



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

## Teaching and Learning in Nursing

journal homepage: [www.jtln.org](http://www.jtln.org)

## Using Narrative Inquiry to Explore the Experience of One Ethnically Diverse ESL Nursing Student<sup>1</sup>

Nadja James, MSN, MHA, RN, PCCN\*

Doctoral student of University of Northern Colorado School of Nursing, Greeley, CO, 80639, USA  
Faculty of Morton College, Cicero, IL, 60804, USA

### ARTICLE INFO

Article history:  
Accepted 5 August 2017  
Available online xxx

#### Keywords:

English as a second language  
ESL  
Ethnically diverse  
Indian immigrant  
Narrative inquiry  
Nursing education  
Nursing student  
Persistence  
Qualitative

### ABSTRACT

Nursing education is tasked with the responsibility to ensure that the future nursing workforce mirrors the diversity of the patients it serves, but high attrition of ethnically diverse nursing students continues to plague prelicensure nursing programs. A great deal of quantitative evidence exists about variables that correlate to the higher attrition rate of ethnically diverse students. What is missing in the literature is the voice of the individual student solicited through a constructivist ontological lens. Therefore, the aim of this study was to explore the lived experience of one ethnically diverse nursing student who speaks English as a second language (ESL). Using a narrative inquiry approach, the life story of an Indian immigrant who successfully completed the nursing program was obtained through interviews and other artifacts. The student's life story was then reconstructed into a 3-dimensional narrative using a social constructivist perspective. Authenticity was established through unstructured interviewing, data triangulation, member checking, and careful examination of interview transcripts. Three themes were culled from the participant's narrative: *family*, *language*, and *persistence*. Analysis showed that family can be a source of additional stress for ethnically diverse students, but the support that family members provide tends to outweigh the negatives. Linguistic challenges related to English proficiency can lead to culturally insensitive behavior and discrimination toward ESL students. Persistence is a deeply individual phenomenon that is difficult to generalize or quantify. More research is needed to better understand the lived experience of ethnically diverse students who speak English as a second language. That knowledge will help nurse educators in creating culturally inclusive learning environments for ethnically diverse/ESL students that will support persistence and decrease attrition.

© 2017 Organization for Associate Degree Nursing. Published by Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

### Introduction

Nurse educators continue to face an increase in the diversity of students they teach. I currently work at a community college in a large metropolitan area that has an over 80% Hispanic/Latino student population, and many of those students speak English as a second language (ESL) (U.S. News and World Report, 2016). This high percentage of ethnically diverse/ESL students is encouraging because an urgent need exists for a more diverse nursing workforce to care for an increasingly diverse patient population (Diverse, n.d.). Despite the recognized need, nursing programs' retention and graduation rates of these students remain low. Low nursing student retention is a persistent problem in the United States and other English-

speaking countries such as Australia, Great Britain, and Canada (Mooring, 2016). Attrition rates have been reported as high as 50%, and ethnically diverse students make up a disproportionately larger portion of those numbers (Harris, Rosenberg, & O'Rourke, 2014; Mooring, 2016; Olson, 2012).

High attrition of nursing students is a vexing problem, and nurse educators need to continue to examine the reasons behind it. As I started to peruse the nursing education literature in search of answers, I found it to be replete with quantitative and qualitative evidence about the many challenges experienced by ethnically diverse/ESL students (Mikkonen, Elo, Kuivila, Tuomikoski, & Kääriäinen, 2016; Mooring, 2016; Olson, 2012). Reviewing the literature also led me to reflect on my own experience as a 19-year old immigrant to the United States and ESL student in an associate degree nursing program in the 1980s. I realized that quantitative evidence alone would not satisfactorily answer my question on why some ethnically diverse students persist and successfully complete a program while others do not. I concluded that exploring their experiences through

<sup>1</sup> Acknowledgment of financial support: No grant support or other financial assistance was received for this study.

\* Corresponding author. 201 N Erie St, Wheaton, IL 60187. Tel.: +1 630 841 9867.  
E-mail addresses: [jame5333@bears.unco.edu](mailto:jame5333@bears.unco.edu), [nadja.james@morton.edu](mailto:nadja.james@morton.edu).

the underutilized narrative inquiry approach would help me gain a more salient understanding of the educational experience of ethnically diverse/ESL students. Therefore, the purpose of my inquiry was to explore the lived experience of one ethnically diverse ESL nursing student with particular attention to experiences that involve language and how they are embedded in the student's narrative.

## Methodology

### Study Design

It is clear from the nursing education literature that we have identified a number of challenges encountered by ethnically diverse students and that seem to correlate to attrition (Mikkonen et al., 2016; Mooring, 2016; Olson, 2012). However, the voice that is missing is that of the *individual* student. Using narrative inquiry and the life story interview method, in particular, can generate new knowledge that is distinctive because it comes from the individual and his or her unique experiences.

Narrative inquiry can be described as a qualitative research design that involves generating, analyzing, and reporting stories of life experiences as data and “as a way of honoring lived experience as a source of important knowledge and understanding” (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 42). Its most defining feature is the goal to explore experience as it is lived. The focus for a narrative inquirer is not on facts or truths but rather on learning about an individual's experience through time and discovering the choices and events that occurred along the way that shaped the individual's worldview (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007). Using life stories as a form of narrative inquiry allows for exploring real-life problems faced by ethnically diverse nursing students. This knowledge can help to further elucidate the student experience and provide deeper understanding for nurse educators. Therefore, the research question that guided my inquiry was: What does an ethnically diverse nursing student who speaks English as a second language say about his or her student experiences?

### Philosophical Framework

The philosophical framework that underlies the study is social constructivism. Social constructivism posits that knowledge is generated through the constructed stories and subjective meanings attached to them by the individual, and we acknowledge that they belong solely and unalterably to the individual. The narrative inquirer's primary goal is to listen carefully and offer interpretation that itself is shaped by the researcher's own life experiences (Creswell, 2013). The aspects of trying to understand the constructed meanings of experiences of individuals by looking at them in a holistic way support the ontological and subjective nature of this framework (Savin-Baden & Niekerk, 2007, p. 460).

### Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher in narrative inquiry is unique. From the onset of the study to the final representation of the data in the form of a reconstructed story and beyond, the narrative inquirer is collaborator and participant. Reflexivity or the positioning of oneself within the reconstructed narrative will inevitably occur because of one's own life history, cultural background, and professional experiences. In highly collaborative research, such as narrative inquiry, the relationship between researcher and participant becomes an integral part of the narrative and may create ethical concerns in regard to boundaries and objectivity. Extra care must be taken to ensure that the narrator's “voice” that will be explored and reconstructed remains that of the narrator's and does not become that of the researcher's (Green, 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

### Participant Selection

After receipt of institutional review board approval and using a convenient, purposeful/criterion sampling method, I approached current undergraduate and graduate nursing students who I knew either personally or professionally about participating. In order to avoid concerns about coercion and bias, I did not recruit from the program where I currently teach. The participant had to meet the criteria for being considered ethnically diverse and to speak a first language other than English. Mary (pseudonym) met those criteria.

I met and gotten to know Mary while we worked the night shift together on the telemetry unit of a local hospital from 2011 until 2012. We became good friends and remained in touch after she transferred to another hospital and I obtained a position in nursing education. Mary was 11 years old when her family immigrated to the United States from Mumbai (formerly Bombay), India in 1994. Mary described the reason her parents moved to the United States was their desire for their children (Mary and her older brother) to have better educational opportunities leading to a better future and professional career: “...hoping that we would do really well in school and have a better career and future. I'm sure that was like their primary aim, you know, just a better life.” She obtained her nursing degree in 2006 and has worked as a registered nurse since. Mary started an accelerated, online graduate family nurse practitioner (FNP) program in 2016 and was in the practicum phase of the program during the time of the study.

### Data Collection

I met with Mary on several occasions over a period of two months in early spring 2017. We met at her home and in public places. We also talked on the phone and exchanged e-mails and text messages to arrange to meet. When we met in person, I recorded our conversations and had those recordings professionally transcribed. Our conversations or interviews were unstructured and open-ended. Because we have known each other for several years and have enjoyed a professional and personal friendship, Mary felt very comfortable during our conversations and only required occasional questions or prompts to tell her story about her nursing education experience.

My first (and longest) conversation with Mary happened at her home. When I arrived, Mary welcomed me at the door and, right away, wanted to confirm that I would not mind that her parents and her 4-year old twins were at home during our interview. I told her that I did not. I had met her parents and children before and knew that it would be difficult for her to get away or find someone to watch her children. I greeted her mother who was cutting up “jackfruit” in the kitchen and who right away offered me a taste. I had never tasted jackfruit before and accepted a small sample. Mary on the other hand insisted on making authentic Indian Chai tea for me and proudly showed me a drawer filled with Indian spices and ingredients. Later, I also met Mary's husband and her mother-in-law, and these interactions made me feel more like a visiting distant relative than a researcher.

### Data Analysis

Analysis and interpretation of the data were conducted in a modest, thoughtful, and logical manner and extrapolations that were selected to add richness to the description naturally derived from Mary's stories and not from preconceived ideas (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The first level of data analysis consisted of placing Mary's life story into the three-dimensional narrative inquiry framework of *temporality, sociality, and place*. Temporality is concerned with past, present, and future events. Sociality pertains to the storyteller's personal

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/8581962>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/8581962>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)