, twenty-five personal stories written by junior level nursing students were examined for evidence of empirics, ethics, esthetics, and personal knowing.

The study found many rich examples of patterns of knowing were threaded throughout the student's stories. Additionally, by examining their own stories, students were able imagine their future role as practicing nurses and how they might one day react in similar circumstances. This is an important finding as much of nursing knowledge develops over time with ongoing patient care experiences. Stories then serve as a bridge for novice nursing students linking empirical and ethical discussions of the typical classroom with the art of practice embedded in personal and esthetic knowing.

Lastly, this dissertation also addresses the benefits of storytelling to nursing faculty. By creating a safe space within their classrooms for students to share their personal experiences, teachers begin to move beyond the more customary empirical focus traditionally found in nursing education programs. Carper (1978) would consider this a therapeutic use of self and as such an important segue into helping both students and faculty experience the reciprocity needed for self-actualization and personal growth. Moreover, as faculty approach students and teaching with a more holistic stance, they can develop the congruence necessary for their own integrated knowing.