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## An Exploration of the Enactment of Acculturation in Research Utilization within a Nursing Undergraduate Curriculum-In-Action

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree in Doctor of Philosophy  
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AN EXPLORATION OF THE ENACTMENT OF ACCULTURATION  
IN RESEARCH UTILIZATION WITHIN A NURSING  
UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM-IN-ACTION

(Thesis format: Integrated-Article)

by

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Graduate Program in Nursing

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

The School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies  
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## ABSTRACT

**Background:** Professional acculturation is the process by which the values, attitudes, and norms of a professional culture are internalized. The internalization of professional culture leads to both conscious and unconscious acceptance of tenets that guide subsequent organization of knowledge and professional action. Professional nursing competencies establish and outline many of the values, attitudes, and norms that need to be accultured in undergraduate curriculum. Research utilization, both an identified competency and a key professional value, attitude, and norm, is the application of research findings in all individual and organizational elements of nursing practice. As an integral element of safe, effective, and competent nursing care, research utilization has been identified as an important element of professional nursing.

**Research Purpose:** The overall purpose of the dissertation study was to develop an interpretive understanding of the enactment of acculturation to research utilization by students and educators in one undergraduate nursing.

**Methodology:** Focused ethnography was used as a methodology to explore the social construction of norms, understandings, relationships, and experiences that comprise acculturation to research utilization curriculum-in-action across educational experiences and contexts.

**Findings:** The social construction and acculturation of research utilization transpired unintentionally within the nursing program in the presence of both articulated and unarticulated curricular values, norms, and goals. Two main sub-themes of the unintentional process of research acculturation were identified: the use and role of unintentional curricular language and the variable enactment of values, norms, and goals across educational experiences and contexts.

Discussion and Conclusion: An intentional approach to acculturation to research utilization within the curriculum-in-action through the intentional definition and implementation of teaching methods to promote student acculturation is essential to socially construct the professional practice of nursing through formalized professional education. Nursing programs need to understand how to successfully acculture students to valued practice competencies such as research utilization because these competencies constitute the essence of professional nursing.

Keywords: Professional acculturation, undergraduate nursing education, research utilization

## CO-AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT

Craig M. Duncan completed the following work under the supervision of Dr. Carroll Iwasiw and Dr. Yolanda Babenko-Mould, and advisement of Dr. Carol McWilliam and Dr. Kathy Hibbert. All supervisors and advisors will be co-authors on publications resulting from the chapters of this dissertation.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The overall purpose of the dissertation study was to develop an interpretive understanding of the enactment of acculturation to research utilization by students and educators in one nursing curriculum. Focused ethnography was used as a methodology to explore the social construction of norms, understandings, relationships, and experiences that comprise acculturation to research utilization curriculum-in-action across educational experiences and contexts.

Acculturation within a profession is the process by which the values, attitudes, norms, and artifacts of the professional culture are internalized (Polk, 1989; du Toit, 1995; Rush, McCracken, & Talley, 2009). Professional groups develop cultures made up of the knowledge, theory, normative standards, and ethical codes that guide the profession (du Toit, 1995). These cultures consist of “socially learned models of thought, feeling, and behaviour” (Polk, 1989, p. 25) developed through human interaction. Cultural norms can be learned formally through education and developed informally through social interaction (du Toit, 1989).

Acculturation of students to the values, attitudes, norms, and artifacts that make up professional nursing culture changes how individuals both perceive situations and act on those perceptions. Values are the “principles of positive orientation to a common belief” (Polk, 1989, p. 25). Values can have moral, knowledge-based, and/or aesthetic imperatives (Polk, 1989). Attitudes are the perspectives that guide the behavioural manifestation of values; if a specific value is espoused by a professional then it will be evident in the “actual predispositions to act in a given way” (Polk, 1989, p. 25). Norms are the enacted value behaviours reflecting the culturally-bound rules and standards for

social acts (Polk, 1989). Artifacts are the material objects related to knowledge within a culture (Polk, 1989). The development of these artifacts is guided by the values and attitudes of the culture. Culture is “transmitted and maintained through learning” (Polk, 1989, p. 25). Acculturation is a process whereby cultural values, attitudes, and norms are internalized. The internalization of culture leads to both conscious and unconscious acceptance of tenets that guide subsequent organization of knowledge and professional action (Polk, 1989). Professional nursing competencies establish and outline many of the values, attitudes, and norms that need to be accultured in undergraduate curriculum. Research utilization is one of these integral competencies.

Research utilization is the application of research findings in all individual and organizational elements of nursing practice (Estabrooks, 1998; Profetto-McGrath, Smith, Hugo, Patel, & Dussault, 2009). As an integral element of safe, effective, and competent nursing care, research utilization has been identified as an important component of professional nursing (Canadian Nurses Association (CNA), 2010). The professional organizations responsible for the establishment of nursing education guidelines and entry-to-practice competencies in Canada require the incorporation of research into practice (CNA, 2010; Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing (CASN), 2005). As outlined in the CNA (2010) *Code of Ethics*, nurses are required to “support, use, and engage in research and other activities that promote safe, competent, compassionate, and ethical care” (p. 9). Baccalaureate nursing programs are expected to provide a foundation for understanding and commitment to, research utilization to meet the research-focused accreditation competencies (Squires, Estabrooks, Gustavsson, & Wallin, 2011). CASN (2005), which accredits nursing education programs, stipulates that educational

environments and learning experiences should help to develop students into nurses who engage in evidence-based, quality patient care.

Improved patient outcomes, more cost-effective patient care, improved practitioner accountability, and transparency in decision-making have all been linked to the utilization of current research evidence by nurses (CNA, 2010). Despite these benefits and competency-based requirements, nurses have been slow to integrate research into practice (Squires et al., 2011). Rather, researchers have identified that social interaction and experience are the sources of practice knowledge most predominantly relied upon by nurses (Baessler et al., 1994; Estabrooks, et al., 2005).

Researchers contend that the limitations that nurses experience in integrating current nursing evidence into practice need to be considered in the planning and implementation of undergraduate nursing education (Estabrooks, 2009; Squires et al., 2011). The development of professional practice that includes values, attitudes, and norms related to research utilization is an important part of educating students who will, upon graduation, be expected to meet research utilization competencies. Spiers, Paul, Jennings, and Weaver (2012) contend that undergraduate nursing programs need to create and support curricula that help students develop the knowledge, values, and efficacy, integral elements of a professional practice, required to utilize research post-graduation.

### **Purpose of the Study**

Numerous studies have examined the ‘how to’ of teaching and the experience of teaching and learning research utilization (August-Brady, 2005; Burke et al., 2005; Ervin & Cowell, 2004; Mattila & Erikson, 2007; Morse, Oleson, Duffy, Patek, & Sohr, 1996; Shuster, Learn, & Duncan, 2003). However, researchers have not explored how various strategies are enacted in the curriculum-in-action, i.e., the interactions and transactions

between students and educators that makeup acculturation to research utilization. Understanding the curriculum-in-action related to research utilization is essential if nursing students are to be prepared to meet the professional commitments to research utilization. It is essential to explore how research utilization acculturation is enacted within curricula so that subsequently, the effectiveness of the processes can be optimized in facilitating students' acculturation to research utilization. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore acculturation to research utilization within a nursing curriculum-in-action.

### **Research Question**

*What is the enactment of acculturation in research utilization within a nursing education curriculum-in-action?*

### **Significance**

Research utilization is a “complex and non-linear process involving both individual and organizational change” (Profetto-McGrath et al. 2009, p. 200) and includes the utilization of research findings to inform all elements of registered nurses' practice (Estabrooks, 1998). The education of students, in order that they may successfully meet professional obligations to utilize research to inform their practice, requires complex and multifaceted learning activities and pedagogy. To have knowledge, capacity, and efficacy that are foundational to engaging in research utilization, students need to deconstruct and critically evaluate research evidence, implement research in practice, and enact attitudes and values that provide the impetus for following through in such endeavors within the healthcare context (Estabrooks, 2009; Wallin, Boström, & Gustavsson, 2012). As such, any curriculum foundational to research utilization is inevitably complex and multifaceted, extending across many contexts, and engaged in by

numerous players. Reflecting this premise, acculturation of students to research utilization takes place in various educational environments with a number of educators. Educators need more in-depth understanding of the complex and non-linear process of acculturation to research utilization in order to optimize educational strategies that facilitate the practice of this competency.

### **Key Concepts**

#### **Research Utilization and Nursing Curricula**

The focus on research utilization within undergraduate curricula has increased with the proliferation of professional standards related to research utilization, scholarly literature supporting the positive outcomes of research utilization, and professional organizations' commitment to research utilization within the profession (Profetto-McGrath et al., 2009). Ethical, professional, and practice standards created, published, and monitored by the governing bodies of nursing directly influence undergraduate curricula because graduating nurses must demonstrate preparedness to meet the outlined standards. Curricula may also reflect endeavors to transform the nursing profession and compel changes within the practice environment (Fineout-Overholt, Melnyk, & Schultz, 2005, Williams et al., 2012). Foci in undergraduate curricula related to research utilization reflect a concerted effort within the nursing profession to promote and adopt research utilization as an integral element of nursing practice (Fineout-Overholt et al., 2005).

There is a plethora of published methods for teaching research utilization, reflecting a diversity of goals. Early curricula focused on developing students' knowledge associated with becoming good consumers of research (Collins, Corder-Mabe, Greenberg, & Crowder, 1992). This focus has continued within the nursing education



literature. Many current studies address basic research knowledge and/or efficacy as the intended outcome of learning activities (August-Brady, 2005; Burke et al., 2005; Jones, Crookes, & Johnson, 2011; Mattila & Erikson, 2007; Shuster et al., 2003; Shwu-Run, Cheng, Tsai, Chang, 2013). Researchers argue, however, that while knowledge and efficacy are foundational for research utilization post-graduation, knowledge without the values, attitudes, behavioural norms, and overall practice grounded in an ongoing commitment to the implementation of research will do little to meet the standards for research utilization in practice (Estabrooks, 2009; Forsman, Rudman, Gustavsson, Ehrenburg, & Wallin, 2009).

### **Acculturation and Culture**

Acculturation cannot be understood without addressing the concept of culture. Culture is a process contextualized through “historical, social, political, and economic lenses” (Gregory, Harrowing, Lee, Doolittle, & Sullivan, 2010, p.1). From a constructivist perspective, culture is organic in nature, a process that is ever changing and evolving (Gregory et al., 2010). The foundation of culture in constructivist ontology means that it is a socially constructed concept, multifaceted, and bound in the lived understanding of individuals (Gregory et al., 2010). Three key shared components make up a culture subject to possible change over time: “1.) knowledge; 2.) values, beliefs, norms; 3.) artifacts” (Polk, 1989, p. 25). These key components are part of individual members’ enactment of a culture through problem-solving and interaction within their cultural context (Polk, 1989).

In educational research, of particular interest is the acculturation to curricular culture that is revealed in “the belief systems, everyday behaviours and interactions, the artifacts that participants create, the use people make of time, and the allocation of

decision-making power” (Joseph, 2011, p. 20). In nursing education, this culture needs to reflect the professional practice educators’ hope for students to develop. The development of values, attitudes, norms, and goals underlying the enactment and experience of curricular culture should be a deliberate and intentional pattern of “planning, practices, and evaluation” (Joseph, 2011, p. 20).

The socialization of individuals within professions is a significant outcome discussed across the healthcare curriculum literature (Goldenberg & Iwasiw, 1993; Lindberg, 2009; du Toit, 1995; Polk, 1989; Rush et al., 2009). For many authors, socialization focuses on the influence of role models, clinical educators, and nursing professionals as students are socialized into “the professional role (skills, knowledge, behaviour) and values, attitudes and goals integral to the profession” (Goldenberg & Iwasiw, 1993, p. 4). Acculturation shares this developmental focus but is different from socialization in its fundamental emphasis on culture. Acculturation leads to the formation of professional values, attitudes, and norms bound within a cultural context. This formation is an evolving experience, constitutive in nature, and transactional in process (Benner, Sutphen, Leonard, & Day, 2010). The formation of students from laypersons to nursing professionals leads to a transformation of “their ways of perceiving and acting in situations” (Benner et al., 2010, p. 86). It is the curricular culture that provides the context integral in this transformation.

The nursing organizations that establish standards for both practice and education have outlined commitments to research utilization within nursing. It is the responsibility of educators to promote students’ internalization of the values, attitudes, and norms embodied in these standards in order to institute and support research utilization as part of the professional culture of nursing. What is missing within the nursing education

literature is an exploration of the enactment of acculturation within undergraduate curricula and specifically the process of acculturation of undergraduate students to research utilization.

### **Individual Research Utilization Factors and Acculturation**

Researchers have identified individual factors that affect research utilization. These factors include educational experiences, professional socialization, involvement in research activities, use of information sources and personal autonomy (Estabrooks, Kenny, Adewale, Cummings, & Mallidou, 2007). In a systematic review of the literature investigating individual factors influencing research utilization, Estabrooks (2009) concluded that “only a positive attitude to research, inservice attendance, and the ability to suspend strongly held beliefs remained...as significant influencing factors” (p.226). Funk, Champagne, Weise, and Tornquist (1991) suggest that other possible key individual characteristics included nurses’ values, skills, and awareness of research.

The empirically-based association between the attitudes and values of nurses and their utilization of research has led to both a call for research that considers how education can influence the creation of these foundational attitudes and values and the inclusion of research utilization within professional and educational nursing standards (Estabrooks, 2009). The exploration of acculturation to research utilization needs to encompass endeavors being used to create and enact positive values and attitudes related to research utilization in nursing practice. This exploration is a significant and relevant approach to furthering the educational knowledge base that promotes the utilization of research.

## **Organizational Research Utilization Factors and Acculturation**

Research utilization in nursing is a social process situated within the culture of the clinical environment (Kitson, 1999). Multiple formal and informal factors comprise the organizational context that shapes research utilization. Formal factors include recognized policies, procedures, priorities, and resources influencing nurses' ability to acquire and implement new research into practice (Bapuji & Crossan, 2004). Informal factors include the organizational acceptance of new knowledge and research in practice reflected through openness, participatory decision-making culture, and an orientation to learning (Bapuji & Crossan, 2004).

Researchers suggest that new nurses should emerge from education programs with an articulated valuing of research utilization and the knowledge needed to successfully implement evidence into practice (Maben, Latter, & Macleod, 2006). Socially constructed organizational norms related to professional culture and informal acculturation to the profession within nursing units, however, may sabotage and disrupt new graduates' ability, efficacy, and impetus to implement research utilization (Maben et al., 2006). Both the barriers to and facilitators of research utilization are bound within social construction and social interaction (Estabrooks, 2008; McWilliam, Kothari, Kloseck, Ward-Griffin, & Forbes, 2008). According to Estabrooks (2009), organizations employing strategies for the implementation of research utilization will need to confront negative attitudes towards research utilization and inadequate understanding of its importance, both of which are prevalent in current nursing organizational environments. Organizational elements that support research utilization, including administrative support, the existence of research champions, and a cultural focus on the implementation of research (Estabrooks, 2009) are dependent on individuals who have developed positive

values, attitudes, and norms experienced and internalized in undergraduate research utilization.

Developing and internalizing professional practices that include positive values, attitudes, norms, and knowledge associated with research utilization within the undergraduate curriculum might be linked to enactment of values post-graduation. Scott, Estabrooks, Allen, and Pollock (2008) contend that students need to adopt and enact attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours that support research utilization in order to be prepared to overcome situations where research utilization is not the norm.

Multiple studies have investigated the outcomes of acculturation and socialization of students into professional nursing practice. Much of this research focuses on the acquiescence of students to the cultural values, attitudes, and norms at the organizational level within professional nursing units (Grealish & Trevitt, 2005; Mackintosh, 2006; Nolan, 1998; Rush et al., 2009). The findings of this research indicate that clinical educational experiences may not reflect the values and norms espoused within overall curricular goals and classroom experiences. Students acquiesce and conform to the espoused values when they are in different educational contexts, but do not fully internalize these values because they are not shared across curricular contexts. As a result, students are more likely to conform to values, attitudes, and norms evident in practice learning contexts than to those espoused in any other contexts of the nursing curricula.

The internalization of a nursing practice culture within clinical experiences is not a passive process; rather, students engage in the process of acculturation where they do not simply respond to cultural pressures but, in actuality, “construct and give meaning to their practice experiences” (Rush et al., 2009, p.315). Students, who engage in the

acculturation process shaped by a commitment to research utilization, as part of undergraduate curricula, may more readily adopt positive and constructive values, attitudes, and norms related to research utilization and resist acquiescence to culture that does not reflect a commitment to research utilization. Developing and internalizing positive values, attitudes, and norms associated with research utilization within the undergraduate curriculum and across curricular contexts might be linked to the resistance of the internalization of values, attitudes, and norms post-graduation that do not reflect professional competencies.

The implementation of educational strategies focusing on developing students who are critical of the adoption of values, attitudes, and norms that do not reflect a commitment to research utilization may lead to professional nurses who are better able to utilize research. Scott et al. (2008) suggest that these strategies are also intended to mediate cultural values, attitudes, and norms that do not support research utilization while contributing to change that supports evidence-informed practice, contexts, and social processes conducive to research utilization.

### **Values, Attitudes, and Norms Education**

The underlying importance for undergraduate nursing curricula to address both individual and organizational factors that lead to research utilization in undergraduate curriculum is well established in the preceding discussion. The successful acculturation of research utilization as an integral value, attitude, and norm within undergraduate nursing education is key outcome needed to support and promote research utilization considering both individual and organizational factors.

### **Declaration of Self**

My experiences in nursing practice and nursing undergraduate education inform the underlying context of this research study. I am committed to the integration of scientifically derived research into nursing practice. I believe that research utilization is integral to nursing practice that meets professional nursing competencies and that provides for the best possible outcomes to patients. In my experiences as a nurse within an acute care psychiatric hospital, I continually strived to ensure that the most current scholarly research evidence informed my practice. As an educator I have been involved in teaching research courses and am committed to educating students in ways that help them understand and value research utilization. I believe that student understanding of research utilization as a value is shaped by their experiences across undergraduate curricular contexts and through their day-to-day interactions with educators and others. I understand that my views need to be kept in mind throughout the research process. Being cognisant of and working through how my views of research utilization shape the research process has been an important element of this interpretive study.

### **Overview of Chapters**

This integrated article format dissertation consists of five chapters. The first chapter serves as an introduction. Chapters 2, 3, and 4 are manuscripts to be submitted for publication and are the essential elements of the dissertation study. As such, some repetition exists across the different chapters. In chapter 5, the conclusion is presented.

Chapter 2 is an integrative review of the research findings related to undergraduate development of important competency-based professional values, attitudes, and norms. The review was guided by the question: *What is the current state of the scientific literature regarding professional acculturation, professional socialization,*

*and formation of professional values, attitudes, and norms within the overall context of undergraduate curricula?*

In Chapter 3 the evolution and application of ethnography and focused ethnography are described and discussed. Included in this chapter are an analysis of the methodology and methods, along with recommendations for future researchers and future research. Chapter 4 is the presentation of the study including the findings of the research questions, discussion of findings, and implications of the research.

The conclusion of the dissertation in Chapter 5 will include a discussion of study findings, implications of the research, and recommendations. This chapter will present the overall contributions of this thesis relative to research methodology and method and practice within undergraduate nursing education and the nursing profession.



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## **CHAPTER 2**

### **INTEGRATIVE REVIEW**

Professional nursing is undergoing radical transformations as a consequence of changing governmental, organizational, and professional nursing goals, limited healthcare resources, fragmentation of healthcare services, and external definitions of what constitutes nursing practice (Liashenko & Peter, 2005; Wall, 2013). In the midst of such challenges, professional competencies that delineate ethical evidence-based knowledge and praxis required for professional practice continue to be specified and maintained (College of Nurses of Ontario [CNO], 2010). These competencies encompass values, attitudes, and norms that constitute key elements of professional nursing practice. Therefore, to practice competently, nurses need to understand and develop practice that is grounded in these values, attitudes, and norms (Beck & Young, 2005; Liashenko & Peter, 2005; Wall, 2013).

Professional values and culture are primary factors in effective competency-based nursing practice (O'Connor, 2007). Professional nurses, by definition, engage in decision-making processes bound in values and culture that shape how behaviours for safe and competent professional nursing care are selected and implemented (Taylor & Care, 1999). It is these culturally-based values, attitudes, and norms that differentiate professional nursing actions from other forms of social activity (O'Connor, 2007). Therefore, the development of practical skills, cognitive ability, ethical comportment, and foundational knowledge for competence within undergraduate curricula must incorporate learning opportunities and experiences for the concurrent development of professional values, attitudes, and norms.



The curricula within different educational contexts (professional practice experiences, classroom, and simulated practice experiences) provide both a declared map of student cognitive learning opportunities and also a less visible “inculcating of non-cognitive dispositions such as values, tastes, and beliefs” (Webster, 2005, p. 267). The process of developing professional values, attitudes, and norms within undergraduate nursing curricula is discussed in the scholarly literature through reference to a plethora of theoretical and conceptual terms, including: *professional acculturation*, *professional socialization*, *formation*, and *professional habitus* (Bashe, Anderson, Handelsman, & Klevansky, 2007; Benner, Sutphen, Leonard-Kahn & Day, 2008; Clouder, 2003; O’Connor, 2007; Webster, 2005).

The utilization of the term *acculturation* to elucidate the development of professional values, attitudes, and norms is apt because of the notion of professional disciplines as social constructs (Webster, 2005). Novices are acculturated into a “prevailing knowledge base where knowledge includes cognitive, corporeal, and embodied elements” (Webster, 2005, p. 267). *Acculturation*, when understood as the process of learning and internalizing the value systems, norms, and, behavioral patterns of the profession, is foundational in the development of professional nursing practice (du Toit, 1995; Rush, McCracken, & Talley, 2009). Research that informs educators about how to promote students’ acculturation within undergraduate nursing curricula, however, is limited. Further, research describing the enactment of curricular acculturation processes intended to prepare students to meet nursing’s professional requirements and commitments is not known to exist.

### **Aim**

The purpose of this integrated review was to analyze the research findings about

the formation of professional values, attitudes, and norms through acculturation in undergraduate nursing education. An understanding of this information is foundational to the development of curricula that promote the development of professional values, attitudes, and norms needed to meet professional nursing standards. The following question guided this review: *What is the current state of the scientific nursing literature regarding professional acculturation, professional socialization, and the formation of professional values, attitudes, and norms within the overall context of undergraduate nursing curricula?*

### **Background**

Acculturation within a profession is the process by which the values, attitudes, norms, and artifacts of the professional culture are internalized (du Toit, 1995; Polk, 1989). Professional groups develop cultures made up of the knowledge, theory, normative standards, and ethical codes that guide the profession (du Toit, 1995). These cultures consist of “socially learned models of thought, feeling, and behaviour” (Polk, 1989, p. 25) developed through human interaction. Cultural norms can be learned formally through education and developed informally through social interaction (du Toit, 1995).

In a review of nursing education literature, the term professional socialization is pervasively used in the examination of the development by students of professional values and behaviours (Dinmohammadia, Payrovi, & Mehrdad, 2013). The literature exploring professional socialization has two dominant conceptual perspectives: interactionist and functionalist. An interactionist approach to professional socialization is based in the assumption that individuals derive meaning through interactions with others, environments, and engagement in reflection (Ware, 2010). Professional socialization

from this viewpoint is bound in a socially interactive process where individuals are actively and creatively engaged, rather than simply passive recipients of experiences and values (Ware, 2010). A functionalist approach is a deterministic and passive view of socialization (Ware, 2010). For many authors, such socialization encompasses the influence of social impacts, particularly role models, clinical educators, and current nursing professionals during student formative experiences (Condon & Sharts-Hopko, 2010; Henderson, 2002; Rush et al., 2009). They suggest that this process is initiated externally to the individual, driven largely by others influencing student development of behaviour and values.

Professional acculturation shares a focus on the experiences and process of student development, similar to the interactionist conceptualization of professional socialization. The key feature that differentiates professional acculturation from professional socialization is the centrality of culture to the acculturation process. Professional acculturation specifically attends to the culturally grounded interactions and transactions between and among the students, educators, and other individuals within the educational context.

The process of professional acculturation involves consciously or unconsciously contemplating how core personal and professional values, attitudes, and norms align. Individual professional values, attitudes, and norms are then shaped through this contemplation. As individuals develop their professional values, attitudes, and norms they make decisions about the degree to which they will embrace or reject new professional or institutional values, attitudes, and norms with which they are confronted (Berry, 1980; Berry & Sam, 1997). The formation of students from laypersons to nursing professionals leads to a transformation of “their ways of perceiving and acting in

situations” (Benner, Sutphen, Leonard, & Day, 2010, p.86). Broadly, professional acculturation is the dynamic process whereby students interact within the nursing profession, and experience and internalize the values, attitudes, and norms of the culture that guide their professional practice.

Professional acculturation has an explicit cultural focus. Culture is a “dynamic process understood contextually through historical, social, political, and economic lenses” (Gregory, Harrowing, Lee, Doolittle, & Sullivan, 2010, p. 1). This constructivist notion of culture focuses on its organic living nature, a process that is ever changing and evolving (Gregory et al., 2010). In constructivist ontology, culture is a socially constructed concept, multifaceted, and bound in the lived understanding of individuals (Gregory et al., 2010). A culture is made up of components that may change over time consisting of: knowledge, values, attitudes, norms, and artifacts (Polk, 1989). These key components are part of individual members’ enactment of a culture through problem-solving and interaction within their cultural context (Polk, 1989).

Values are the “principles of positive orientation to a common belief” (Polk, 1989 p. 25). Values can have moral, knowledge-based, and/or aesthetic imperatives (Polk, 1989). If a specific value is espoused in a professional culture, it ought to be evident in the “actual predispositions to act in a given way” (Polk, 1989, p. 25) and in behavior consistently reflective of the value (Krawthwohl, Bloom, & Masia, as cited by Iwasiw & Goldenberg, 2015). Attitudes guide the behavioural manifestation of values; a professional value will be evident in the “actual predispositions to act in a given way” (Polk, 1989, p. 25). Norms are the behavioural manifestations of values, the patterns of behaviour of a given culture (Polk, 1989). Artifacts are the material objects related to knowledge within a culture (Polk, 1989). The development of these artifacts is guided by

the values and attitudes of the culture. Culture, the embodiment of values, attitudes, and norms, is “transmitted and maintained through learning” (Polk, 1989, p. 25). The internalization of culture leads to both conscious and unconscious acceptance of tenets that guide subsequent organization of knowledge and professional action, changing how individuals both perceive situations and act on those perceptions (Polk, 1989).

The nursing education literature, however, affords little knowledge of the process of professional acculturation to these values, attitudes, and norms. A beginning step in this exploration is an integrative review of scholarly literature that considers professional acculturation, interactive professional socialization, and the overall formation of professional values, attitudes, and norms in undergraduate nursing curricula.

### **Methods**

To answer the question that guided this review, literature which included multiple research designs and methodologies (Whittemore & Knafl, 2005) was identified. The literature related to acculturation focused on two major areas, acculturation to a novel culture and acculturation to a profession (Bashe et al., 2007). Although both areas of acculturation research share some theoretical tenets, the foci of the educational processes within them are different. This integrated review focused solely on professional acculturation in nursing undergraduate education. Some of the selected research informs an understanding of acculturation from the viewpoint of general professional socialization (a process that shares a focus on the development of professional values, attitudes, and norms but does not have the same cultural and internal and external foci of acculturation) within undergraduate curricula.

The interactionist socialization literature informs the current state of the evidence on professional acculturation but intrinsically does not focus on the key cultural

understandings. Other identified studies explored the development of attitudes and the intentions of educators related specifically to undergraduate nursing education.

A systematic search of literature about professional acculturation in undergraduate nursing education was completed using the search terms: *acculturation, socialization, values, formation, habitus, professional, undergraduate, and nursing*. CINAHL, Proquest Nursing Journals, and Scholar's Portal databases were used to access relevant research studies. No time limits were imposed on the search and articles were included if they were published in English language, peer-reviewed scientific journals. In all, 129 articles were found in the preliminary search. All non-research and duplicate articles were eliminated. Only studies that involved traditional undergraduate (non-accelerated and face-to-face) curricular endeavors to acculturate and/or socialize nursing students to nursing professional values were included. A secondary search of the reference lists in these articles was completed to identify articles not found in the original search. A total of 10 studies were found that investigated professional acculturation, professional socialization from an interactionist perspective, and/or the formation of professional values, attitudes, and norms within undergraduate nursing education. The studies are summarized by publication date in Table 1.

## **Results**

### **Literature Informing Acculturation**

Ten studies were identified that explored acculturation, socialization and /or the formation of values, attitudes, and norms in undergraduate nursing curricula. This work encompassed two categories: one study addressed the impact of acculturation and socialization on a specific professional nursing value, and the remaining nine focused on acculturation and/or socialization in undergraduate nursing student development.

**The impact of acculturation and socialization on professional nursing values.**

Acculturation, socialization, and the key professional nursing value of caring were specifically considered in only one of the identified studies. Mackintosh (2006) investigated the role of socialization in developing student nurses' views about caring over time in an exploratory qualitative study. The purposeful sample included third year undergraduate nursing students (N=16) in a three-year undergraduate nursing program in the United Kingdom. New understandings at an interpretive level were not noted in the study; however, the descriptions of student experience and learning across curricular environments provided key information.

Table 1

*Summary of Professional Socialization, Professional Acculturation, and Formation of Professional Values, Attitudes, and Norms in Nursing Education*

Study	Purpose	Sample	Methods	Results
Brown, Stevens, & Kemode (2012)	To examine the role of the clinical teacher in the process of professional socialization of students.	N=14, clinical teachers and graduates	Exploratory, qualitative	Clinical teachers were instrumental in supporting students to develop strong and positive nursing values. The professional practice experience provides key exposure to the nursing role allowing for the internalization of values and norms observed in social action.
Carlson, Pilhammar, & Wann-Hansson (2010)	To describe how preceptors influence nursing students' professional socialization.	N=29, preceptors and staff nurses	Ethnography	Professional practice preceptors attempted to support the development knowledge, skills, and values in students to enable them to become "good competent nurses". Practical skills, planning and prioritization, ethical awareness, communication skills and critical thinking were all identified foci for educators.
Condon & Sharts-Hopko (2010)	To examine the process of professional socialization among Japanese nursing students.	N=10, faculty members and 3 <sup>rd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> year nursing students	Exploratory, qualitative	The socialization of students is multidimensional process influenced by professional practice, classroom, and extracurricular experiences. Professional practice experiences were described as the "best" learning for socialization to the "real" nursing role. Faculty were described as having little direct impact on socialization.



Table 1 Continued

Study	Purpose	Sample	Methods	Results
Rush, McCracken, & Talley (2009)	To describe and compare students' perceptions as insiders when participating in different models of professional practice experience teaching and to describe factors influencing student self-perception.	N=38, 3 <sup>rd</sup> year undergraduate	Descriptive, non-experimental	Participants demonstrated significant changes in self-perception as insiders (belonging to and accepted by the profession) as a result of professional practice experiences. Factors influencing self-perception included: the educator-student relationship, opportunity for independent practice, and exposure to complex professional practice realities that challenged their understandings.
Ware (2008)	To discover, describe, and analyze the process of forming a concept of oneself as a professional nurse.	N=15 4 <sup>th</sup> year final semester undergraduate	Grounded Theory	Participants drew on a knowledge base throughout the nursing program in the formation of their self-concept as a person and aspiring nurse. Faculty had a key role in establishing and maintaining the culture of the nursing program that is foundational in students internalizing values and beliefs.
Mackintosh (2006)	To identify the effect of time on participants' perceptions of caring and becoming a nurse during pre-registration nurse training.	N=16, 3 <sup>rd</sup> year undergraduate	Descriptive, longitudinal, qualitative	Participants described an overall loss of the idealistic view of caring as an integral part of nursing care as they progressed through education environments

Table 1 Continued

Study	Purpose	Sample	Methods	Results
Day, Field, Campbell, & Reutter (2005)	To examine the socialization of nursing students within a four-year baccalaureate program.	N=50, 1 <sup>st</sup> - and 4 <sup>th</sup> year undergraduate	Exploratory, qualitative	Participants' images of nursing moved from those of a layperson to those of a professional nurse over the 4 years of the program. The development of professional values, such as caring, advocacy, and compassion, took place across curricular environments and with multiple educators.
du Toit (1995)	To examine nursing students' exposure to and internalization of normative standards and professional characteristics	N=173, 1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> year undergraduate	Descriptive, non-experimental	Participants were highly socialized to nursing values (the client as the primary consideration and the importance of caring) and standards over the course of their education. Socialization increased over the educational period
Campbell, Larrivee, Field, Day, & Reutter (1994)	To describe student- identified factors that facilitated their learning to nurse in the professional practice setting.	N=131, 1 <sup>st</sup> - and 4 <sup>th</sup> year undergraduate	Exploratory, qualitative	The professional practice instructor and peer supporter were the most influential factors on student learning in the professional practice setting.
Goldenberg & Iwasiw (1993)	To examine the effects of a senior professional practice nursing preceptorship experience on professional socialization.	N=68, 4 <sup>th</sup> year final semester undergraduate	Descriptive, non-experimental	Participants developed nursing role conceptions during professional practice education. These role conceptions help students resolved the inconsistencies between student nurse and graduate nurse roles.

Specifically, Mackintosh (2006) identified an overall loss of the idealistic view of caring as integral and important within nursing care as students progressed through a variety of complex educational environments in the three-year degree program. Mackintosh linked a reduced commitment to the role of caring in students' practice to their experiences of coping within the professional practice setting. She identified that many participants felt that a degree of emotional hardening and a lessening of commitment to care were needed to cope in professional practice environments that often did not allow students to practice in a caring way. She further characterized development of caring in students as *complex*, concluding that there was a need for curricula that enact a commitment to development of values. To accomplish this goal, Mackintosh argued that it would be necessary to focus on values such as caring and patient-focused relationships, not only in the classroom, but most importantly, in professional practice settings.

To date, researchers have not attempted to investigate the complex interactions between and among the various contexts that make up a curriculum in relation to individual professional values. In this knowledge vacuum, Mackintosh's work not only highlights the erosion of foundational professional values such as caring, but reinforces the need to further understand the cultural role of curriculum and curriculum-in-action across curricular contexts in shaping the formation of professional values, attitudes, and norms.

**The influence of acculturation and/or socialization on undergraduate nursing student development.** The influence of acculturation and/or socialization on undergraduate nursing student development was addressed in 9 studies. Across the literature few authors have specifically examined undergraduate student development

through the lens of acculturation. Some authors did include acculturation in various ways within their studies including: as a subtheme in the findings (Brown, Stevens, & Kermode, 2012), as a result of the professional socialization process (Rush, McCracken, & Talley, 2009), and as an overall process of which professional socialization is a sub-process (du Toit, 1995). In each of these studies, however, student development was viewed through the lens of professional socialization. As such, literature examining professional socialization has been reviewed to inform, consider, and discuss in relation to acculturation in research utilization.

In an exploratory qualitative study with a purposeful sample of clinical instructors (N=7) and graduates (N=7) from an undergraduate program in Australia, Brown, Stevens, and Kermode (2012) explored the role of clinical teacher in the interactionist process of professional socialization of students. Brown et al. did not clearly define their conceptual understanding of professional socialization as interactionist. Their focus in the results section on interactions in the learning environments including clinical and interactions with faculty, however, is reflective of the interactionist conceptual approach. Clinical teachers were instrumental in student development of strong and positive nursing identities. This development occurred through exposure to nursing practice experiences. Students both observed and internalized values and norms in the social actions of professional nurses within the practice experience context. This led to the development of self-concepts and social identities that were situated in the accepted norms and values of current practicing nurses.

Clinical teachers were instrumental in seven domains of student learning in the practice experience: professional role concept, acculturation, acquisition of knowledge, acquisition of skill, acquisition of professional values, assimilation into the organization,

and professional role modelling. In each domain the clinical instructor provided access to the learning environment and clinicians, support in the learning process, support for the students' sense of belonging and place, and guidance in learning needs. A conceptual understanding of the process of professional socialization was not connected to the findings of this study. Rather, the authors focused on theoretical learning domains in relation to clinical instruction and professional socialization. The authors' findings addressed the importance of clinical educators in the professional socialization of students and the importance of the practice environment in the socialization process. Brown, Stevens, and Kermode (2012) included a focus on acculturation as one element of student development of professional values and norms. This focus was not specific to any particular value and norm and focused generally on the acculturation in the one cultural context. Since the focus was solely on the practice environment, research is needed to further understand the impact of different cultural learning contexts in undergraduate nursing programs on socialization and acculturation.

Carlson, Pilhammar, and Wann-Hansson (2010) conducted an ethnographic study with a purposeful sample of precepting and staff nurses (N=29) in Sweden to explore how preceptors shaped the development of an understanding of nursing in undergraduate nursing students within a professional practice environment. The authors' interactionist conceptual understanding of the process of professional socialization is clearly stated in their definition. They found that professional practice experience preceptors attempted to help students develop the knowledge, skills, and values that would enable them to become "good and competent nurses" (p. 746). The required knowledge, skills, and values included practical skills, planning and prioritization, ethical awareness, communication skills, and critical thinking. The authors did not contextualize their

findings within a conceptual understanding of the process of professional socialization. Carlson et al. focused on how professional nursing roles were mediated by precepting nurses within the study purpose and findings. Carlson et al. suggested that their work reinforces the importance of the professional practice learning environment in the formation of professional values, attitudes, and norms through socialization. While the study furthers the understanding of preceptors' intentions and processes of student formation of professional values, attitudes, and norms, how education transpires in the cultural context of practice environment related to these intentions and processes, needs further investigation. For instance, the role of the culturally-based interactions and transactions between practicing nurses and students is not well understood, further reinforcing the need for culturally focused research.

In an exploratory qualitative study with a purposeful sample of undergraduate faculty (N=2) and nursing students (N=8) in Japan, Condon and Sharts-Hopko (2010) explored the process of professional socialization among undergraduate nursing students. The authors focused on the interactions between students, educators, and nurses within their definition of professional socialization and findings reflected an interactionist professional socialization perspective. Condon and Sharts-Hopko reported that socialization of students is a multidimensional process that is influenced by the classroom, professional practice, and extracurricular experiences. Students identified the professional practice experiences as the "best" learning for socialization into the "real" nursing role. In contrast, classroom educators were described as having little direct impact on the socialization of students to nursing. While the faculty role was connected to facilitation of the process of socialization through encouragement of communication and self-reflection, it was the experiences within the nursing practice setting that shaped

the socialization process. The authors did not describe a connection between their findings and conceptual understanding of the process of professional socialization. Condon and Sharts-Hopko's work reinforces the importance of the practice experience in the socialization and acculturation process. Further research is needed to elucidate why the cultural interactions and transactions within the classroom setting have little impact in shaping students' values and how to enact curriculum that successfully connects needed professional values, attitudes, and norms across curricular cultural contexts.

Ware (2008) explored the process of forming a professional nursing self-concept for undergraduate nursing students. Ware intentionally defined professional socialization from an interactionist conceptual perspective, specifically using the term "interactionist" within the definition, and included a discussion of why the interactionist rather than functionalist framework fit within this context. Using a grounded theory study with a purposeful sample of baccalaureate nursing students (N=15) from the first semester of the 4<sup>th</sup> year of an American nursing program, Ware found that participants drew on knowledge and learning experiences from across the nursing program in the formation of their self-concept as professional nurses. As they progressed through the nursing program, students took in the culture of the program, defined by Ware as "the school as whole" including: learning experiences, faculty and student interactions, and guiding documents. Faculty establish and maintain this culture by making learning experiences possible and guiding students' understanding of the implications of the learning experiences, particularly in the professional practice learning environment. Students internalized values such as holism and caring through interactions with clients, faculty, and society. Professional practice experiences allowed students to rehearse the nursing role, an element of the professional socialization process. Ware argues that every learning

experience should be intentionally and appropriately connected with how it impacts students' socialization to the nursing profession, given that the socialization process occurs across the nursing program from beginning to end.

Ware's findings further support that professional socialization and acculturation occurs across educational environments. The findings of this study further the understanding of the professional socialization process through the conceptualization of how students come to a nursing program with a self-concept as a person and aspiring nurse and "take it all in" building on foundational knowledge to develop a self-concept as nurse (Ware, 2008, p.9). This conceptualization of the process of professional socialization focuses on an incremental building of student self-concept of nurse through experiences where students take in and interact with knowledge about nursing. These sources of knowledge include diverse sources such as educators, clinical experiences, tests, text books, and client reactions. While this study provides a theoretical understanding of the process of self-concept development and professional socialization during undergraduate nursing education, the cultural interactions and transactions that encompass acculturation to specific values, attitudes, and norms are still not well understood.

In an exploratory qualitative study with a purposeful sample of undergraduate nursing students (N=50) from all four years of an undergraduate program in Canada, Day, Field, Campbell, and Reutter (2005) examined the socialization of students in the four years of that program. The authors clearly articulated how their study is based in an interactionist conceptual approach to professional socialization within a discussion of the definitions and constituent elements of interactionist and functionalist conceptualizations of professional socialization. Content analysis was used to confirm Davis's theory of



doctrinal conversion, a six-stage theory of professional socialization. Professional socialization was defined as the development of professional values and norms that would include elements such as a commitment to caring and research utilization. While the findings of this study were limited to a description of student experiences, these experiences did provide several important ideas to consider related to professional acculturation.

Specifically, the researchers reported that students' images of nursing moved from those of a layperson to those of a professional nurse over the four years of the undergraduate program. These images were reflections of the professional values (such as caring and compassion) and norms (for example, the need for education and advocacy) to which students were committed. Day et al. suggested that students' professional values guided the professional care that they provided. That is, while students attempted to fit into the professional practice environment through all years of the program, by fourth year, students would not provide care that "compromised their established values" (p. 643). They found that students develop professional values and norms across curricular environments and in conjunction with classroom and professional practice educators. Their work reinforces the importance of socialization and acculturation of students to values that support professional practice. It also highlights the need for studies that explore the complexity inherent in the establishment of values, attitudes, and norms within curricular cultures.

In a descriptive, non-experimental study of first- and third-year undergraduate nursing students (N=173) at two Australian universities, du Toit (1995) investigated students' exposure to, and internalization of, normative standards and professional characteristics within an undergraduate curricula. du Toit also defined professional

socialization from an interactionist conceptual perspective, as evidenced by her identification of the “interactional sphere” as an integral element within the stages of professional socialization (p. 166). These normative standards and professional characteristics included a commitment to caring, a service orientation, and being collaborative and committed to correct decision-making.

du Toit (1995) investigated the development of these standards and commitments by surveying students at two time points within their education to compare their commitment to different values over time. She reported that students were highly socialized to nursing values and standards over the course of their education and suggested that biographical or institutional variables had little correlation with the high levels of internalization of professional values. The study focused on the extent of professional socialization and did not connect results to a conceptualization of the process. Although the findings were limited by use of an instrument without recognized reliability and validity, this early research provided insight into the relationships between curriculum and the internalization of nursing normative standards and professional characteristics, a key element within the acculturation of students to research utilization.

However, du Toit did not elucidate the actual process or mechanisms involved with this element of the formation of professional values, attitudes, and norms. Rather, she argued that while professional socialization was identified within nursing curricula, the means by which the actual curricula-in-action influence these particular processes requires further research. du Toit’s work further reinforced a gap in knowledge about the current scientific state of nursing literature regarding professional socialization, professional acculturation, and the cultural interactions and transaction that lead to the formation of professional values, attitudes, and norms.

Campbell, Larrivee, Field, Day, and Reutter (1994) explored how students became socialized into the profession and how their attitudes and values changed through their professional practice education experiences. The authors do not articulate the conceptual professional socialization perspective. They do, however, describe a socialization process in which students “seek out role models” (p. 1126) and actively reflect upon experiences. Both of these elements reflect an active interactionist understanding of professional socialization. Using an exploratory qualitative study with a purposeful sample of undergraduate nursing students (N=131) from all four years of a Canadian undergraduate program, they found that students’ professional socialization was enhanced by the relationships between students and professional practice instructors, the effectiveness of instructors in conveying nursing as a challenging and exciting profession, and instructors’ ability to foster a safe and supportive environment. Campbell et al. argued that professional practice faculty had a stronger involvement in the development of student attitudes towards nursing than classroom faculty. The authors’ findings further reinforce that professional socialization and acculturation occurs across classroom and professional practice educational environments, in particular within the professional practice environment. The findings were contextualized within a conceptual understanding of the process of professional socialization. Specifically, Campbell et al. furthered the conceptual understanding of the integral role of instructors and peers in student professional socialization through the themes of shaping attitudes, creating environments, facilitation of learning, emotional support, and assisting with physical tasks. The authors determined that further investigation needs to focus on the cultural relationships between the classroom and practice settings, how values, attitudes, and norms compare within these cultural contexts, and how educators can utilize the powerful

professional practice cultural context to influence the creation of professional values, attitudes, and norms that support safe and effective professional nursing care.

In a descriptive non-experimental study with a non-probability convenience sample of nursing students (N=68) enrolled in a final semester senior professional practice preceptorship experience in Ontario, Goldenberg and Iwasiw (1993) examined the effects of the preceptorship experience on professional socialization. The authors define professional socialization as an “interactive process” (p. 4) reflective of an interactionist conceptual perspective. Goldenberg and Iwasiw did not connect the study findings to a conceptual understanding of the process of professional socialization. Rather, they contextualized their findings within conceptual understanding of role conception.

Although the small convenience sample may limit the generalizability of the results, the study has provided insight into the importance of the preceptor role. For example, Goldenberg and Iwasiw found that professional practice education helps students develop nursing role conceptions that “assist in the resolution of incongruence between student and graduate roles” (p. 13). They also called for a further examination of the preceptor’s role and contribution to the professional socialization of nursing students. The results highlight the importance of professional practice experiences in students’ socialization to the nursing profession and reinforce the importance of the professional practice environment in the formation of professional values, attitudes, and norms.

### **Discussion**

The function of an undergraduate curriculum is to develop the foundational knowledge for nursing practice competence (cognition, attitudes, and ethics) and the professional nursing values, attitudes, and norms that provide the impetus and manner to

engage in the needed skills, knowledge, behaviours, and cognition to practice competently (O'Connor, 2007). This integrative review examined the state of the evidence related to professional acculturation, professional socialization, and the formation of professional values, attitudes, and norms in nursing students in undergraduate nursing programs. Four findings were identified across the reviewed literature: the significance of professional practice experiences for the development of professional values, attitudes, and norms, the role of time in the creation of students' professional values, attitudes, and norms, the contribution of multiple educational contexts in the formation of professional values, attitudes, and norms, and the importance of understanding the process of interaction (see Table 2).

Table 2

*Influences on Professional Values Formation*

Study	Professional practice experiences	Time	Multiple educational contexts	Process of interaction
Brown, Stevens, & Kermode (2012)	X	X		
Carlson, Pilhammar, & Wann-Hansson (2010)	X		X	
Condon & Sharts-Hopko (2010)	X		X	
Rush, McCracken, & Talley (2009)	X			
Ware (2008)	X	X	X	X
Day, Field, Campbell, & Reutter (2005)	X	X		X
Mackintosh (2006)	X	X	X	
du Toit (1995)		X		
Campbell, Larrivee, Field, Day, & Reutter (1994)	X		X	X
Goldenberg & Iwasiw (1993)	X			

As depicted in Table 2, the distinct influence of the professional practice setting in the creation of professional values, attitudes, and norms through professional acculturation and socialization was a major theme in 9 of 10 studies (Brown et al., 2012; Campbell et al., 1994; Carlson et al., 2010; Condon & Sharts-Hopko, 2010; Day et al., 2005; Goldenberg & Iwasiw, 1993; Mackintosh, 2006; Rush et al., 2009; Ware, 2008). All researchers identified the primacy of professional practice experience over classroom

experiences in the development of professional values, attitudes, and norms. They reported that the professional values, attitudes, and norms espoused by nurses and professional practice educators in the practice context were an integral element of the development of the professional values, attitudes, and norms of undergraduate students. They further suggested that the relationship between the professional practice educator and student was a key element in the process of the formation of professional values, attitudes, and norms. The professional practice education context clearly needs to be considered in planning education that both promotes foundational professional values, attitudes, and norms through professional acculturation and also alters the commitment of nursing students to particular values such as caring as espoused in the classroom setting.

In five of the reviewed studies, the development of professional values, attitudes, and norms was examined and identified over the course of a baccalaureate degree (Brown et al., 2012; Day et al., 2005; Mackintosh, 2006; du Toit, 1995; Ware, 2008). The formation of professional values was related to socialization occurring as the baccalaureate nursing curriculum progressed (du Toit, 1995). Students' development of professional values over time was found to guide the provision of care within the professional practice environment (Day et al., 2005). This work suggests that student nurses entered nursing programs with a conception of what it is to be a professional nurse. This conception provided a foundation for the development over time of professional values, attitudes, and norms within the baccalaureate program. Further research is needed to understand the role of time in relation to formation of professional values, attitudes, and norms in undergraduate nursing programs. Educators need to recognize the role of time in the formation of professional values, attitudes, and norms and work to develop curriculum that supports students through this evolution over time.

Research to date also identifies the context of curriculum as a salient element of professional acculturation, professional socialization, and formation of professional values, attitudes, and norms. Six studies incorporated an understanding of the undergraduate curriculum that included multiple curricular contexts (Campbell et al., 1994; Condon & Sharts-Hopko, 2010; Day et al., 2005; Mackintosh, 2006; Ware, 2008). Many of the researchers in the literature reviewed herein separated the curriculum into segments based on location, perhaps a somewhat simplified understanding of the undergraduate nursing student learning experience. To come to conclusions about the influence of professional practice experience education on the formation of professional values, attitudes, and norms without considering the connections of the other concurrent curricular contexts belies the cumulative effect of a curriculum-in-action. Further research is required to elucidate the interplay among the cultural contexts to take full advantage of the multi-contextual reality of undergraduate nursing curriculum in the development of professional values, attitudes, and norms.

Finally, in three of the reviewed studies, authors further elucidated the influences on professional value formation within the context of a conceptual understanding of the process of interaction in professional socialization (Campbell et al., 1994; Day et al., 2005; Ware, 2008). The authors of each of the studies connected their findings to different conceptualizations of professional socialization. Ware added to the conceptual understanding of the incremental nature of the professional socialization interactive process and the diversity of sources that influence this process. Day et al. used content analysis to confirm Davis's theory of doctrinal conversion, a six-stage theory of the professional socialization interaction process. Finally, Campbell et al. further conceptualized the integral role of instructors and peers within the interactional process



of student professional socialization. The atheoretical approach to understanding the interactive creation of professional values, attitudes, and norms in undergraduate nursing curriculum apparent within the majority of the reviewed studies reflects the current lack of clarity within the literature examining the formation of professional values, attitudes, and norms. Studies that attempt to elucidate the process of interactive learning across contexts and curricula are needed to provide insight into the complexity of the role of undergraduate curriculum in the formation of values, attitudes, and norms within undergraduate nursing students.

While the existence of professional acculturation, professional socialization, and the formation of professional values, attitudes, and norms within nursing educational contexts was discussed in this research, very little investigation and discussion of the actual cultural mechanisms or processes involved could be identified. Essential issues concerning the culturally-based mechanisms, interactions, transactions, and process of professional values, attitudes, and norms formation remain. Questions arise such as: *Why do experiences of the professional practice environment play such an important role in the formation of student professional values, attitudes, and norms? Why do theoretical or classroom learning experiences have a lesser role in formation of professional values, attitudes, and norms? How do the types of teaching and learning processes and experiences environments linked to the formation of professional values, attitudes, and norms come into play in the different curricular environments? How does a curriculum as a culture across educational contexts and enacted by multiple educators shape the professional acculturation of students? What role does the cultural context of an educational institution play in the effort to promote professional acculturation?*

Discussion of the existence of formation of professional values, attitudes, and norms is

only a beginning point in creating knowledge to support the successful development and integration of curriculum guides and supports to enhance the formation of professional values, attitudes, and norms in nursing students. To critique and enhance current undergraduate curriculum, further research is needed to assist educators' understanding of the culturally-bound processes and mechanisms that may be used to promote formation of professional values, attitudes, and norms.

### **Limitations**

There were a number of limitations identified in this literature review. Multiple terms, such as professional acculturation and professional socialization, were used across studies to describe professional value, attitude, and norm formation. This lack of clarity regarding the meaning of and relationship between and among professional acculturation, professional socialization, and the formation of professional values, attitudes, and norms within the context of undergraduate nursing curriculum is problematic. The small number of studies in the review, the small sample sizes of the quantitative studies, and limited theoretical interpretation of the qualitative data also limit the generalizability and transferability of the findings. The diversity in the curricular contexts of these research studies may also limit the contribution of this work in understanding of the formation of professional values, attitudes, and norms in undergraduate nursing education.

### **Conclusion**

Currently there is a paucity of research exploring the formation of professional values, attitudes, and norms in the context of nursing undergraduate curriculum. In particular, there is limited research exploring this formation in relation to acculturation. Findings from this review explicate the existing state of the knowledge and thus add to the research base for nursing education practice. Three key findings regarding

professional value, attitude, and norm formation in undergraduate nursing education were identified as important considerations for further research. First, professional values, attitudes, and norms of nursing students develop over the course of an entire undergraduate program, influencing professional nursing practice (Day et al., 2005; du Toit, 1995; Mackintosh, 2006; Ware 2008). Second, the experiences of nursing students in professional practice settings have an integral role within the formation of professional values, attitudes, and norms (Brown et al., 2012; Campbell et al., 1994; Carlson et al., 2010; Condon & Sharts-Hopko, 2010; Day et al., 2005; Goldenberg & Iwasiw, 1993; Mackintosh, 2006; Rush et al., 2009; Ware, 2008). Finally, the context of curriculum, including environment and educator, has a role in the formation of professional values, attitudes, and norms (Campbell et al., 1994; Condon & Sharts-Hopko, 2010; Day et al., 2005; Mackintosh, 2006; Ware, 2008).

Although limited, the research to date has several important implications for nursing education. Understanding that students develop professional values, attitudes, and norms within the context of their entire nursing program and that these nursing values, attitudes, and norms influence professional practice demonstrates the importance of questioning the paucity of research available to inform the curricula of nursing programs. Gaps exist in relation to the theoretical understanding of formation of professional values, attitudes, and norms, the role of cultural context in this development, and the essential cultural mechanisms in this process. In the context of this knowledge vacuum, the seemingly serendipitous manner in which nursing programs currently plan and develop their curricula in relation to the formation of professional values, attitudes, and norms remains problematic. The cultural mechanisms, interactions, and transactions that lead to professional values, attitudes, and norms in nursing students are not understood. The

identification of a framework addressing the cultural concepts and relationships at work within the formation of professional values, attitudes, and norms is a first step in addressing the ambiguity highlighted in this review. Further professional acculturation focused research is warranted to clarify the meaning and relationships among the integral concepts, culture, and experiences in undergraduate nursing curricula to explicate the process of how the formation of professional values, attitudes, and norms is realized.

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## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Of particular relevance to the educative process is a need to understand the cultural realities of curricula and the influence of meaning in social and cultural learning contexts (Cruz & Higginbottom, 2013; Leung, 2002). Individuals, as they engage with one another and the outside world, are guided by cultural understandings and interpretations. Culturally-based inquiry in undergraduate education may be addressed by ethnography and, more specifically, focused ethnography. Ethnography is based on the idea that “social life is meaningful” (Atkinson & Pugsley, 2005, p. 229); that is, the interactions that make up a culture are bound in individuals’ shared understandings and interpretations (Atkinson & Pugsley, 2005). Focused ethnographers study specific cultural settings or experiences rather than long-term explorations of whole communities typical of traditional ethnography (Cruz & Higginbottom, 2013).

In this paper, ethnography and specifically, focused ethnography, will be described and discussed historically as a research methodology within anthropology, sociology, and more recently within health education. The use of focused ethnography within nursing education research literature will be reviewed to identify constituent elements of the methodology and illustrate the nature of focused ethnographic findings. Finally, an example of focused ethnography that explored acculturation within an undergraduate nursing curriculum will be presented to illustrate the potential utility of this methodology for nursing education researchers.

#### **Ethnography**

*Ethnography* is literally translated as “writing, describing or painting a picture (graph) about particular people (ethno)” (Lambert, Glacken, & McCarron, 2011, p. 17).

However, a well-defined, fixed, and shared meaning of ethnography does not exist (Atkinson, Coffey, Delamont, Lofland, & Lofland, 2010; Hammersly & Atkinson, 2007; Savage, 2006). Part of the underlying complexity in defining ethnography is its adoption and development in both anthropology and sociology (Hammersly & Atkinson, 2007). Further, Savage (2006) contends that the absence of an established definition has limited the adoption of this method in health research.

Meaning, context, process, knowledgeable actors, and rational actors are fundamental ideas that underpin any use of ethnography (Atkinson & Pugsley, 2005; Goodson & Vassar, 2011). The meanings within social life are the essential focus of ethnography (Atkinson & Pugsley, 2005). Individuals' social lives are guided by cultural understandings, meanings, and interpretation as they engage in multiple contexts with one another and the outside world. Atkinson and Pugsley contend that ethnography has a process orientation where social existence, meaning, and identity are constantly open to discussion and change.

Context is an important element of ethnography, as meaning and understanding are bound in context. Within this context individuals are both knowledgeable and rational actors. That is individuals within a culture are knowledgeable about the elements that are essential to their context. This socialized individual knowledge may be part of a broad repertoire of competencies and skills that are shared across a particular culture. Knowledge is often *tacit*, that is individual members of a culture may not be consciously aware of the rules, values, and conventions of a culture but their rational actions are guided by them daily (Atkinson & Pugsley, 2005).

The origin of ethnography can be traced to early anthropological research (Hammersly & Atkinson, 2007). Researchers were interested in describing the social life

of a community or culture, often in remote locations (Cruz & Higginbottom, 2013; Hammersly & Atkinson, 2007). Early 19<sup>th</sup> century ethnographic research involved prolonged engagement by anthropologists in ‘other’ cultures to “document and interpret their distinctive way of life, and the beliefs and values integral to it” (Hammersly & Atkinson, 2007, p. 1).

Historically, the majority of ethnography has come from a naturalist viewpoint. Underlying naturalism is a commitment to study the social world within its natural setting (Hammersly & Atkinson, 2007; Savage, 2006). Through observations, naturalist ethnographers believe they are able to access reality as it exists in the empirical world. Naturalistic ethnographers attempt to limit inquiry methods that occur in artificial environments such as formal interviews and experimental designs (Hammersly & Atkinson, 2007).

Over time, ethnographers have changed their focus from remote, isolated, and different cultures to culture within local and familiar settings (Lambert et al., 2011). From the 1920s to the 1950s sociologists adopted and developed research methods that shared elements with the ethnographic methods used by early anthropologists (Hammersly & Atkinson, 2007). For instance, sociologists at the ‘Chicago School’ studied the patterns of social life in cities (Hammersly & Atkinson, 2007).

Since the 1960s, the use of ethnography has spread from sociology-based research to other disciplines, and it has become a well-used mode of inquiry worldwide (Hammersly & Atkinson, 2007). Anthropology, sociology, education, midwifery, and medicine have all employed ethnography (Lambert, Glacken, & McCarron, 2011) with some common elements, particularly immersive exploration and a cultural focus, the latter increasingly one of cultural relativism (Atkinson et al., 2010; Lambert et al., 2011).

A growing adherence by contemporary ethnographers to an ontological approach informed by and bound in cultural relativism is noted within the literature (Atkinson & Pugsley, 2005; Hammersly & Atkinson, 2007). Many present-day ethnographers attempt to understand social organization from an emic perspective or “in its own terms” (Atkinson & Pugsley, 2005, p. 230). This focus manifests itself in an attempt by these researchers to “portray people as constructing the social world, both through their interpretations of it and through actions based on those interpretations” (Hammersly & Atkinson, 2007, p. 11).

Immersive exploration is one aspect of ethnographic methodology. It involves the immersion of the researcher in people’s daily existence for a prolonged time, observing what transpires, listening to what is discussed, using informal and formal interviews to ask questions, and collecting meaningful artifacts from people’s daily lives (Hammersly & Atkinson, 2007). The ethnographic researcher develops understandings of cultures of interest by learning about the group of interest and experiencing its cultural existence within the natural setting (Richards & Morse, 2007). This fieldwork consists of gathering information about culture through first-hand observations and experiences rather than in researcher-controlled environments (Lambert et al., 2011; Hammersly & Atkinson, 2007). Data are gathered from multiple sources using multiple approaches. Participant observation, informal interviews, and artifact collection within the cultural setting are typical methods (Atkinson & Pugsley, 2005).

Another aspect of ethnography is an explicit cultural focus. This entails directing attention specifically to culturally bound shared meanings and understandings (Lambert et al., 2011; Wolf, 2010). Researchers using ethnography are interested in exploring “the total way of life of a group and the learned behaviour that is socially constructed and

transmitted” (Wolf, 2010, p. 294). Ethnographers attempt to describe and understand the unique processes situated in the beliefs, values, attitudes, rules, and norms that comprise culture (Wolf, 2010). Lambert et al. (2011) maintain that the ongoing emphasis of ethnography is “describing and understanding the regularities of human social behaviour that implicate cultural processes” (p. 20).

### **Ethnography in Education Research**

Ethnography is a research method that has recognized application to education-focused inquiry and a long history of being utilized in research exploring the cultural knowledge involved in the education of school-aged children (Yon, 2003). Most educational ethnography has been focused on primary and secondary schooling (Trowler, 2013). Early studies from the 1920s to the 1950s were largely centred on the “socialization and enculturation of children in different cultural settings” (Yon, 2003, p.411). This anthropological approach to educational ethnography concentrated on the experience of ‘others’, such as Native Americans, in more dominant cultures of the time (Yon, 2003).

As more sociology-oriented ethnographic approaches developed, educational research using this methodology also shifted focus. Education-related ethnographic questions reflected researchers’ ontological and epistemological commitments, including naturalist, critical social, critical feminist, and realist explorations of education (Yon, 2003). For example, critical ethnography is a popular methodology used by educational researchers to examine social inequalities viewed as systemic within contemporary cultures (Carspecken, 2009).

Underlying the shift in ethnographic explorations of education was a commitment to understanding education and schooling as “lived hegemony and habitus, created and

recreated as culture from within” (Yon, 2003, p.421). Throughout this work curricular culture represented the “vision and practice” of the educational program (Joseph, 2011a, p.20). It included “assumptions about the needs and nature of learners, the role of teachers and instruction, norms about subject matter, learning environments, curriculum planning, and evaluation” (Joseph, 2011a, p.20).

While primary and secondary school-based educational ethnographies have been frequently completed, ethnography has not been frequently used in the exploration of post-secondary education (Pabian, 2014). A limited number of studies examining university education have used an ethnographic approach even though the methodology affords the same possibility of meaningful culturally-based knowledge of curriculum. According to Pabian, in a search of Higher Education Abstracts, 70 studies have used an ethnographic approach while over 2000 have employed other methodologies. As university education shares many key structural elements and roles with education at the primary or secondary level (for instance educators and students, formal curriculum, and curriculum-in-action), why university education researchers are more likely to adopt other forms of research has been questioned (Pabian, 2014).

The use of ethnography within a limited number of studies has successfully allowed university education researchers to broaden inquiry from traditional individually-based experiences to “situated practices” where “the constitution of meaning is occurring, as is the enactment of mutually constructed realities” (Trowler, 2013, p. 3). For example, a seminal study by Nespors (1994) of undergraduate physics and management courses, allowed for an exploration not just of what teachers and students say (interviews) but also what they do (participant observation). Nespors found that the loose structure of curriculum in management courses limited the integration of students into management

as an academic discipline, leading students to focus value only on curricular experience that in their view was bound in learning experiences directly relevant to the real world. This understanding is situated within the mutually constructed reality of students and educators within the management program.

The most current thinking on ethnography in education research holds that curricular inquiry from a cultural view allows for an exploration of “a holistic understanding of education, not only based in planned curricular content, but as experienced or lived in the presence of people and their meanings” (Joseph, 2011b, p. 23). By adopting an ethnographic approach to curricular inquiry, Joseph (2011b) argues that educators can further understand “if there is an overarching vision for education and if a coherent curriculum exists” (p. 34). This approach to curricular inquiry provides evidence to support the creation, planning, and enactment of curriculum that has a vision and coherent approach by understanding how the curricular culture “affirms certain values about knowledge, learning, and conduct” (Joseph, 2011b, p.27). This is an important reason for education researchers to adopt this methodology. To gain further insight into how the formal curriculum is enacted as the curriculum-in-action, relative to important professional values, such as research utilization, a methodology that can access this cultural reality is needed.

### **Ethnography in Medical Education and Nursing Education**

Ethnography has a long standing tradition of providing evidence to inform medical educative practice (Goodson & Vassar, 2011). Early uses of ethnography in medical education included two seminal studies, *The Student Physician* and *The Boys in White* (Goodson & Vassar, 2011). The first study, by Fox, focused on “uncertainty in medical knowledge” experienced by medical students (Goodson & Vassar, 2011, p. 4).



The second study, by Atkinson and Pugsley, focused on medical students' shared challenges and responses. In particular, this work uncovered how students managed high demands "by using selective negligence (only learning vital information)" (Goodson & Vassar, 2011, p.4).

Both studies were influential in that they provided educators with further knowledge of curriculum-in-action and the culturally-based outcomes that medical students experienced. Leung (2002) argued that the most important learning in medical education is bound in the context and culture of the lived curriculum. Ultimately for Leung, it is the curriculum-in-action that influenced student's internalization of values, priorities, and attitudes transforming students into professionals.

Authors have made arguments for the utilization of ethnographic research to study nursing education (Robinson, 2013; Rosenthal, 1989). Rosenthal, a nurse educator, discussed the appropriateness of the ethnographic approach in the exploration of professional education, specifically clinical teaching. While ethnographic methods do have potential, traditional ethnography has not been a popular research methodology within nursing education research (Robinson, 2013). Robinson contends that the limited use of ethnography may be due to a lack of understanding of the approach and its underlying philosophy. One key inhibitor may be a misunderstanding of what culture is understood to be, with traditional definitions associated with race and ethnicity limiting the application of ethnography to culture as shared professional values, attitudes, norms, and practices that apply to professional nursing (Robinson, 2013).

One example of a traditional ethnography used to examine undergraduate nursing education is Holland's (1999) study exploring students' experience of the transitional journey from student nurse to qualified nursing professional. Students progressed through

three states as they experienced their undergraduate education. The students moved from becoming a student nurse, being a student nurse, and becoming a qualified nurse. Holland found that these states were not well defined, and that a lack of role clarity inhibited students' ability to progress. The use of ethnography by this study allowed for insights into the curriculum-in-action and the culturally-based outcomes of formal curriculum.

Traditional anthropological studies with prolonged engagement and broad research questions, such as Holland's study, were rarely completed within nursing educative research. Methodologies that fall under the ethnographic methodology but do not follow traditional (interpretive epistemology and prolonged engagement) methods were much more frequently found. These methodologies included institutional ethnographies, critical ethnographies, and focused ethnographies. Each of these methodologies share a more concentrated approach to the development of research questions, emphasizing more specific research questions, that in turn reduce the need for the prolonged engagement of traditional ethnography. Both institutional and critical ethnographies begin with research questions centering on power inequities and focused ethnography begins with questions focused on a predetermined topic of interest. This more specific form of ethnography, without the prolonged engagement and with a focused approach to the research purpose, seems to have a better fit with the current needs of educational researchers asking detailed questions about education.

### **Focused Ethnography**

In nursing research, focused ethnography has emerged as an accepted and promising methodology to explore more specific culturally-based issues or shared experiences (Cruz & Higginbottom, 2013). Focused ethnography allows for a closer examination of a predetermined topic of interest (Morse & Richards, 2002). In lieu of the

prolonged contact with a culture of interest that is associated with traditional ethnography, researchers undertaking focused ethnography approach data collection with specific interests in mind, allowing for more efficient and concentrated exploration of cultural perspectives.

Focused ethnography is characterized by short-term field visits combined with intensive data collection through interviews, document analysis, and observation as well as concentrated data-analysis (Knoblauch, 2005). The shorter time period of field visits, when compared to traditional ethnography, is compensated for by intensive data collection with multiple data sources that produces a large amount of data (Knoblauch, 2005) and concentration on specific complex issues, including “cultural perspectives, behaviour, and social context” (McElroy et al., 2011, p. 19). The shorter research period and ability to research specific elements fits well with education research emphasizing the examination of specific elements of the educational process. Important elements of nursing curricula can be specifically explored through this method, in turn providing evidence to support the further development of curriculum.

### **Focused Ethnography in Nursing Education Research**

A comprehensive search of health and education databases was undertaken to identify studies that used a focused ethnographic approach to examine elements of undergraduate baccalaureate nursing curricula. This search led to the identification of two research teams that collectively have published five articles regarding their work. One study by another group of authors was identified. These publications illuminate the appropriateness and utility of this type of inquiry to the unique culture of nursing education.

Focused ethnography was used by Sedgwick and Yonge (2008a) to explore the norms, values, beliefs, and behaviours that influenced socialization during a rural hospital-based clinical experience for fourth-year students. For the purposes of this article, Sedgwick and Yonge looked at the theme of student preparation for rural hospital preceptorship that emerged from a larger socialization study. A purposive sample of students (n=12) and preceptors (n=6) participated in individual semi-structured interviews. A second interview was completed by six students and one preceptor. Student journals, completed during the clinical placement experience, were collected. In addition, focus groups were conducted with staff members at the hospital involved with the study. Data from these sources were analyzed to better understand students' sense of their preparedness to engage the rural clinical practice setting. Students' understanding of their preparedness largely focused on their conception of rural clinical environments as requiring broader and more varied practice knowledge and skills, and more individual responsibility, initiative, and confidence. The largest challenge identified by students was determining the skills and knowledge that they would need within the rural clinical setting. Sedgwick and Yonge concluded that the broad and varied practice experience in rural settings makes it challenging for students to prepare for these clinical placements and suggested that undergraduate nursing programs should adopt stringent selection criteria for students applying to rural preceptorships. Students should also attend site visits before the placement to support student success.

In a second publication, based on data from the same larger study, Sedgwick and Yonge (2008b) examined students' sense of belongingness within the rural clinical experience. A purposive sample of students (n=12) and preceptors (n=6) participated in individual semi-structured interviews. A second interview was completed with five of the

12 students and one of the six preceptors. A focus group was also completed with a hospital manager and staff members. Data was also collected through the analysis of student journals that were a part of a course assignment. These data sources were analyzed to better understand students' sense of belongingness in the clinical practice setting. Students' sense of belongingness was shaped by factors including: student characteristics, clinical relationships, and the climate of the unit. Sedgwick and Yonge reported that daily safe and comfortable interaction between students and nurses who supported their work towards becoming a team member was a key element of developing a sense of belongingness. As nurses created relevant learning opportunities and provided an insider's perspective of the unit's routines, students were exposed to the cultural norms, values, and beliefs unique to the clinical practice setting. The researchers concluded that belongingness supports learning and ultimately assists in preparing students for work readiness in the role of a nurse.

In a third publication by Sedgwick and Yonge (2009) based on a subset of data from this same data set, focused ethnography was used to examine undergraduate nursing students' experiences and perceptions of faculty involvement in rural hospital clinical. Using a purposive sample of undergraduate nursing students (N=12), Sedgwick and Yonge explored both the implicit and overt aspects of the preceptorship experience through interviews addressing the preceptorship experience. They found that nursing students felt a lack of meaningful faculty support and engagement in their preceptored rural setting and felt isolated in the rural environment. Meaningful engagement and evaluation for students meant that faculty should be able to provide support in making connections with staff in the clinical environment and provide informed feedback about students' performance. Students felt both of these elements were limited because of the

lack of presence and communication from faculty. Given these insights, Sedgwick and Yonge suggested changes, including the meaningful presence of faculty both in the clinical environment and through focused and ongoing communication with the students and preceptors.

Harder, Ross, and Paul (2013a) examined the experience of teaching in the simulated clinical experience in a focused ethnographic study using a purposive sample of 20 simulation experience instructors. Two instructors agreed to individual interviews and 18 participated in one of two focus groups. All participants agreed to have researchers observe their instruction during a simulated clinical experience activity. Harder, Ross, and Paul found that instructors felt that a lack of confidence and comfort shaped their ability to teach effectively in simulated clinical experiences. Many instructors identified a lack of knowledge regarding the role of the instructor as well as a need to further understand educational theory and teaching strategies as applied to the simulated clinical experiences. Further, the instructors connected these deficits with what they perceived as a reduction in both student engagement in the learning process and learning outcomes. The findings illustrate culturally-bound understanding and experience of the instructor's role within the simulated learning experience.

These authors also used focused ethnography to examine students' perceptions of learning in a simulated clinical experience (Harder, Ross, & Paul, 2013b). The authors wanted to further understand the culture of learning in simulated clinical experiences within undergraduate nursing education. A total of 84 students were purposively selected to participate in the study, which included observations of simulated clinical experiences, interviews, and document analysis of reflective journals. The use of focused ethnography produced a rich description of the culturally-bound process of learning within simulated

clinical experiences, an element of the curriculum-in-action. Participants described variable understandings of the multiple roles, learning processes, and learning outcomes within the simulated clinical experience. Enacting the nurse's role in these simulation experiences was most clearly connected by students to meaningful learning. Other roles, such as observer, were inconsistently understood by students in relation to role expectations, performance requirements, and the potential for learning. Based on their findings, Harder, Ross, and Paul recommended that both roles and learning outcomes for clinical simulation experiences be clearly defined and articulated for students. Such a recommendation aligns with an appreciation of the need to more clearly articulate expectations to purposefully shape the cultural reality of the curriculum-in-action.

Finally Spiers et al. (2014) used a focused ethnography to explore the "experience trajectories" (p. 1463) of nurses who graduated from an undergraduate program utilizing Problem Based Learning (PBL). This research focus arose from a larger study that explored the perspectives of graduates relative to the contribution of PBL to their professional practice development. A theoretical sample of nurses who graduated from a PBL undergraduate program (N=45) participated in semi-structured and focus group interviews. Spiers et al. wanted to understand why some students adapt to and welcome PBL while others reject the approach and why some students are able to become independent, a key stage of intellectual development for PBL, and others are not. Participants described varied levels of valuing and understanding of PBL within the cultural context of PBL undergraduate programs. Overall the process of completing the PBL program was described as "taking control of your learning" reflecting the incremental nature of how participants came to "comprehend, harness and employ PBL processes to a greater or lesser extent so that they flourished or floundered" (p. 1465).

These studies illustrate the utility of focused ethnography in furthering an understanding of the embeddedness of curriculum, and in particular, the curriculum-in-action as a cultural reality. The researchers used focused ethnography to explore specific elements of undergraduate curricula, thereby facilitating the examination of the culturally-bound meanings and outcomes of programmatic and formal curricular planning in undergraduate nursing education. Rural hospital clinical experiences, simulated clinical experiences, and experiences throughout an undergraduate program were examined and cultural understandings were elicited from the perspectives of students and educators. The work of these researchers illustrates the merit of focused ethnography as a methodology for the creation of evidence to inform the planning, development, and revision of curriculum relative to the unique cultural contexts examined. More specifically, their use of focused ethnography generated knowledge regarding the cultural realities of key elements of undergraduate curricula and concomitant curriculum-in-action such as rural clinical experiences, simulated learning experiences, and experiences with PBL.

### **An Exemplar Illustrating the Methodology and Methods of Focused Ethnography**

To illustrate the use of focused ethnography as a methodology, a detailed description of select elements of a recently completed study in nursing undergraduate education is presented. The elements addressed include purpose, background, context, methodology, sample, data collection, data analysis, and findings.

#### **Purpose**

Focused ethnography was chosen to elicit an interpretive understanding of acculturation to research utilization as enacted by students and educators in one nursing



education curriculum. The research explored the social construction of relationships, understandings, experiences, and norms that make up the interactions and transactions of research utilization within the curriculum-in-action across educational contexts and experiences in the third and fourth year of a four-year, integrated, undergraduate university nursing program.

## **Background**

*Research utilization*, the use of research findings in any and all elements of nursing practice at the individual and organizational level was identified as the specific focus of inquiry because of the high valuing of evidence-based practice in nursing (Estabrooks, 1998; Profetto-McGrath, Smith, Hugo, Patel, & Dussault, 2009) and the limited research exploring acculturation to research utilization in undergraduate education. In the interest of fulfilling their public accountability, professional and governmental organizations responsible for nursing education and professional practice in Canada require the incorporation of research into practice (Canadian Nurses Association (CNA), 2010). Educating students to successfully enact this professional competency thus should be an integral element of the preparation of nurses through undergraduate curricula (Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing (CASN), 2005). To be able to function as professional nurses, students need the requisite knowledge, the skills, and importantly, the values, attitudes, and norms to practice ethically, morally, and in conjunction with established and emerging standards throughout their careers (Johnson, Cowin, Wilson, & Young, 2012).

Acculturation is the process of learning and internalizing the value systems, attitudes, norms, and behavioural patterns of a profession (du Toit, 1995; Rush, McCracken, & Talley, 2009). The development of professional practice in relation to key

values, attitudes, and norms such as research utilization relies of the acculturation process (du Toit, 1995; Rush et al., 2009). Nursing students are acculturated to the profession through the formal curriculum and concomitant curriculum-in-action. In undergraduate nursing programs, the educational contexts, educators, and learning experiences combine in the acculturation students to their professional role (Johnson et al., 2012). The combination of these elements forms the curricular culture that plays a key role the formation of professional values, attitudes, and norms (Johnson et al., 2012).

The curricular culture is revealed in “the belief systems, everyday behaviours and interactions, the artifacts that participants create, the use people make of time, and the allocation of decision-making power” (Joseph, 2011a, p. 20). Within nursing education, this culture ought to reflect the professional values, attitudes, and norms educators wish students to develop. Values, attitudes, and norms underlying enactment and experience of curricular culture should be developed in a deliberate and intentional pattern of “planning, practices, and evaluation” (Joseph, 2011a, p. 20).

### **Context**

As research knowledge and research utilization are emphasized within such institutions, a research-intensive school of nursing was chosen for the study. Theoretically, the prioritization of research within research-intensive institutions is most apt to constitute a context in which research knowledge and utilization are part of the everyday educational culture. Research and the integration of research to inform and influence practice were identified as key components of the philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of the chosen program. In the third year of the program, two research courses focused on developing students’ abilities to become consumers of nursing research, a key step in the overall goal of developing nurses who can engage in research

utilization. Both courses focused on the knowledge and skill development for nursing research utilization in practice. Within such an environment, students and educators may be aware of and experience the enactment of the acculturation of nursing research within their educative experience.

### **Methodology**

Focused ethnography was used to explore the acculturation of nursing students to research utilization. Culture is a process, dynamic in nature, bound contextually within “historical, social, political and economic lenses” (Gregory, Harrowing, Lee, Doolittle, & Sullivan, 2010, p.1). Culture has an organic living nature, and is a process that is ever-changing and evolving (Gregory et al., 2010). In constructivist ontology, culture is understood to be socially constructed concept, multifaceted, dynamic, and bound in the lived understanding of individuals (Gregory et al., 2010). Applying this understanding in this study meant exploring culture and acculturation across multiple educational contexts and with the multiple individuals who construct meaning and enactment within a curriculum-in-action.

### **Sample and Sampling Strategy**

A diverse purposive sample of the environments, documents, contexts, and participants involved in teaching and learning across the curriculum was explored to uncover the acculturation of nursing students to research utilization in an undergraduate curriculum-in-action. The classroom, the simulated practice experience, and the practice experience were the three major teaching environments. The curriculum-in-action was made up of the transactions and interactions that occur within each of these settings. Students and educators were therefore observed in these environments, and interviewed about their experiences, knowledge, feelings, values, and opinions across these

educational contexts. Observations were completed in three research course classrooms, two nursing theory classrooms, two laboratory-based simulated laboratory practice experiences, and one practice experience in the hospital lasting for a total of approximately 35 hours. Ten individuals participated in the semi-structured interviews. Participants included classroom educators of the third-year research courses (n=4) and a nursing theory course (n=1), a fourth-year nursing theory course professor (n=1), educators in the simulation laboratory, (n=2), and a practice experience educator (n=1). Only one student consented to a formal interview. The curricular documents that shaped these experiences were also reviewed. Curricular documents included all undergraduate nursing course syllabi and the program manual.

### **Data Collection Methods**

Data were collected in three ways: interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Two types of interviews were conducted: semi-structured interviews with key informants and informal interviews conducted during the course of participant-observations. In the semi-structured interviews, participants were asked open-ended questions from a researcher-designed interview guide to elicit discussion of how they experienced values, attitudes, beliefs, norms, and practices related to research utilization. Informal interviews took place during observations in classroom, laboratory, and clinical settings. These interviews were spontaneous, informal conversations with students in the course of the clinical experience (Hammersly & Atkinson, 2007). Informal interviews focused on further exploration of the researcher's related to the enactment of acculturation of research utilization within the particular educational setting.

Participants were observed in the classroom environments of third-year and fourth-year research and theory courses. Groups of fourth-year students were also

observed during conferences preceding simulated practice experiences, during the experiences, and during de-briefing. Student-educator interactions were observed throughout the practice experience and during practice-related post-conferences in an acute-care practice setting. Field notes, comprised of detailed analytic accounts of observations about the interactions and transactions between students and educators that included “speech rendered in a manner that approximates to a verbatim report” were recorded during these field visits (Hammersly & Atkinson, 2007, p.145). These “situated vocabularies” provide valuable insight into the social construction of reality (Hammersly & Atkinson, p.145). Field notes also included “descriptions of social interactions and the context in which they occurred” (Montgomery & Bailey, 2007, p.67). Non-verbal behaviour was reported in “relatively concrete terms” (Hammersly & Atkinson, 2007, p.145).

Curricular documents, specifically, all undergraduate nursing course syllabi and the program manual, were examined for data relevant to education theory and philosophy related to research utilization, as well as cultural attitudes, values, beliefs, and norms.

### **Data Analysis**

Data from curricular documents, interview audiotapes, and field notes were transcribed verbatim and entered as textual data for management using N-Vivo (Version 10). Line-by-line reading of transcribed data led to the creation of initial codes that categorized key phrases and recurring topics. Initially-coded data were then compared and contrasted to identify and develop preliminary data categories. As new data were acquired, the categories and developing themes were further analyzed to generate a theoretical understanding (Lofland, 2006) of the enactment of norms, shared values, and explicated goals for students learning, constituent elements of acculturation to research

utilization. Thick descriptions of context and themes, along with peer review (Kuzel & Like, 1991) of the coherence and cohesion of the interpretation by the thesis advisory committee promoted authenticity. A comprehensive audit trail was maintained to enhance the epistemological integrity of the interpretations, recommendations, and conclusions arising from the data.

In summary, the methods of this study reflect a commitment to understanding the cultural enactment of curriculum (the curriculum-in-action) within an educative program. The focused ethnographic methodology and methods allowed for an exploration that examined multiple data sources required to explore the complexity of undergraduate curriculum and, most importantly, curriculum-in-action. Specifically, the use of this methodology and methods allowed for an exploration of the acculturation to research utilization that furthers an understanding of both the curriculum and curriculum-in-action within an undergraduate nursing program.

### **Considerations**

In this final section suggestions and important considerations for future researchers using focused ethnography to examine undergraduate nursing curriculum will be discussed. To begin, researchers need to consider that the utilization of the focused ethnographic methodology fits with a particular view of education and curriculum. Researchers need to carefully consider whether the questions that they have are appropriately explored by focused ethnography. The use of focused ethnographic methodology and methods centers on an understanding of curriculum as being culturally-based in a socially-constructed, multifaceted, and dynamic form (Gregory et al., 2010). Research questions that reflect this understanding will largely focus on cultural enactment. That is, focused ethnography is particularly applicable to the exploration of

the cultural enactment of formal curricular planning, goals, vision, and commitments (Joseph, 2011b). By employing focused ethnography, researchers can develop an understanding of the situated practices and constitution of meaning that occurs in the cultural enactment of formal curriculum; the curriculum-in-action (Trowler, 2013).

Researchers need to consider that this type of research has a process focus. For example, the findings of the example study addressed the unintentional enactment of the acculturation to research utilization, a cultural process. The appeal of using focused ethnography is that evidence created allows for a further understanding of the cultural processes or enactments that happen within the curriculum-in-action. With these findings educators then have insight into the cultural experience of the enactment of curriculum and can shape these important experiences for students. For instance, changing an unintentional approach to the acculturation of research utilization is easier when educators have insight into what makes up this unintentional approach and can change curriculum to reflect the need for a coherent approach to both the meaning and enactment of research utilization. Educators need to carefully consider whether their research questions reflect a cultural understanding of curriculum and a needed focus on enactment of curriculum within the curriculum-in-action.

The education of undergraduate nursing students related to professional values, attitudes, and norms is an area of research that fits well with focused ethnographic research. The acculturation of multiple values should be a recognized goal of undergraduate nursing education connected with professional nursing competencies. To practice competently as professional nurses, students need to develop professional knowledge, skills, and values (Johnson et al., 2012).

Values, attitudes, and norms such as safety, accountability, caring, honesty, integrity, and research utilization are outlined in the competencies for professional nurses (College of Nurses of Ontario, 2014). As such, understanding the situated practices and constitution of meaning relative to these professional values, attitudes, and norms in the undergraduate nursing programs is an important area of research. Students' acculturation to these values, attitudes, and norms is embedded and enacted in the curriculum-in-action as a cultural reality. Examining this reality through focused ethnography can help programs develop formal curriculum and concomitant curriculum-in-action that is coherently and intentionally focused on the acculturation of these key values, attitudes, and norms across curricular environments and with multiple educators. Students will develop professional values, attitudes, and norms. It is the responsibility of the undergraduate nursing programs to ensure that these values, attitudes, and norms reflect programmatic goals and professional competencies. Evidence from focused ethnographic research exploring values, attitudes, and norms in undergraduate curriculum can support this responsibility.

The scope of the researchers' area of interest or research questions is another important consideration for potential researchers. Focused ethnography allows for a close examination of a predetermined and specific topic of interest (Knoblauch, 2005; Morse & Richards, 2002). The specificity of the area of interest needs particular consideration. The formation of professional values, attitudes, and norms, for instance, is an area of research in undergraduate curriculum that fits with the cultural enactment foundational to focused ethnography. Professional values, attitudes, and norms in general, however, are too broad to warrant a focused ethnographic study. The researcher needs to focus on elements that warrant further research but are not so broad that they would be not feasible for focused



study. Traditional anthropological ethnography, with its prolonged engagement would be better suited to the exploration of the cultural enactment of the multiple values, attitudes, and norms that make up professional practice education in the undergraduate program. An element of professional values, attitudes, and norms such as the acculturation to research utilization has a better fit with the specificity of this type of ethnography.

The cultural context of focused ethnography is a key focus for educational researchers. If researchers are interested in exploring the enactment of particular values, attitudes, and norms it is imperative that they purposefully strategize about what type of program and curricular culture they need to access. In the example study, a research-intensive school of nursing was chosen given that research knowledge and research utilization are emphasized within such institutions. The setting was thought to allow for a focused exploration of acculturation related to research utilization.

Researchers completing a focused ethnography of curricular culture also need to account for the complexity of the curriculum-in-action and the diverse actors and contexts that shape cultural learning. Such an account needs to be sensitive to the interactions and transactions between educators and students that occur across curricular contexts. Researchers need to take time to first define the values and concepts of interest and think about how they will access data to inform their examination. Researchers need to carefully identify the important cultural actors who create and enact culturally-bound understandings and meanings and environments in which these cultural interactions and transactions occur. Data then needs to be collected from each of these important sources.

Researchers need to consider that the curriculum-in-action is the key to understanding enactment. Both the informal interviews and field notes from observations of the enactment moments help to further inform ideas that come out of the formal

interviews and curricular documents. In the example study, educators talked about how they enacted commitments to the integration of research utilization. Being able to observe the interactions and transactions reflective of these commitments is invaluable within this methodology. It was the curriculum-in-action observations that led to the understanding of the unintentional curricular approach found in the sample study. While the formal curricular documents did have multiple definitions and enactments that fit with research utilization, it was the observation of the different enactments and understandings of the acculturation to research utilization across multiple contexts that reinforced this cultural conception of the curriculum-in-action. Researchers need to ensure that their data collection methods allow for the collection of data that permits insight into the curriculum-in-action.

Accessing multiple curricular environments for observation is a challenge within focused ethnography. From a pragmatic viewpoint researchers need to contact individuals who can help the researcher gain access to the educational environments, educators, and students. Rich and varied data sources are needed, and as such each important educational environment should be accessed and participants from different areas need to be included. In the example study, students were difficult to access for formal interviews but did participate in informal interviews during observations. Decisions need to be made about what environments will and will not be included. In the example study, research courses begin in the third year of the program. Therefore, data was collected in the third and fourth years of the program across multiple educational environments with the idea that enactments of the acculturation to research utilization could be accessed. Not all environments and educators of a program will be able to be accessed in a focused ethnography, so researchers to think about with whom and where to access data to further

understand the enactment of interest. Applying this understanding in the example study meant exploring culture and acculturation across multiple educational contexts and with the multiple individuals who construct meaning and enactment within a curriculum-in-action but only in the third and fourth years of the program.

### **Conclusion**

Focused ethnography is a methodology that holds the potential of helping researchers and educators better understand undergraduate nursing curricula and in particular, curricula-in-action. Use of this methodology can elucidate meaningful understandings of what happens in the enactment of formal curricula in the curriculum-in-action. This paper presents an overview of ethnography in general and focused ethnography within the context of nursing. In particular, the history, use, constituent elements, nature of findings, and potential utility of this methodology for nurse education researchers are addressed.

Key insights that add to the literature on focused ethnography in nursing education include an enhanced understanding of the fit between the multiple contexts, complexity, and cultural view of undergraduate nursing educational programs and focused ethnography. At its root an undergraduate nursing program is a culture that guided by the formal curriculum and enacted in the curriculum-in-action, accultures students to professional values, attitudes, and norms such as research utilization. The acculturation of values, attitudes, and norms that form professional nursing practice is an essential outcome of undergraduate nursing education (Curtis, Horton, & Smith, 2012; Johnson et al., 2012; Maben, Latter, & Clark, 2007).

This paper outlines not only the cultural foundation of curriculum but also lays out the arguments for using focused ethnography to examine this culture. Nurse educators

have a responsibility to help students develop a professional values, attitudes, and norms that reflect professional competencies. Values, attitudes, and norms such as research utilization, safety, accountability, and collaboration need to be included throughout undergraduate nursing programs in order that students understand and internalize them into their professional practice (CNA, 2010). Given the cultural make-up of a nursing program and complex and multifaceted learning environments, inclusion, however, is not enough. Educators need to understand how these important values, attitudes, and norms are enacted and accultured within the curriculum-in-action. Developing evidence to support the creation of informed curricular acculturation of values, attitudes, and norms is needed.

Any of the values, attitudes, and norms included in the professional competencies would be excellent research topics within undergraduate curricula. For example, how the acculturation of safety, collaboration, or accountability is enacted within the curriculum-in-action would create evidence to inform curricula that need to integrate these values, attitudes, and norms. The outline of focused ethnographic methodology and associated methods that are well suited to the task of creating such evidence are provided in this paper.

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## CHAPTER 4

### RESEARCH FINDINGS

Research utilization, the application of research findings in all individual and organizational elements of nursing practice (Estabrooks, 1998; Profetto-McGrath, Smith, Hugo, Patel, & Dussault, 2009), is an integral part of effective nursing practice and should be a key focus of undergraduate nursing education. The integration of research evidence by nurses has been linked to better outcomes for patients, increased cost-effectiveness, enhanced accountability, and transparent decision-making (Canadian Nurses Association (CNA), 2010).

Despite the acknowledged benefits of research-based nursing practice and an ever-increasing availability of research findings, the under-utilization of research by nurses is an ongoing concern (Forsman, Gustavsson, Ehrenberg, Rudman, & Wallin, 2009; Squires, Estabrooks, Gustavsson, & Wallin, 2011; Thompson, Moore, & Estabrooks, 2008) and integrated into nursing practice in a “at best, slow, and haphazard” manner (Squires, Estabrooks, Gustavsson, & Wallin, 2011, p. 2). Consequently, the nursing care provided to patients may not be the most current and beneficial (Squires et al., 2011).

Given the deficiencies in the integration of research in the face of established professional competencies for evidence-informed practice, the determinants of research utilization is an ongoing area of investigation within nursing (Squires et al., 2011). To facilitate research utilization post-graduation, Estabrooks (2009) contends that the underlying complex and socially bound causes of this research-practice gap need to be considered within undergraduate nursing curricula. Further, Spiers, Paul, Jennings, and Weaver (2012) suggest that nursing education programs need to generate and implement

curricula to support students in overcoming cultural and contextual challenges to research utilization while helping them develop related knowledge, values, and efficacy needed to effectively use research in their practice. The shared values, attitudes, norms, and goals of research utilization within undergraduate learning experiences by both faculty and students, however, are not yet clearly understood. Therefore, a focused ethnography was undertaken to explore the enactment of acculturation in research utilization within a nursing education curriculum-in-action.

### **Background and Significance**

The professional and governing organizations responsible for nursing education in Canada require the incorporation of research into practice (CNA, 2008; Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing (CASN) 2005). The CNA (2008) *Code of Ethics* specifies that nurses “support, use, and engage in research and other activities that promote safe, competent, compassionate, and ethical care” (p. 9). To meet the research-focused accreditation competencies, baccalaureate nursing programs are expected to provide a foundation for understanding and commitment to, research utilization (Squires, et al., 2011). CASN, which accredits nursing education programs, stipulates that educational environments and experiences should help to create nurses who engage in evidence-based quality patient care.

To date, professional expectations which foster understanding and implementation of research in practice are not strongly reflected in nursing research findings (Forsman et al., 2009). Rather, researchers have identified that nurses rely predominantly on social interaction and experience as sources of practice knowledge (Baessler et al., 1994; Estabrooks et al., 2005; Estabrooks, Chong, Brigidear, & Profetto-McGrath, 2005).

Complex and multifaceted educational strategies are required if graduates are to meet professional obligations. Students need knowledge and skills to deconstruct and implement research evidence, and attitudes and values that motivate doing so within healthcare contexts (Estabrooks, 2009).

Acculturation, the process of learning and internalizing the value systems, attitudes, norms, and behavioural patterns of the profession, is foundational to developing of professional practice in relation to research utilization (du Toit, 1995; Rush, McCracken, & Talley, 2009). Similar to professional socialization, the process of acculturation focuses on the development of professional behaviours. It is important to understand the similarities and differences between these processes as professional socialization is more widely used by researchers in the examination of the development by students of professional values and behaviours (Dinmohammadia, Payrovi, & Mehrdad, 2013). Socialization centers on the influence of social impacts particularly educational environments, role models, clinical educators, and current nursing professionals during student formative experiences (Condon & Sharts-Hopko, 2010; Henderson, 2002; Rush et al., 2009). Professional acculturation shares a focus on the experiences and process of student development, similar to professional socialization. The centrality of culture to the acculturation process differentiates professional acculturation from professional socialization. The culturally grounded interactions and transactions between and among the students, educators, and other individuals within the educational context are specifically attended to within professional acculturation. Nursing students are acculturated to the profession through the formal curriculum and concomitant curriculum-in-action.

The curricular culture is revealed in “the belief systems, everyday behaviours and interactions, the artifacts that participants create, the use people make of time, and the allocation of decision-making power” (Joseph, 2011, p. 20). Within nursing education, this culture needs to reflect the professional values, attitudes, and norms educators wish students to develop. Values, attitudes, norms, and goals underlying enactment and experience of curricular culture should be developed in a deliberate and intentional pattern of “planning, practices, and evaluation” (Joseph, 2011, p. 20).

Values are the positive orientation to a shared belief, manifested in an individual’s actions (Polk, 1989). Attitudes are the perspectives that guide the behavioural manifestation of values; if a specific value is espoused by a professional then it will be evident in the professional’s proclivity to particular actions (Polk, 1989). Norms are the socially negotiated rules and standards for behaviour that are characteristic of a sociocultural group (Cialdini & Trost, 1998). Norms are the manifestation of values in behaviours and actions (Polk, 1989). Finally goals are the expectations for students ultimately culminating in the “anticipated professional abilities of graduating students” (Iwasiw, Goldenberg, & Andrusyszyn, 2009, p.182). Educators and students within a curricular culture should be able to articulate the educational focus, process, and outcomes for key concepts that are enacted and experienced within values, attitudes, norms and goals (Joseph, 2011).

Although authors have argued for teaching research utilization within curricula (Moch, Cronje, & Branson, 2010; Spiers et al., 2012), the literature investigating the implementation of research utilization education in undergraduate nursing curricula has largely been limited to descriptions of teaching strategies. Many studies address basic research knowledge and/or efficacy in research utilization (August-Brady, 2005; Burke et

al., 2005; Ervin, & Cowell, 2004; Mattila & Erikson, 2007; Morse, Oleson, Duffy, Patek, & Sohr, 1996; Shuster, Learn, & Duncan, 2003), yet fall short in attention to the development of values, attitudes, and behavioral norms required to meet practice standards for research utilization (Estabrooks, 2009; Forsman, Rudman, Gustavsson, Ehrenburg, & Wallin, 2010).

### **Literature Review**

Researchers have reported that individual factors such as educational experiences, professional socialization, involvement in research activities, use of information sources, values, skills, awareness of research, and personal autonomy influence research utilization (Estabrooks, Kenny, Adewale, Cummings, & Mallidou, 2007; Funk, Champagne, Weise, & Tornquist, 1991). However, from a systematic literature review in which structural equation modeling was used to identify individual factors influencing research utilization, Estabrooks (2009) found that “only a positive attitude to research (values), inservice attendance, and the ability to suspend strongly held beliefs were significant” (p.226). She concluded that nursing programs therefore need to understand the process of developing research utilization values, attitudes, and norms.

To date, only 10 studies have addressed the influence of acculturation and/or socialization in general on undergraduate nursing student development. In an exploratory qualitative study with a purposeful sample of clinical instructors (N=7) and graduates (N=7) from an undergraduate program in Australia, Brown, Stevens, and Kermodé (2012) examined the role of clinical educators in student professional socialization. Clinical educators were instrumental in professional socialization by providing access to the learning environment and clinicians, supporting the student learning process, enhancing student sense of belonging and place, and by guiding learning needs. Students

developed strong and positive nursing values through exposure to the culture of nursing within nursing practice experiences guided by clinical educators. Research is needed to understand the impact of cultural learning contexts, other than the practice environment, on socialization and acculturation.

In an ethnographic study with a purposeful sample of precepting staff nurses (N=29) within a Swedish educational context, Carlson, Pilhammar, and Wann-Hansson (2010) explored how clinical practice preceptors affected undergraduate nursing students' development of an understanding of nursing. Researchers focused specifically on knowledge, skills, and values related to competency and being a good nurse. Research utilization was not amongst the values of the nurse.

Condon and Sharts-Hopko (2010) conducted an exploratory qualitative study with a purposeful sample of undergraduate faculty (N=2) and nursing students (N=8) in Japan to examine the process of professional socialization among undergraduate nursing students. The authors found that socialization occurs within the classroom, professional practice, and extracurricular experiences. Students identified the professional practice experiences as the most important learning environment for socialization into the nursing role.

Using a non-equivalent group, pre-test post-test design to study undergraduate nursing students (N=38) from a Southeastern United States baccalaureate program, Rush et al. (2009), assessed the extent to which students participating in different models of clinical teaching perceived their status as insiders, a key aspect of professional socialization. The researchers found that students demonstrated significant changes in self-perceptions as insiders as a result of clinical experiences.



Ware (2008) explored the formation of professional nursing self-concept for undergraduate nursing students. Using grounded theory with a purposeful sample of baccalaureate nursing students (N=15) from the first semester of the 4<sup>th</sup> year of an American nursing program, Ware found that participants formed their self-concept as professional nurses by drawing on knowledge and learning experiences from across the nursing program.

Mackintosh (2006) investigated the development of student nurses' value of caring over time through socialization in an exploratory qualitative study. The purposeful sample included third year undergraduate nursing students (N=16) in a three-year undergraduate nursing program in the United Kingdom. An overall loss of the understanding of caring as integral and important within nursing practice was found by Mackintosh as students progressed through the three-year degree program environments and experiences. This reduced commitment to caring in practice was linked to students' experiences of coping within the professional practice setting that did not often allow for students to practice in a caring way. Mackintosh argued that it would be necessary to focus on values such as caring and patient-focused relationships across educational environments and specifically in the professional practice settings.

In an exploratory qualitative study with a purposeful sample of undergraduate nursing students (N=50) from all four years of an undergraduate program in Canada, Day, Field, Campbell, and Reutter (2005) examined the socialization of students within the four years of the nursing program. Students' images of nursing moved from layperson to professional over the four years. However, the acculturation process in the curriculum-in-action relative to research utilization was not explored.

In a descriptive non-experimental study of first and third-year undergraduate nursing students (N=173) at two Australian universities, du Toit (1995) investigated the exposure to and internalization of normative standards and professional characteristics within the undergraduate curriculum. Students were highly socialized to nursing values and standards over the course of their education. She argued that while professional socialization was identified within nursing curricula, how the actual curriculum-in-action influences these particular cultural processes, requires further research.

Campbell, Larrivee, Field, Day, and Reutter (1994) using an exploratory qualitative study with a purposeful sample of undergraduate nursing students (N=131) from all four years of a Canadian undergraduate program explored how students became socialized into the profession and how their attitudes and values changed through their clinical education experiences. They found that students' professional socialization was enhanced by clinical experiences shaped by the clinical instructors. The authors' findings further reinforce that student development of values, attitudes, and norms occurs across classroom and clinical education environments, in particular within the clinical environment.

Using a three-group, pre- and post-test design with a non-probability convenience sample of nursing students (N=68) enrolled in the final semester, senior clinical preceptorship experience within a southwestern Ontario city, Goldenberg, and Iwasiw (1993) examined the effects this experience on professional socialization. They found that clinical education helps students develop nursing role conceptions that "assist in the resolution of incongruity between student and graduate roles" (p. 13).

Three key findings were articulated in the literature reviewed. First, researchers identified that professional practice experiences have a significant role in the

development of professional values, attitudes, and norms of students (Brown et al., 2012; Campbell et al., 1994; Carlson et al., 2010; Condon & Sharts-Hopko, 2010; Day et al., 2005; Goldenberg & Iwasiw, 1993; Mackintosh, 2006; Grealish & Trevitt, 2005; Rush et al., 2009; Ware, 2008). The development of professional values, attitudes, and norms was investigated and identified throughout the progression of a baccalaureate degree (Brown et al., 2012; Day et al., 2005; Mackintosh, 2006; du Toit, 1995; Ware, 2008). Finally, researchers indicated that the development of values, attitudes, and norms occurs across multiple contexts within the undergraduate curriculum (Campbell et al., 1994; Condon & Sharts-Hopko, 2010; Day et al., 2005; Mackintosh, 2006; Ware, 2008).

Except for one study revealing that acculturation to caring was undermined by exposure to the clinical context (Mackintosh, 2006), research describing the enactment of curricular acculturation processes that are intended to prepare students to meet nursing's professional requirements and commitments to specific professional values, attitudes, and norms was not identified. The culturally-based transactions and interactions that are crucial within the acculturation process also have not been elucidated (Mansour & Porter, 2008; Porter & Mansour, 2003). There is a critical need to extend the evidence base for nursing education (Iwasiw, Goldenberg, & Andrusyszyn, 2005) and a key element in doing so is the investigation of acculturation to research utilization and its related outcomes. The purpose of this focused ethnography, therefore, was to answer the research question: "What is the enactment of acculturation in research utilization within a nursing education curriculum-in-action?"

### **Methodology and Methods**

A focused ethnographic design was used in this study. This methodology was chosen to elicit an interpretive understanding (Knoblauch, 2005) of research utilization

acculturation as enacted by students and educators participating in the social organization of relationships, understandings, experiences, and norms that make up the interactions and transactions in research utilization within the curriculum-in-action. Focused ethnography allows for a closer examination of a predetermined topic of interest (Morse & Richards, 2002) by short-term field visits combined with intensive data-collection through interviews, document analysis, and observation as well as concentrated data analysis (Knoblauch, 2005). When compared to traditional ethnography, the shorter time period of field visits is compensated for by intensive and extensive data collection (Knoblauch, 2005), concentrating on understanding specific complex issues, including “cultural perspectives, behaviour and social context” (McElroy et al., 2011 p. 19).

In this study, the exploration of culture focused specifically on research utilization acculturation across contexts and experiences in the third and fourth year of a four- year, integrated, undergraduate university nursing program. Approval to conduct the study was received from the institutional Ethics Review Board and the Director of the School of Nursing.

### **Context**

A research-intensive school of nursing was chosen because of its emphasis on research knowledge and utilization. Research and the integration of research to inform and influence practice is a key component of the philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of the curriculum. The learning contexts examined were the formal and informal environments in which education transpired, specifically nursing practice settings, classrooms, and the simulation laboratory.

### **Sample and Sampling Strategy**

A diverse purposive sample of the environments, documents, contexts, and participants involved in teaching and learning across the curriculum was explored to uncover the acculturation of nursing students to research utilization. Ten individuals participated in the semi-structured interviews. They included classroom educators of the third-year research courses (n=4) and a nursing theory course (n=1), a fourth-year nursing theory course professor (n=1), educators in the simulation laboratory, (n=2), and a practice experience educator (n=1). Only one student consented to be interviewed. Approximately 35 hours of observations were completed in three research course classrooms, two nursing theory classrooms, two simulated practice experience laboratory, and one practice experience venue. Curricular documents included all undergraduate nursing course syllabi and the program manual.

### **Data Collection Methods**

Data were collected in three ways, semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. In the semi-structured interviews ( $\bar{x}$ =1 hr, range = 45min – 1hr 15min), participants were asked open-ended questions from a researcher-designed interview guide to elicit discussion of how they experience acculturation related to research utilization values, attitudes, norms, goals, and practices within the undergraduate curriculum. Elaborations of observations of the enactment of acculturation of research utilization within the particular setting were also sought.

Participant observations in classroom environments included third-year and fourth-year research and theory courses. Groups of fourth-year students were also observed during conferences preceding simulation experiences, the simulated experiences, and de-briefing. Student-educator interactions and post-conferences were

observed in an acute-care practice setting. Field notes were written during each of the observations. They were made up of detailed descriptions of the interactions and transactions observed between students and educators along with the noted responses of participants to informal questions from the researcher. The field notes included responses between the researcher and participants, educators and students, and students “rendered in a manner that approximates to a verbatim report” (Hammersly & Atkinson, 2007, p.145). The “situated vocabularies” provided in the field notes offered valuable insight into the social construction of reality (Hammersly & Atkinson, 2007, p.145).

“Descriptions of social interactions and the context in which they occurred” were also included within the field notes (Montgomery & Bailey, 2007, p.67). Non-verbal behaviour was described in “relatively concrete terms” (Hammersly & Atkinson, 2007, p.145). The use of field notes afforded the opportunity to observe and note the interactions and transactions within the curriculum-in-action as well as being able to report responses from participants to informal questions about their understandings of these processes.

Curricular documents, specifically, all undergraduate nursing course syllabi and the program manual, were identified. These documents were then examined for data relevant to education theory and philosophy related to research utilization, as well as cultural values, attitudes, norms, and goals.

### **Data Analysis**

Data collection and analysis occurred simultaneously and iteratively (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Data from curricular documents, interview audiotapes, and field notes were transcribed verbatim and entered as textual data for management using N-Vivo (Version 10). Line-by-line reading of the transcribed data yielded initial codes that

identified key phrases and recurring topics. Initially-coded data were then compared and contrasted to identify and develop preliminary data categories. As data categories were developed, burgeoning themes were further explored with participants within subsequent interviews and through informal questions by the researcher during observations. As new data were acquired, the categories and developing themes were further analyzed to generate a theoretical understanding (Lofland, 2006) of the enactment of shared values, attitudes, norms and explicated goals for students learning, constituent elements of acculturation to research utilization.

### **Rigor**

The constituent elements of rigor in qualitative research have a long history of debate (Rolfe, 2006). Researchers agree that defining what makes good, rigorous, trustworthy, and/or valid qualitative inquiry is an essential element of a qualitative study (Sandelowski & Barroso, 2002). While definitive criteria that apply to all interpretive contexts do not exist (Caelli, Ray, & Mill, 2003). Caelli et al. contend that rigorous qualitative studies, at a minimum, articulate a clear approach to rigor based in sound knowledge and theory and select an approach that is congruent with the study philosophy and methodology.

For the purposes of this study trustworthiness was chosen as the overall approach to rigor. Trustworthiness fits with the constructivist ontology and interpretive epistemology (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) that are foundational within focused ethnography (Wolf, 2010). Trustworthiness is based in the confidence that those assessing the study can have in its findings (Rolfe, 2006). Trustworthiness is made up of credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

These four elements of rigor were addressed in the study in the following ways. Credibility was supported by an ongoing process of peer review by the thesis advisory committee to address the coherence and cohesion of data interpretation (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). Throughout the study, concurrent data collection and analysis from multiple data sources allowed for early data categories and themes to be further explored in subsequent interviews and informal questions during observations, further enhancing credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Nelson, 2008). The dependability of the study was promoted as the study progressed by developing an audit trail that included an accounting of the ongoing processes and procedures (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Nelson, 2008). Transferability was enhanced through the inclusion of thick descriptions of context and themes (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Nelson, 2008). Finally, confirmability was addressed through the inclusion in the comprehensive audit trail of the interpretations, recommendations, and conclusions arising from the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Nelson, 2008).

### **Findings**

In this study, the social construction and acculturation of research utilization transpired within the context of unintentional curricular connections in the nursing program in the presence of both articulated and unarticulated curricular values, norms, and goals. Two main sub-themes of the unintentional context and process of research acculturation were identified: the use and role of unintentional curricular language and the variable enactment of values, norms, and goals across educational experiences and contexts.



### The Use and Role of Curricular Language

As artifacts of the curricular culture, clear definitions normally appear in formal curricular documents as part of educators' strategic effort toward acculturation. The specific term, *research utilization*, appeared infrequently in both the formal curriculum, constituted by the syllabi and program manual, and in the curriculum-in-action, constituted by the actions and transactions of educators and students. Several definitions were evident in the data collected. These varied definitions reflected an unintentional context for student acculturation.

The term, *research utilization*, was found in one document, the course syllabus of the third-year research methods course. Commonly associated elements of research utilization were identified and defined including: "knowledgeable consumers of research," "research critique" and "evaluating research." These meanings, however, were not directly (intentionally) connected to research utilization: rather, the norm was to leave students and educators to make the connections.

Multiple terms associated with research utilization were used in all other courses. Use of the terms varied from course-to-course and year-to-year, indicating that variation in the curricular lexicon is a norm. The terminology included: *best practice guidelines*, *empirical knowledge*, *evidence*, *evidence-informed practice*, *evidence-based practice*, *scientific knowledge*, *informed consumer*, and *research*. A connection between these terms and research utilization was not evident in the data collected. The apparent norm was limited articulation of research utilization as a term or concept across the curriculum.

Further, the values, norms, and goals related to research utilization were not clearly articulated within the curricular documents collected. Goals specific to research utilization were not visible in overall curricular objectives. Similarly, norms such as

educative approaches to teaching and learning research utilization were not formally addressed. Values grounded in a shared system of beliefs were not clearly delimited across the formal curriculum, although values are specified in the School's mission statement.

Thus, clarity, purposefulness, and consistency in curricular language about the concept of *research utilization* were not identified across the data collected. This cultural context allows for unintentional contextual processes.

### **Meanings of *Research* within the Curriculum**

Multiple understandings of research were apparent within the curricular context, including: *research as scientific inquiry*, *research as the process of finding existing information*, and *research as information*. These are elaborated in the following subsections.

**Research as scientific inquiry.** One understanding of the meaning of research, apparent in both the research and non-research courses, was the systematic approach to the creation of new knowledge. Research as scientific inquiry was used consistently in the research course formal curriculum artifacts, such as syllabi and learning activities (written guidelines for class preparation), classroom, and by research course educators socially constructing a clearly articulated connection between the term “research” and the scientific creation of new knowledge. Language such as *methods*, *results*, *analyze*, *sample*, and *critique*, common to the process of scientific inquiry, reflected this definition. The norm amongst research course educators was to use this language to provide explanations of acculturation to research utilization:

E3: I think it is a good thing that students are exposed to critiquing research early on in the nursing program.

E4: We're trying, in that particular course, to help our students understand why studying statistics helps them to critically appraise research, and then to use that research in their practice.

Although these participants did not directly define research, through their use of language, they illustrated how they connected research with scientific inquiry within the context of nursing education.

The norm of connecting research with scientific inquiry through choice of language revealed formal curricular goals and values consistent with research utilization throughout curricular documents. Two research course syllabi afforded examples:

Understanding the research process, and being able to interpret the results sections in published research, enables nurses to critically analyze the discussion and implications of research.

The main goal of the course is to prepare baccalaureate level nurses to be knowledgeable consumers of research, that is, to engage in research utilization. The research process must be understood to accomplish this goal. Understanding the research process enables nurses to critically analyze the purpose, methods, and findings of research.

Although, a clear definition of research was not provided, the curricular norm was to use associated terminology such as “results sections,” “critically analyze,” and “purpose, methods, and findings”, creating a common understanding of research as scientific investigation within these research courses. The course-based goal, to have students “engage in research utilization,” was identified.

Participants used the term research as scientific inquiry in the research course classes. One research course professor said:

“When you are reading research you are looking for systematic errors that are going to affect the outcome and whether you believe it's true.”

Language in the research course classroom that connected research to scientific inquiry such as “systematic errors”, “random and convenient samples”, “limitations”, and “data

collection” was commonly used by research-course educators. As such, the educator-student interactions within the research courses and the related curriculum-in-action reflected shared language-based norms and formal goals and values consistent with research utilization.

An understanding of research as scientific inquiry was also evident within the normative language used in educators’ descriptions of their classroom interactions with students in other courses. For example, educators who were involved in facilitating professional practice courses described how they connected research to practice:

E2: I will give examples of my own research and say how this pertains to community, and so they’re getting real stuff or I’ll have readings over and above their text that are research studies that have been done by people who are right here, and I suggest to students that you go see them.

E6: There has been research that’s guided us to see that, with that technique and that medication, there’s no need to aspirate. (From a simulated practice experience educator)

These educators talked about particular research studies and/or specific research knowledge.

Nevertheless, the norm in non-research course syllabi was to include little or no explanation of the associated meaning of the term *research*. The absence of a definition rendered the meaning of the term open to individual educator and student interpretation.

The following excerpts from other course syllabi illustrate this lack of clarity:

This course will explore practice, research, and theory concepts and issues related to health care and nursing in rural and remote settings. (Theory Course – Course Descriptions)

This course facilitates your critical thinking skills and reflective practice through course readings and lectures, class discussions, and application of theory and research to professional nursing practice. (Practice Course – Course Description)

Furthermore, no descriptors were presented to clarify the intended meaning of research.

**Research as the process of finding existing information.** The term *research* also was used to mean the process of locating existing information about a specific subject from a variety of sources. The term *information* within this context involved a broad understanding of knowledge and knowledge sources, including: patient information, medical documents, textbooks, and scholarly journals. This definition of research was evident across artifacts and observed norms in contexts other than the research courses. For example:

E7: They have to prepare, provide client research, and a care plan. [They need to answer:] “What do you expect to be doing today, and what did you need to go look at, look up, and explore in more detail?”

E8: If there’s somebody there that has a personal assistive device to look something up I say, “Let’s research that.” But then I encourage them to go to more platforms that are going to give them much better information.

*Research*, conceptualized as gathering information, was associated with course elements such as preparation for practice and assignment requirements. For example, the following excerpt from a course syllabus illustrates this conceptualization:

Research the nursing academic literature regarding the relevance of each of the determinants of health (2<sup>nd</sup> year nursing theory course syllabus - Assignment outline)

These examples illustrate the colloquial use of the term *research* as a process of information- gathering. References to the process of “looking up” information as being research reflected a normative use of the term.

**Research as information.** The word *research* also was used as a generic term to refer to all information obtained from a plethora of discipline-specific and scholarly literature. These sources included literature reviews, scholarly discussions, textbooks, clinical documentation, and research articles. In response to questions about the nature of research in nursing, study participants articulated a broad and fluid understanding, as

exemplified by the following:

E8: So the students know even from writing their first Reflection on Practice Report that they must provide two documents, two examples of where they went for the research to support their thinking. (Practice Experience Educator)

The norm among educators was to use language open to interpretation such as “literature” or “documents.”

The use of language to represent the meaning of research as a collection of knowledge was also identified across the curriculum in the non-research course syllabi.

For example:

Scholarly research and content - Reference at least four articles from professional nursing and allied health journals. Although web-based information may be used, it must be in addition to journal references. (1<sup>st</sup> Year Theory Course Syllabus – Assignment Outline)

Assignment requires you to identify an issue and examine the research that will help you develop an understanding about the issue. Drawing on the literature, you will present an issue, briefly summarizing information about this issue including the research, identifying the key stakeholders involved in and affected by the issue, and outlining what has been done to address the issue to date. (4<sup>th</sup> Year Theory Course Syllabus – Assignment Outline)

The terms “articles,” “journal references,” “literature,” and “background information” constitute artifacts that include research in such a manner that its meaning was open to interpretation. The presence of these terms was not accompanied by explanatory text that further delineated the meaning of each term. For example, “journal references” may have included various types of articles, without the clear expectation to include scientific inquiry-based nursing research articles. Hence, clarity of the goals and values related to research utilization was not evident within the particular documents collected from these courses.

In summary, the meanings of the term research included scientific inquiry, the

process of finding information, and information itself. These meanings were found across curricular contexts, documents, and in individual explanations provided by classroom and clinical educators. A consistent singular meaning for research as scientific inquiry was identified as a norm only across data related to the research courses of the curriculum. Multiple meanings could be associated with research in the theory courses, simulated practice experiences, and practice experiences of the curriculum. The multiple definitions found within the data collected allowed for the social construction of multiple meanings creating an unintentional context for acculturation to research utilization within the curriculum-in-action.

### **Meaning of *Utilization* within the Curriculum**

The term *utilization* was also used and defined only in the data collected from Research Methods course, as follows;

To critique research about a practice issue/question, to discuss factors that influence the applicability of the research to the practice setting, and to recommend changing practice.

One research course educator provided a definition of utilization that aligned with that of the Research Methods course, stating:

E3: For me, that utilization piece is reading research, it is critiquing research, and implementing research if it is appropriate”.

Another educator, who taught in both nursing theory and research courses, addressed the lack of a formal articulation of *utilization*:

E5: Research utilization is something that should be transparent and visible in the course and I think it’s sort of one of those implicit assumptions. I certainly can’t say that I’ve seen anything formal and we’ve certainly not had those discussions in the course development to make it a transparent piece.

Across the data collected, the norm within the curricular cultural context was limited direct and intentional use of the concept of research utilization, and the terms

*research* and utilization. There was a paucity of clear language connected with these terms, possibly creating a lack of clarity of meaning. The intentional acculturation to curricular values relies on coherency in the experience and presentation of values (Joseph, 2011). A key element of coherency is consistent practices and content that reflects the aims of the curriculum. A multitude of language and concomitant meanings within the curricular culture reflects a challenge to the coherency needed to intentionally acculturate students to required professional values (Joseph, 2011).

### **Enactment of Curricular Norms, Values, and Goals**

Participants enacted multiple curricular norms, values, and goals in assignments, experiences, and cultural dialogue throughout the curriculum-in-action bound in the multiple meanings of research utilization, socially constructed through language.

### **Enactment through Contextual Connection**

Classroom and practice experience educators connected research utilization to nursing practice, enacting the educational goal of having students make this connection. This espoused connection revealed a shared, albeit unarticulated curricular belief that students have the potential to come to understand the fundamental association between research and practice at a novice level. However, normally, in the reviewed data, educators did not describe how students should go about connecting research and practice in an integrated and purposeful manner across the formal curriculum and curriculum-in-action. Articulated teaching strategies were not identified that could intentionally encourage students to critique evidence, determine the applicability of research, and implement research findings in practice. Although most educators conveyed a valuing of the relationship between research and clinical practice in theory courses, their



explanations did not extend to more pragmatic strategies for research utilization acculturation, irrespective of definition. They explained:

E2: In practice we're always basing our decisions that we make, formed by some sort of knowledge that might be coming from formal research studies' findings or from more informal knowledge. So it's engrained in your practice.

E5: We're trying to, in that particular course, help our students understand "why." Understanding statistics helps them understand how to critically appraise research and think about how they can use that research in their practice.

However, participants did not address how their actions within a particular context translated into behavioural norms indicative of acculturation to research utilization. The norm was to link the specific terms "research" and "practice" in the same learning requirement with little identified reference to research utilization or any of its components. For example:

Integrates theory, research and practice (Minimal course requirements in multiple courses)

This course facilitates your critical thinking skills and reflective practice through course readings and lectures, class discussions, and application of theory and research to professional nursing practice. (Theory Course Description)

The norm of using the terms "theory," "practice," "professional nursing practice" and "research" concurrently was apparent within the stated educational goals, course requirements, assignments, and student learning outcomes in the reviewed documents. How to connect research and practice, however, was not articulated within this document data. Strategies for research utilization that were identified focused on using research studies in the context of practice. Specifics of the process of research utilization in professional practice, however, were not addressed. Thus, curricular materials, artifacts generated by individual educators, revealed the potential presence of shared goals and

values consistent with research utilization. However, beyond a connection between terms, explanation of research utilization was not apparent.

In the curriculum-in-action across all the research courses, educators consistently connected *research*, understood as scientific inquiry, to healthcare examples. For example, to engage students in discussion, teachers asked:

“Is that generalizable to a patient with a BP of 180/90?”

“How does workload affect nurses’ stress and burnout?”

The norm for research course educators was to ground their teaching of concepts, methodologies, and theory in examples of nursing practice. Within the multiple sources of collected data, the connection of these examples to the complete process of research utilization within the formal curriculum and any other curriculum-in-action was not readily apparent. Rather, key elements of the research utilization process were experienced throughout the curriculum-in-action without an apparent enactment experience of the complete process. The research utilization process includes asking researchable questions, finding research studies, critically evaluating research studies, implementing research findings in practice, and evaluating the implementation. As such, the enactment of the process elements of research utilization, not identified in the formal curricular documents, relied on individual educators.

### **Enactment through Exemplars**

Exemplars from scientific inquiry were provided within classroom and practice experience learning situations but not in the formal curriculum. It was a norm for classroom educators to expose students to exemplars that demonstrated the potential impact of scientific inquiry on specific nursing practices. In addition, educators within practice settings, exposed students to salient research to facilitate new learning connected

to specific practice experiences. In both contexts, the exemplars were used to elucidate aspects of the connection of research to practice, a key curricular goal and value consistent with research utilization acculturation. Components of the research utilization process, however, were not normally addressed in these examples. Rather, the norm of using exemplars focused on identifying the purpose of research utilization and rationale for nurses' use of research in practice. Exemplars often illustrated how knowledge and practice could change through research utilization. For example, one educator in the laboratory explained: "Research studies have shown that the brain can watch a space to a space, so a watch with hands is better than a digital watch when timing". In another example in the clinical setting, an educator led a discussion about how the decision to use cloth or synthetic gowning should be based in current scientific research.

Although these exemplars represented a strategy to acculture students to research utilization, the 'how' of research utilization was not identified across the data base. Normally, students were not required to situate their development of research knowledge in their self-identified practice problems, questions, environments, or examples. The goal appears to be for students to understand the importance of integrating research utilization into nursing practice, however, not to actively engage in the complete process.

### **Enactment through Experiential Learning**

In this study, experiential learning that facilitated research utilization was apparent in the Report on Reflective Practice (RRP), course assignments, and praxis. Within these learning experiences curricular norms, values, and goals relevant to research utilization were enacted without apparent intention.

**Reports on Reflective Practice.** Study participants stated that RRP's are a valuable approach to promoting student acculturation to research utilization. The overall

purpose of RRP's, identified in the undergraduate program manual was "for students to learn by reflecting on issues identified from their own experiences, [share] these reflections with faculty who, in turn, respond." Thus, educators' beliefs about the role of research utilization in RRP's were not intentionally specified in this curriculum artifact. As such, students' experience of components of research utilization was, at best, serendipitous. The complete research utilization process, inclusive of critical evaluation of relevant research findings to support informed practice was not included in the program manual and the RRP description. However, the norm was to use the RRP as a tool to acculture students to undertake research utilization, as described in the following:

E8: So the students know even from writing their first RRP that they must provide two documents, two examples of where they went to the research to support their thinking. So I look at research as being something that is just probably being taken for granted now in our profession whereas before, not so much.

E2: Students are writing reflective reviews in practice, we're expecting them to give their evidence so they need to get some knowledge of what's evidence and what isn't.

From the first year of the program, students were required to include references to research in their RRP's. Students, however, were not formally introduced to critical appraisal until the third year. Therefore, in the first two years of the program, the shared meaning and routine behavioural strategies embodied in the RRP process may not have involved the critical evaluation of research. The enacted RRP process, without formal connection to critical evaluation of research, relies on individual educator-led integration and teaching of critical evaluation.

E3: I know that they had asked to do Reports on Reflective Practice and that includes incorporating literature and research studies. I don't know how the process is actually enacted until they get to third year and they get their courses in stats and research.

**Course Assignments.** Across the formal curriculum, assignments also normally

stipulated that research utilization was a requirement. For example, in the final year of the program, students were required to reference research articles in the process of examining nursing issues:

This assignment requires you to identify an issue and examine the research that will help you develop an understanding about the issue. Drawing on the literature, you will present an issue, briefly summarizing information about this issue including the research, identifying the key stakeholders involved in and affected by the issue, and outlining what has been done to address the issue to date.

Although students were required to “examine the research” within the context of this assignment, critical appraisal of such research was not specified in the particular curricular documents examined in this study. As a norm, experiential learning expectations did not include research utilization processes within the description of course assignments. Assignment expectations merely guided students to link their practice generally with research.

**Praxis.** In the formal curriculum, praxis was included as the process through which knowledge is generated and practice is guided. Practice experience educators describe in-clinical and post-clinical discussions as part of praxis. Although research was identified as one of four components of knowledge within the curricular descriptions of praxis, research was not explicitly defined within the programme manual and curriculum syllabi. Similarly, the connection between research and research utilization, as a link between knowledge and practice within praxis was not identified. Collectively, these curricular norms meant that research utilization was unintentionally connected throughout praxis opportunities. Students and educators made their own unique connections between research, praxis, and research utilization.

### **Summary of Findings**

The findings of this study illuminate the unintentional curricular connections in the enactment of acculturation to research utilization within one undergraduate curriculum. Multiple definitions, meanings, enactment experiences, and goals relative to the value of research utilization were identified in the program manual, across individual course syllabi, and within the observed curriculum-in-action. Acculturation occurred serendipitously through many different educational experiences that promoted reflection upon research utilization. Such opportunities were most evident within the research courses. Overall, the variation in curricular guidelines regarding research utilization and the diversity of language and meanings associated with research utilization, created a curricular culture where educators were individually responsible for acculturation to this aspect of professional nursing practice.

These findings must be considered within the context of the study limitations. The setting of the study was a single undergraduate nursing program. Additionally, the findings of the study reflect the cultural meanings and enactments found only in the data collected. Data unavailable to the researcher may have revealed other interpretations. Only one practice experience educator participated, and therefore, the full range of enactment activities related to acculturation to research utilization in the practice environment may not have been uncovered. The meanings and enactment in the practice environment should be explored further from the perspective of multiple educators. Moreover, only one student completed the formal interview process. Consequently, the findings largely reflect perspectives of faculty and those who created the curriculum documents. Student attitudes, a key element of acculturation are still an outstanding

knowledge gap. However, the findings may have applicability to nursing education in general.

### **Discussion**

The formal curriculum in undergraduate nursing education is made up of both intentional and unintentional elements. Theoretically, the intentional elements of the curriculum are comprised of foundational concepts and values. Normally, the formal curriculum articulates the intended curriculum-in-action and, ultimately, practices (Coles & Grant, 1985). Routinely, key elements of the curriculum are defined. Essential elements of these definitions include purpose, aims, goals, and situated meanings, illustrating the intentions of the educators involved (Coles & Grant, 1985). As such, the intentional formal curriculum reflects a purposive approach to the teaching and learning process relative to key concepts within the curriculum.

The key elements of an unintentional curriculum and the corresponding curriculum-in-action are bound in serendipity rather than clearly defined and agreed upon understandings in the formal curricular documents (Coles & Grant, 1985). As a result, the intentions of the educators involved are difficult to surmise at a formal level. Further, as part of the serendipitous nature of the unintentional curriculum, the meanings and experiences of concepts are largely bound in educators' philosophies and meaning making (Coles & Grant, 1985). Educators may or may not share similar definitions regarding key curricular concepts and values. They may not even agree on whether a concept or value is important within an undergraduate curricular context. Consequently, while a concept might exist in the curriculum, an unintentional approach will impact the curriculum-in-action and therefore, student experience and learning. Undefined key concepts will be integrated into students' professional values, attitudes, and norms

without a formal definition and delineation of intended outcomes relative to the development of competent and effective professional practice. That is, the lack of definition and articulation of a professional concept or value does not stop its development and integration, but rather, allows for a happenstance development that is bound in student learning experiences associated with the key concept or value. Lack of systematic clarity opens the curricular context to multiple meanings associated with the integration of key concepts and values, attitudes, and norms into student professional practice.

Although research utilization is a key professional competency that educators believe must be accultured and integrated within professional nursing education for students to engage in effective nursing post-graduation, current practice realities suggest that this is not happening (Christie, Hamill, & Power, 2012). The educational practices described in this study constitute potential challenges to professional acculturation to research utilization within nursing education. Findings revealed an overall unintentional rather than intentional execution of research utilization acculturation in both the formal curriculum and the related curriculum-in-action. In the absence of an intentional process, the educational development of practitioners who are able to integrate the value, attitude, and norm of research utilization into their professional practice is questionable.

In contrast, a clearly communicated consistent meaning could lead to a shared understanding of research that fits with research utilization across the curriculum. Study findings suggest the potential for refinement of the curriculum-in-action through intentional use of mutually- agreed definitions, and conscious intentional enactment of curricular values, norms, and goals regarding research utilization.



Research utilization values, attitudes, norms, and goals need to be identified, agreed upon and intentionally enacted clearly and consistently in all facets of the teaching and learning process across all curricular environments. In the absence of intentional and agreed upon curricular values, norms, and goals, the developmental acculturation process, in this instance that of research utilization, becomes serendipitous at best. A clear and shared definition that crosses the formal curriculum is a meaningful first step in this process. Curricular values, attitudes, norms, and goals for the acculturation to research utilization need to be founded in this clear definition.

If research utilization is experienced across educational environments, there could be a positive impact on students' integration of research utilization into their professional values, attitudes, and norms (Christie et al., 2012). That is, if students experience an intentional connection between curricular learning environments, for instance between their research course context and other learning contexts, the development of a belief in their capability relative to research utilization will be enhanced (Forsman, Wallin, Gustavsson, & Rudman, 2012; Wallin, Bostrom, & Gustavsson, 2012). The formation and commitment to a value, attitude, and norm with the opportunity for enactment across curricular experiences will result in an understanding of the complexity of research utilization and belief in one's capability to enact this element of professional responsibility.

In a review of studies of social cognitive theories and healthcare professionals' behaviours, Godin, Belanger-Gravel, Eccles, and Grimshaw (2008) found that capability beliefs and intentions were associated consistently with the performance of specific clinical behaviours. Wallin et al. (2012) contend that it is difficult for students to develop capability beliefs and self-efficacy if they do not have learning experiences that allow for

successful and complete enactment of the research utilization process. They argue that capability beliefs depend on self-efficacy, the personal belief in one's ability to succeed relative to a specific goal or situation (Wallin et al., 2012). A consistent understanding and practice of research utilization, assists students in the development of self-efficacy in research utilization.

The findings of this study have implications for educators relative to their roles and responsibilities for developing and implementing curriculum. Curricular development, implementation, and revision may be strengthened by purposeful attention to professional value, attitude, and norm development. The values, attitudes, and norms integral to students' professional practice need to be identified, defined, and agreed upon by the educators creating and refining nursing program curricula. The mandate of professional education, mediated by the process of acculturation, is to foster the development of professional values, attitudes, and norms (O'Connor, 2007). A commitment to specific values, attitudes, and norms, such as research utilization, relies on coordinated and coherent efforts of individual educators to guide purposeful enactment (Joseph, 2011). In order to support the professional development of students, educators should understand the programmatic shared values, attitudes, and norms, including rationale and strategies for development. Additionally, there ought to be within agreed-upon descriptions or definitions of key curricular concepts (Iwasiw & Goldenberg, 2015), such as research utilization.

The agreed upon values, attitudes, and norms need to be intentionally integrated across courses and learning experiences that make up the curriculum and curriculum-in-action. Such integration should include a leveled approach whereby students are introduced to and experience increasing depth and complexity relative to a particular

value as they progress toward degree completion. Careful and intentional curricular planning needs to be completed in order to ensure that students comprehensively and meaningfully integrate curricular values, attitudes, and norms into their professional practice.

The multiplicity of learning environments and experiences should be constantly reviewed relative to how they inform and enact professional acculturation. Environments and experiences that do not support acculturation to professional values, attitudes, and norms should be eliminated. If elimination is not possible, an intentional approach to helping students successfully critically reflect upon and navigate these experiences, while still developing key professional values, attitudes, and norms, is needed.

Finally, nurse educators are obligated to structure learning components not only to facilitate students' integration of curricular values, attitudes, and norms into their professional practice, but to promote their capacity beliefs relative to value enactment. This is particularly salient given that the acculturation of professional values, attitudes, and norms is not limited to a philosophical commitment, but rather necessitates implementation in nursing practice.

### **Conclusion**

Curricula constitute an introduction to and inculcation into professional nursing culture. Acculturation to research utilization is espoused as an essential component of that culture. Acculturation within a profession, the process of internalization of values, attitudes, and norms is a critical element of undergraduate curricula leading to the development of professional nursing practice (Benner, Sutphen, Leonard, & Day, 2010). As such, the student experience of socially constructed cultural understandings of key nursing values, attitudes, norms, and relevant intentional opportunities for enactment in

undergraduate curricula are crucial for the development of capability beliefs. Professional values, attitudes, and norms and their implementation in praxis are important as they are internalized by students within their undergraduate acculturation and lead to future professional action (Polk, 1989). This study uncovered the enactment of unintentional curricular connections in relation to research utilization.

Students were left to serendipitously develop understandings of research utilization in the context of multiple definitions, variable language, and numerous integration experiences. To acculturate students to research utilization, educators need to agree upon the meanings, values, attitudes, norms, and goals that should be enacted within the learning process and then set out to create an intentional curriculum to acculture students to this process. Future research is needed to further uncover the process of acculturation from a student perspective. While this study exposes the need for the development of curriculum with a clear and agreed-upon focus and approach to key curricular values, norms, and goals it is important that further research explores student attitudes and what students perceive as meaningful within the acculturation process.

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## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION

Professional groups develop cultures made up of knowledge, theory, normative standards, and ethical codes that guide their membership (Almås & Ødegård, 2010; O'Connor, 2007; du Toit, 1995). Shared thoughts, feelings, and behaviors learned formally through educational processes and developed informally through social interaction, constitute the uniqueness of a given professional culture (Polk, 1989, du Toit, 1995). Acculturation is the process of internalization of the values, attitudes, norms, and artifacts of a particular culture (Polk, 1989; du Toit, 1995; Rush, McCracken, & Talley, 2009).

Nationally, within the discipline of nursing, members share a culture characterized by the provision of safe, ethical, and competent care largely based on research utilization (Canadian Nurses Association (CNA), 2010). Within the domain of nursing education, undergraduate nursing programs are expected to provide students with opportunities to develop a foundational understanding of and commitment to research utilization (Squires, Estabrooks, Gustavsson, & Wallin, 2011). An intentional acculturation to values, attitudes, and norms of the discipline, such as research utilization, relies on consistency in curricular content and processes (Joseph, 2011). Nursing programs need to understand the cultural realities enacted within their curricula, made up of formal curriculum and curricula-in-action, in order to create and transform curricular content and processes to reflect the consistency needed for intentional acculturation to research utilization.

The purpose of this study was to explore acculturation to research utilization within an undergraduate nursing program curriculum-in-action. Focused ethnography

was used to elicit an interpretive understanding of research utilization acculturation as enacted by students and educators. Multiple data sources including semi-structured interviews, participant observations, and curricular documents were accessed and data were analyzed relative to the culturally-based social organization of relationships, understandings, experiences, and norms that make up the interactions and transactions of research utilization acculturation within the studied curriculum. This chapter provides a summary of study findings, implications of these findings, and recommendations to address the identified study implications, and concludes with suggestions for future research.

### **Summary of Findings**

Acculturation to research utilization transpired through unintentional social construction and acculturation of research utilization within the curriculum investigated. This insight was revealed in the presence of both articulated and unarticulated curricular norms, values, and goals. Two subthemes comprised this unintentional process of research acculturation: the use and role of unintentional curricular language and the variable enactment of values, norms, and goals across educational experiences and contexts.

### **The Use and Role of Curricular Language**

The term *research utilization* appeared infrequently in both the formal curriculum, constituted by course syllabi and the program manual, and in the curriculum-in-action, constituted by the actions and transactions of educators and students. No singular, shared, and clearly articulated definition of research utilization was found in either the formal curriculum or the curriculum-in-action. Rather, multiple definitions

existed across the different environments and actors within the overall curricular culture. Students thus experienced an unintentional acculturation to research utilization.

The curricular documents and the curriculum-in-action did not have evidence of shared norms in the curricular lexicon but rather, the use of multiple terms associated with research utilization was found. Terms varied from course to course and year to year and included: *best practice guidelines, empirical knowledge, evidence, evidence-informed practice, evidence-based practice, scientific knowledge, informed consumer, and research*. These terms were never explicitly connected to research utilization. An absence of the articulation of *research utilization* as a term or concept was a norm across the curriculum.

Neither *research* nor *utilization*, as distinct terms that make up research utilization, had a clear, shared and articulated definition across either the formal curriculum or the curriculum-in-action. The term *research* was used variably in different curricular contexts. In some contexts, research designated the process of either scientific inquiry or locating existing information. In other circumstances, research was a term synonymous with *information*. A clearly articulated definition of utilization was only found formally in one research course.

The multiple terms that are associated with research utilization were reflected in educators' individual interactions and transactions within the curriculum-in-action and the lexicon used within the related formal curriculum. Across the curriculum-in-action, educators variably referred to evidence-based practice, evidence-informed practice, and research utilization. What was not evident, however, was a clearly articulated connection between the terms, nor a link to nursing practice competencies.

### **Enactment of Curricular Norms, Values, and Goals**

Curricular norms, values, and goals in course assignments, clinical experiences, and professional dialogue throughout the curriculum-in-action both reflected and underpinned the multiple meanings of *research*, *utilization*, and *research utilization* conveyed within contextual connections, exemplars, and experiential learning. While study participants shared an underlying commitment to the connection between research and practice consistently, key elements of research utilization processes were missing and void of a comprehensive articulation. It is proposed that due to multiple meanings associated with research utilization, which were enacted by faculty and noted in curricular documents, students' experience of research utilization was, at best, serendipitous.

The enactment of curricular norms, values, and goals related to research utilization in the classroom environment, although not comprehensive, ranged from situating theoretical course content with nursing practice exemplars, to addressing practice-based questions with contemporary nursing research. This apparently unintentional enactment of acculturation to research utilization was evident in the unarticulated and variable exposure to components of research utilization.

Clearly articulated processes and goals for research utilization acculturation within the formal curriculum and experienced in the curriculum-in-action were not identified. Overall, the absence of formally articulated curricular guidelines regarding research utilization contributed to the use of variable and inconsistent language across both the formal curriculum and the curriculum-in-action. As a result, the norm was that educators were individually responsible for, and accordingly, individualistically and unintentionally guided, students' acculturation to research utilization.



### **Findings Situated in the Literature**

The findings of this study support and extend contemporary nursing education literature related to the acculturation of undergraduate students to professional values. Study findings support the previously identified importance of connecting values and professional enactments across learning contexts and years within undergraduate nursing education and identify the important role of language and intentionality.

Previously reviewed research and theory has highlighted the primacy of acculturation of values, attitudes, and norms within practice experience learning environments above all other learning environments (Brown, Stevens, & Kermode, 2012; Campbell, Larrivee, Field, Day & Reutter, 1994; Carlson, Pilhammar & Wann-Hansson, 2010; Condon & Sharts-Hopko, 2010; Day, Field, Campbell, & Reutter, 2005; Goldenberg & Iwasiw, 1993; Mackintosh, 2006; Rush et al., 2009; Ware, 2008). Overall, researchers have reported that the professional values, attitudes, and norms espoused by nurses and professional practice educators in the practice context were an essential element of the professional acculturation and the development of the professional identity of undergraduate students.

Within this previous work, some researchers have identified a lack of connection between the values and professional expectations conveyed and nurtured in practice learning experiences in comparison to other learning environments (Mackintosh, 2006). This study sheds further insight into the lack of connection between values and experiences conveyed across learning contexts illuminating the unintentional approach used by educators to enact research utilization acculturation across learning contexts including practice experience learning environments. Unintentionality was evident across both the formal curriculum and the curriculum-in-action. Unique to this study is the

identification that the lack of connections found across learning environments, including the practice experience, involved variable use of language and inconsistent, unintentional enactment strategies, impacting the acculturation of research utilization.

From the literature reviewed, researchers have previously identified the importance of connecting acculturation between and among all learning environments within the undergraduate nursing program. They reported that the development of student values, attitudes, and norms in the undergraduate curriculum occurred across multiple curricular contexts (Campbell et al., 1994; Condon & Sharts-Hopko, 2010; Day et al., 2005; Mackintosh, 2006; Ware, 2008). In this study, consistent with this finding, enactment of acculturation to research utilization occurred across different curricular environments. This enactment, however, was marked by inconsistency and unintentionality related to both the use of language and enactment of curricular values, norms, and goals. The variability within and across educational environments appeared to limit the acculturation to research utilization as a professional value.

The relevancy of time for acculturation has been addressed in previous acculturation literature. Researchers found that the development of professional values, attitudes, and norms occurs over time throughout all years of a baccalaureate degree (Brown et al., 2012; Day et al., 2005; Mackintosh, 2006; du Toit, 1995; Ware, 2008). Students' professional values were found to form and evolve as they progressed through undergraduate nursing programs. The findings of this study reveal that the lack of consistency and intentionality of acculturation to research utilization within the curriculum and curriculum-in-action also transpired over time across all years of the program. For instance, research utilization was introduced in the first year of the program; however, key processes that are integral to understanding and internalizing a

coherent and intentional acculturation to this value, attitude, and norm were not introduced until the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the program. Students were left to develop and internalize an incomplete and inconsistent understanding of the nature of research utilization until the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the program.

Overall, to date there has been limited empirical evidence available to guide educators in the development and refinement of curricula focusing on the acculturation of professional values, norms, and goals in particular, those related to research utilization. Researchers have identified the importance of the practice learning experiences, the need for student development of values, attitudes, and norms to be connected across all learning environments, and the value of leveling the process of internalization of values, attitudes, and norms across all years of undergraduate programs (Campbell et al., 1994; Condon & Sharts-Hopko, 2010; Day et al., 2005; Mackintosh, 2006; Ware, 2008). The process and impact of creating formal curriculum and concomitantly, the curriculum-in-action, to foster the acculturation to research utilization has been largely unaddressed. Without such evidence, educators are subject to uninformed development and implementation of curricula and curricular culture with variable outcomes relative to research utilization acculturation as found in this study.

### **Implications of Findings**

The findings of this study illuminate the contextual cultural norms and trends within the nursing profession and nursing education. Three insights into the dynamic larger cultural context of nursing education are illuminated by the findings of this study. First, the nursing profession itself may be characterized by variability in the use of language and enactment relative to research utilization. Second, the core of most nursing education curricula may not explicitly identify and guide the process of acculturation to

research utilization. Third, transactions and interactions between educators, students, and others present in the curricular context impact the experience of acculturation to research utilization.

### **Variability in the Use of Terminology within Nursing**

Within the studied program, the unintentionality in the acculturation of research utilization, in part, reflects the complexity of acknowledging and addressing the multiple definitions, meanings, and practices associated with research utilization across nursing disciplinary domains. Nursing literature, for example, is replete with multiple related terms that have a direct or tangential association with research utilization. Such terms include *evidence-based practice*, *knowledge-based practice*, *evidence-informed practice*, *information literacy*, *knowledge translation*, and *knowledge utilization* (Schaffer, Sandau, & Diedrick, 2012; Wahoush & Banfield, 2014; Yost, et al., 2014). While these inter-related terms address elements of research utilization, they are not representative of the same concept and value. Further, within nursing regulatory documents, reference to research utilization is subject to the same lack of consistency in the use of language. At best, research utilization is suggested through reference to participation in and implementation of research findings in practice (College of Nursing of Ontario [CNO], 2014). Cumulatively, the indiscriminate use of variable language within the literature and disciplinary documents renders nurses subject to developing an individual interpretation and enactment of research utilization for their practice. In this study, the variable use of language and enactment expectations used by educators and found in the formal curriculum and curriculum-in-action, relative to research utilization, both contributes to and is reflective of the broader disciplinary context.

### **Nursing Education Curricular Core**

The acculturation of particular nursing values, attitudes, and norms transpires through the integration of these values, attitudes, and norms within the curricular concepts, professional abilities, teaching-learning approaches, and curriculum outcome statements that constitute the core of the curriculum (Iwasiw, Goldenberg, & Andrusyszyn, 2009). The core of the curriculum investigated in this study was void of a clear articulation of research utilization as a program value, attitude, or norm. In addition, limited structure was provided in the formal curriculum to guide coordinated intentional efforts of individual educators as they undertook the process of research utilization acculturation.

The establishment of a curricular core is a challenging process within nursing education in general. Approaches to nursing curricula have undergone major changes from educator-centered content-laden programs to a commitment to more learner-centered concept-based curricula (Giddens & Brady, 2007). This philosophical shift has necessitated major adjustments to the formal curricular structure of nursing programs. Faculty across many programs are in the midst of curricular evaluation, revision, and developmental processes to update the essential elements of their curricular core. In the midst of these complex initiatives, professional values, attitudes, and norms such as research utilization may not be deemed the most salient consideration for inclusion within the curricular core. Consequently research utilization may not generally be intentionally threaded throughout the nursing education curricula, as evidenced in this study. In this study these ideas are reflected both in the curricular core but also in the lack of dialogue between course educators about research utilization. How connections could be made

between and across contexts was left unattended and educators largely attended to individual course delivery.

### **Teaching-Learning Transactions**

Transactions and interactions between individual educators, students, and any others, who may contribute to teaching and learning in any educational context as part of the curriculum-in-action, are integral in the formation of professional values, attitudes, and norms (Brown et al., 2012). Faculty not only have a substantive role in the development of the formal curricula, but also in the engagement of students within the curriculum-in-action. Student acculturation to research utilization, as a professional value, attitude, and norm is bound in the individual meaning enacted by educators and any others who constitute a potential professional influence on nursing student education. Individual educator commitment to and understanding of research utilization, as a professional value, may not be translated within the curriculum-in-action, in a manner that supports progressive acculturation to research utilization as students advance through the program. Students experience multiple transactions and interactions with many educators and professionally significant others across an educational program. The serendipitous influence of different understandings of research utilization and approaches to research utilization socially, as found within this study, constitute an overall unintentionality in acculturation experienced by students.

A particularly important implication of the lack of intentionality and concomitant inconsistency found within this study is the undetermined outcome of serendipitous acculturation of students to important values, attitudes, and norms such as research utilization (Joseph, 2011). Further, a compromised acculturation to research utilization, prior to entry-to-practice, may render cohorts of novice practitioners unprepared for the

autonomous provision of evidence-informed care. As a result, the healthcare sector risks becoming entrenched in practice hegemonies that do not reflect the evolution of the contemporary use of nursing research evidence. Ultimately, patients may not be partnered with nurses who value and implement research utilization to optimize their care.

Another implication of such variability in the use of language is the potential for students to self-construct incomplete and/or inaccurate conceptions of research utilization as a professional competency. Further, erroneous ideations of research utilization have the potential to limit the progressive professional development of individual practitioners and that of the discipline. To prevent inaccurate conceptions of research utilization, coherency and intentionality in enactment strategies are needed. Also, the presence of meaningful enactment experiences in isolated, select educational contexts inevitably limits students' integration of values into their professional practice (Christie, Hamill, & Power, 2012). For students to internalize professional values, attitudes, and norms, they need to understand and experience how and why these values are enacted. Therefore, the enactment of the acculturation of research utilization, as a professional value, attitude, and norm, necessitates intentional learning experiences integrated consistently across curricular contexts.

The integration of beliefs about, and capability in, the enactment of values, attitudes, and norms is compromised when there is a lack of coherence and inclusion across curricular learning environments (Forsman, Wallin, Gustavsson, & Rudman, 2012; Wallin, Bostrom, & Gustavsson, 2012). In this study, intentional and coherent enactment experiences supporting research utilization across the curriculum-in-action were not identifiable. Thus, understanding of, valuing of, and commitment to research utilization by students are compromised. Further, without opportunities for enactment of research

utilization across curricular experiences, students' belief in their capacity relative to this element of professional responsibility within nursing practice environments is threatened.

For research utilization to be acculturated, students need to participate in enactment experiences across curricular contexts. If research utilization is not present as an overt value, attitude, and norm that is both visible and experienced consistently in multiple environments, the process shaping students' understanding is truncated. For example, the absence of complete enactment experiences within practice or simulated practice contexts limits student exposure to the *how* and *why* of research utilization as a foundational value, attitude, and norm for the provision of safe, ethical, and evidence-informed practice.

These study implications support the need for change in order to actualize a practice milieu grounded in research utilization. Collectively, these implications inform recommendations that cross the domains of nursing education, research, and practice.

### **Recommendations**

Recommendations stemming from the findings of this study are included to promote the enhancement of acculturation to research utilization and values, attitudes, and norms in general within the context of undergraduate nursing curricula. These recommendations specifically address the responsibilities of curriculum developers, nursing programs, educators, students, regulatory bodies, professional organizations, and practicing nurses.

#### **Curriculum Developers**

Curriculum developers are responsible for the creation and sequencing of learning experiences that allow learners who are both capable and motivated to realize identified curricular outcomes (Iwasiw & Goldenberg, 2015). It is recommended that curriculum developers: (a) identify agreed-upon values, attitudes, and norms that are important in



connection with professional nursing competencies, define these values, and adopt strategies to intentionally and consistently integrate and enact values, attitudes, and norms across curricular contexts, specifically including those related to research utilization; (b) ensure that values, attitudes, and norms are evident in curriculum outcomes; (c) delineate the nature, processes, and language associated with values, attitudes, and norms such as research utilization; and (d) develop a plan for the integration of value, attitudes, and norm enactment experiences that increase the level of complexity as the student progresses through the program.

### **Nursing Programs**

Relative to the findings of this study, multiple recommendations could be implemented to help develop a shared understanding and capacity in the acculturation of values, attitudes, and norms. It is recommended that programs: (a) orient novice educators or educators new to a particular program to integral curricular values, attitudes, and norms and curricular approaches to their acculturation; (b) develop program manuals that include sections outlining professional values, attitudes, and norms identified by the program with clear definitions included; (c) critically evaluate learning experiences relative to their fit with the acculturation to values, attitudes, and norms; (d) adopt and evaluate formal elements of the course structure (such as course objectives and goals, to assignments and practice experience evaluations) that are appropriate for the acculturation of identified values, attitudes, and norms; (e) use program evaluations to examine the curricular approaches to the acculturation of values, attitudes, and norms and that a leveled, coherent, and intentional approach to the inclusion of enactment experiences across the curriculum occurs; (f) evaluate whether professional practice learning environments reflect and support the professional values, attitudes, and norms

identified by the program; and (g) engage students to help them understand the different cultural values, attitudes, and norms that they may experience within practice environments and identify practice strategies that enable students to internalize those values that the program has identified, not those present in less-than-ideal environments.

### **Educator Responsibilities**

Educators have a key role in the successful enactment a formal curriculum and curriculum-in-action reflective of the valuing and intentional promotion of acculturation to research utilization. It is recommended that educators: (a) understand and espouse the professional values, attitudes, and norms that have been identified by the program; (b) meaningfully integrate these values, attitudes, and norms into their teaching/learning experiences in the curriculum-in-action; (c) critically evaluate and develop the integration of values, attitudes, and norms across all of the courses that they teach; and (d) adopt teaching/learning methods that enhance the acculturation of values, attitudes, and norms where students assess their experiences using critical reflection to identify and rationally evaluate the assumptions and values, attitudes, and norms that guide their practice of research utilization.

### **Student Responsibilities**

For students, it is recommended that they: (a) critically evaluate the influence and effects of their values, attitudes, and norms relative to different learning experiences in order to refine and develop their professional commitment to and practice of research utilization (Brown et al., 2012); and (b) engage with educators in the transactions and interactions that make up the curriculum-in-action related to the acculturation of values, attitudes, and norms specific to research utilization.

### **Regulatory Responsibilities**

It is recommended that professional and nursing regulatory bodies: (a) develop intentional, coherent, and clearly articulated definitions of research and research utilization; and (b) create and evaluate clear and consistent competencies related to professional values, attitudes, and norms related to research utilization for both professional nurses and nursing educational programs.

### **Professional Nurses**

It is recommended that professional nurses seek out experiential learning experiences to help them meet research utilization professional competencies, particularly if their undergraduate programs did not provide this foundational learning. Professional nurses could also support students in their efforts to learn about and implement evidence.

### **Health Care Organizations**

It is recommended that health care organizations: (a) develop and sustain continuing education that supports ongoing research utilization in nursing practice; and (b) work to mentor nurses and practice experience preceptors within their agencies to provide students with excellent experiences and examples of the enactment the values, attitudes, and norms of research utilization within nursing practice.

### **Recommendations for Future Nursing Education Research**

Focused ethnography is an appropriate methodology for researching professional culture in undergraduate nursing curricula. Research using this methodology allows for the exploration of important cultural meanings and enactments within curricula-in-action that are integral to acculturation to professional values. An essential outcome of undergraduate nursing education is acculturation to specific professional values, attitudes, and norms (Curtis, Horton, & Smith, 2012; Johnson, Cowin, Wilson, & Young, 2012;

Maben, Latter, & Clark, 2007). Scholarly evidence is needed to inform educational acculturation to specific elements of professional practice, including research utilization. Further research that uses focused ethnography to study the multitude of values, attitudes, and norms that are required in professional practice is warranted.

Professional nursing competencies outline the need for professional nurses to enact values, attitudes, and norms related to safety, accountability, caring, honesty, integrity, and research utilization within their professional practice (CNO, 2014). To be able to successfully acculturate students to these attributes of professional practice, nurse educators need to understand the related situated practices and constitution of cultural meanings and enactments within undergraduate nursing programs. Curricula-in-action, in which professional acculturation is embedded and enacted, is lived and experienced with people and their meanings (Joseph, 2011). Focused ethnographic researchers explore culturally-based issues and shared experiences that are bound in the everyday enactment of culture (Cruz & Higginbottom, 2013). Focused ethnography allows for a close examination of a predetermined and specific culturally-based topic of interest (Knoblauch, 2005; Morse & Richards, 2002). By examining curricular cultural realities with focused ethnography, program educators can further understand and develop formal curricula and concomitant curricula-in-action that are coherently and intentionally focused on the acculturation of all key professional competencies across curricular environments with multiple educators.

The importance of intentional and coherent enactment of curricular values, attitudes, norms, and goals by educators was a key finding of this study; however, further examination of how educators enact curricula is needed. Understanding how educators relate to formal curricula, form meanings informed by formal curricula, and develop and

enact curricula-in-action in relation to the formal curricula would inform future curricular development and refinement to support acculturation to valued professional attributes such as research utilization. Key questions related to educators include: How consistent are educators in their enactment of intentional and coherent formal curricular goals? How can programs support the adoption of commitment of educators to the integration of programmatic values, attitudes, and norms within their interactions and transactions with students?

The practice learning experience also needs further investigation. How to meaningfully shape the educational experiences of students in practice environments is of particular importance. Students cite practice experiences as the most influential learning experiences within their undergraduate education (Brown et al., 2012; Calson et al., 2010; Condon & Sharts, 2010). Learning within the practice environment can support the development of important professional nursing values, attitudes, and norms (Brown et al., 2012). Practice learning environment experiences can also lead to the uncritical adoption and erosion of professional values, attitudes, and norms (Mackintosh, 2006; Grealish & Trevitt, 2005). Studies investigating interventions to help support acculturation to integral professional values, attitudes, and norms within these environments are needed.

Questions to inform this area of research could include: What specific educational interventions help students critically evaluate the professional values, attitudes, and norms to which they are exposed? What are the outcomes of interventions designed to orient and support practice educators' efforts to promote acculturation to a particular valued professional attribute? What interventions enable programs to capitalize on positive environments and mitigate problematic environments? How might educators enhance student ability to reflect upon and critically evaluate the values, attitudes, and

norms espoused within professional practice environments and not uncritically adopt problematic values, attitudes, and norms?

The efficacy of specific educational interventions and approaches should be studied to further understand their influence on student acculturation. Transformative learning, for instance, theoretically fits with acculturation, focusing on critical reflection on assumptions, including values, attitudes, and norms. The outcomes of employing this type of learning in the formation of student professional values, attitudes, and norms are not well understood.

### **Limitations**

This focused ethnography included a sample of only one undergraduate nursing program and, as such, the findings are bound within that programmatic curricular culture (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). The potential applicability of findings would be enhanced through further study of other undergraduate nursing curricula to determine whether the unintentionality of acculturation to research utilization is more widespread throughout nursing education curricula.

Only one practice experience educator participated. The findings of the study reflect the cultural meanings and enactments in the data collected so meanings and enactment in the practice environment should be explored further from the perspective of multiple educators.

Additionally, only one student completed the formal interview process. Thus, the findings of this study largely reflect the perspectives of educators. The observations of students and informal interviews with students over the course of fieldwork did provide some insight into their perceptions, but a further exploration of students' firsthand attitudes towards and experience of acculturation to research utilization is warranted.

## Conclusion

This is the first study known to examine the enactment of acculturation to research utilization within an undergraduate nursing program curriculum-in-action. Overall, the unintentionality of the social construction of acculturation to research utilization across the nursing education curriculum and curriculum-in-action was identified. Both the use and role of unintentional curricular language and the variable enactment of values, norms, and goals across educational experiences and contexts reflected this overall finding. The findings of this study have multiple implications for professional nursing education. Programs need to support and enact an intentional approach to the acculturation of the values, attitudes, and norms of professional practice competencies and attributes such as research utilization within undergraduate nursing curricula. An intentional approach to acculturation to valued professional attributes within the curriculum-in-action through the definition and implementation of appropriate teaching methods to promote student acculturation is essential to socially construct the professional practice of nursing through formalized professional education. Nursing programs need to understand how to successfully acculture students to valued practice competencies such as research utilization because these competencies constitute the essence of professional nursing.

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## Appendix A

### Research Ethics Approval Forms



#### Use of Human Participants - Ethics Approval Notice

**Principal Investigator:** Dr. Carroll Iwasiw  
**Review Number:** 18359E  
**Review Level:** Delegated  
**Approved Local Adult Participants:** 15  
**Approved Local Minor Participants:** 0  
**Protocol Title:** An Exploration of the Enactment of Acculturation in Research Utilization within a Nursing Undergraduate Curriculum-In-Action  
**Department & Institution:** Nursing, University of Western Ontario  
**Sponsor:**  
**Ethics Approval Date:** September 22, 2011      **Expiry Date:** August 31, 2012  
**Documents Reviewed & Approved & Documents Received for Information:**

Document Name	Comments	Version Date
UWO Protocol		
Other	Letter to Director of the Arthur Labatt Family School of Nursing, University of Western Ontario	
Letter of Information	Student Participants - September 2011	
Letter of Information	Educator Participants - September 2011	
Other	Consent Form	
Other	Email Script	
Other	Telephone Script	
Letter of Information	Administrative Assistants - September 2011	

This is to notify you that The University of Western Ontario Research Ethics Board for Health Sciences Research Involving Human Subjects (HSREB) which is organized and operates according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Humans and the Health Canada/ICH Good Clinical Practice Practices, Consolidated Guidelines, and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario has reviewed and granted approval to the above referenced revision(s) or amendment(s) on the approval date noted above. The membership of this REB also complies with the membership requirements for REB's as defined in Division 5 of the Food and Drug Regulations.

The ethics approval for this study shall remain valid until the expiry date noted above assuming timely and acceptable responses to the HSREB's periodic requests for surveillance and monitoring information. If you require an updated approval notice prior to that time you must request it using the UWO Updated Approval Request Form.

Members of the HSREB who are named as investigators in research studies, or declare a conflict of interest, do not participate in discussion related to, nor vote on, such studies when they are presented to the HSREB.

The Chair of the HSREB is Dr. Joseph Gilbert. The UWO HSREB is registered with the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services under the IRB registration number IRB 0000940.



**Principal Investigator:** Dr. Carroll Iwasiw  
**File Number:**101515  
**Review Level:**Delegated  
**Approved Local Adult Participants:**15  
**Approved Local Minor Participants:**0  
**Protocol Title:**An Exploration of the Enactment of Acculturation in Research Utilization within a Nursing Undergraduate Curriculum-In-Action  
**Department & Institution:**Health Sciences\Nursing,Western University  
**Sponsor:**  
**Ethics Approval Date:**August 08, 2012 **Expiry Date:**December 31, 2013  
**Documents Reviewed & Approved & Documents Received for Information:**

Document Name	Comments	Version Date
Revised Study End Date	The study end date has been extended to August 31, 2013 to allow for continuation of the project..	

This is to notify you that The University of Western Ontario Research Ethics Board for Health Sciences Research Involving Human Subjects (HSREB) which is organized and operates according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Humans and the Health Canada/CH Good Clinical Practice Practices: Consolidated Guidelines; and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario has reviewed and granted approval to the above referenced revision(s) or amendment(s) on the approval date noted above. The membership of this REB also complies with the membership requirements for REB's as defined in Division 5 of the Food and Drug Regulations.

The ethics approval for this study shall remain valid until the expiry date noted above assuming timely and acceptable responses to the HSREB's periodic requests for surveillance and monitoring information. If you require an updated approval notice prior to that time you must request it using the University of Western Ontario Updated Approval Request Form.

Members of the HSREB who are named as investigators in research studies, or declare a conflict of interest, do not participate in discussion related to, nor vote on, such studies when they are presented to the HSREB.

The Chair of the HSREB is Dr. Joseph Gilbert. The HSREB is registered with the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services under the IRB registration number IRB 00000940.

## **Appendix B**

### Letter for Student Participants

#### **Letter of Information**

##### An Exploration of the Enactment of Acculturation in Research Utilization within a Nursing Undergraduate Curriculum-In-Action

Dear Colleagues,

I am a PhD student in the Arthur Labatt Family School of Nursing. To meet program requirements, I am conducting a research study. The purpose of my research is to explore how students are taught and learn about research utilization within an undergraduate-nursing program. The project involves interviews with students and nursing faculty, and observations of classroom, simulation laboratory, and clinical experiences.

I would like to learn how students are taught and learn about research, in classrooms, the simulation laboratory, and clinical experiences. The information gained may lead to an understanding of how nurse educators could emphasize positive practices and possibly promote changes in the curriculum related to research utilization.

All students who intend to enroll in the summer externship in 2012 are invited to participate. If you choose to participate in this study, you will be asked to sign a consent form. Students who volunteer may be asked or choose to participate in any one or all of the following aspects of the study:

1. Formal Interviews
2. Observation of interactions between students and instructors in the simulation laboratory and informal interviews in the simulation laboratory
3. Observation of interactions between students and instructors in the clinical environments and informal interviews in the clinical environments

#### Formal Interviews

You may be asked to complete two audio-taped interviews that focus on your experience of teaching and learning related to research utilization. Each interview will last approximately one hour. They will be scheduled at your convenience during the summer semester and occur at least one month apart. Questions in the interviews will focus on your understanding of research utilization, and experience, feelings, values, and opinions regarding the teaching and learning of research in the undergraduate curriculum.

#### Observations and Informal Interviews

You may be asked to allow for the observation of your interactions with your simulation laboratory and/or clinical instructors and to participate in informal interviews with me in the simulation laboratory and clinical setting. Observations made by the researcher will focus on the interactions between you and your simulation laboratory instructors and clinical instructors related to the teaching and learning of research utilization in nursing.



The brief audio-taped informal interviews in the simulation laboratory and clinical setting will focus on your perceptions of your experiences related to the interactions that I observe in relation to nursing research education.

A possible benefit to student participants is the opportunity to share insights related to the process of learning research utilization. Indirect benefits to student participants may include the development of new insights into how best to learn research utilization in practice.

All of the information that you provide will be kept confidential. A list of participant names, email addresses, and telephone numbers will be kept separate from data to allow me to contact you for interviews. Code numbers will be used on transcripts. No names will be used. All data will be stored in a locked office and electronic data will be password protected. Electronic data will be recorded on password protected and encrypted memory sticks. Only members of my thesis committee will have access to data. Upon completion of the study, data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet for a period of seven years and then destroyed. Any publication or presentation of the results will not contain information that could disclose your identity.

Your classroom nursing professors will not be present at the interviews, nor will they be informed about your participation or non-participation in the study. Simulation laboratory instructors and clinical instructors will be present at the observations. Participation in this study is voluntary. You are under no obligation to participate. If you choose to participate, you can refuse to answer any questions. Participation or non-participation will have no effect on your academic status.

There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts associated with this study. You will indicate your consent to participate in the study by filling in the consent form at the time of the interview or clinical observation. Representatives of The University of Western Ontario Health Sciences Research Ethics Board may contact you or require access to your study-related records to monitor the conduct of the research.

If you have any questions concerning this research study, please feel free to contact either of the researchers listed below. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, or the conduct of this study, you may contact the Office of Research Ethics. Please keep this letter for your records.

If you wish to participate in the study please contact me.

Sincerely,

Craig Duncan, RN, BScN, MN  
PhD Candidate  
Arthur Labatt Family School of Nursing

Carroll L. Iwasiw, RN, BN, MScN, EdD  
Professor and Research Supervisor  
Arthur Labatt Family School of Nursing

## **Appendix C**

Letter for Educators Participants  
(Class Professors or Instructors, Clinical Instructors and Laboratory Instructors)

### **Letter of Information**

The Acculturation to Research Utilization within Undergraduate Nursing Curriculum

I am a PhD student in the nursing program at the University of Western Ontario. As part of my dissertation I am conducting a research study. The purpose of my research is to explore how students are cultured in research utilization within an undergraduate nursing program. The information gained by exploring educational experiences and context will help students, teachers, and curricular planners in understanding how undergraduate nursing students are taught and learn research in the undergraduate program. Educators involved in teaching third year clinical and research courses, fourth year clinical course, fourth year nursing laboratory, and fourth year clinical will be invited to participate. The project involves both interviews with educators and the observation of classroom, laboratory and clinical experiences.

If you choose to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete a consent form and two audio-taped interviews that focus on your experience of teaching related to research utilization within the undergraduate curriculum. Each interview will last approximately one hour. They will be scheduled at your convenience over the teaching semester and will occur at least one month apart. Questions in the interviews will focus on your understanding of research utilization, and experience, feelings, values, and opinions regarding the teaching and learning of research in the undergraduate curriculum.

In addition, you will be asked to allow for the observation of your interactions with your students in the educational setting. Observations made by the researcher will focus on the interactions between you and your students related to nursing research.

Although it is anticipated that the findings from this research project will enable nurse educators to emphasize positive practices and promote innovation in curricular acculturation processes related to research utilization, there are no direct benefits to you for participating in this study. Participating in this study will give you the opportunity to share your unique insights related to the process of teaching and learning research utilization. Indirect benefits to you may also include the development of new insights into how best to learn research utilization in practice.

No personal identifying information will be collected. All of the information that you provide will be kept confidential. Code numbers will be used to track all transcripts. No names will be used. All electronic data will be stored in a locked office and electronic data will be password protected. Data will be recorded on encrypted memory sticks and only members of my thesis committee will have access to them. Upon completion of the study data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet for a period of seven years and then

destroyed. Any publication of the results will not contain information that could disclose your identity.

Your employer will not be present at the interviews, nor will they be informed about your participation or non-participation. Participation in this study is voluntary. You are under no obligation to participate and if you chose to participate, you can refuse to answer any questions, you can withdraw from the study at any time, for any reason, without any effect on your academic status.

There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts associated with this study. You will indicate your consent to participate in the study by filling in the consent form at the time of the interview or clinical observation. Representatives of The University of Western Ontario Health Sciences Research Ethics Board may contact you or require access to your study-related records to monitor the conduct of the research.

If you have any questions concerning this research study, please feel free to contact either of the researchers listed below. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, or the conduct of this study, you may contact the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Western Ontario. Please keep this letter for your records.

Sincerely,

Craig Duncan, RN, BScN, MN  
PhD Student  
Arthur Labatt Family School of Nursing

Carroll L. Iwasiw, RN, BN, MScN, EdD  
Professor  
Arthur Labatt Family School of Nursing

## Appendix D

### Email and Telephone Script

#### Email Script

Subject: An Exploration of the Enactment of Acculturation in Research Utilization within a Nursing Undergraduate Curriculum-In-Action

Title: An Exploration of the Enactment of Acculturation in Research Utilization within a Nursing Undergraduate Curriculum-In-Action

Hello (Insert Name),

I am emailing you as a follow-up to a previous Letter of Information (LOI) you received and responded to via email, for the study entitled *An Exploration of the Enactment of Acculturation in Research Utilization within a Nursing Undergraduate Curriculum-In-Action*. Thank you for your interest in the study.

If you are still interested in participating in the study I would like to schedule an interview at a time and location that would be convenient to you. We can meet in my office, however I am open to suggestions for both meeting location and time that are convenient to you. I am available Monday – Friday between the hours of 0830 – 1800. I have attached a copy of the original Letter of Information to this email for your reference.

Please respond via email letting me know the time and place you would like to meet. I will then confirm time and place for the meeting via email-

Sincerely

Craig Duncan RN, BScN, MN

PhD Student

Arthur Labatt Family School of Nursing

#### Telephone Script

Hello, my name is Craig Duncan. I am student in the PhD program at the Arthur Labatt Family School of Nursing at the University of Western Ontario.

I am calling to follow up regarding previous information sent to you about a study entitled *An Exploration of the Enactment of Acculturation in Research Utilization within a Nursing Undergraduate Curriculum-In-Action*.

I received an email from you indicating that you were willing to participate in the study and that a telephone follow-up would work best for communication.

If you are still willing to participate in the study, I would like to schedule a time for us to meet for an interview. Are you still interested in participating in the study?

**If yes then:**

I am available from 0830 to 1800, Monday to Friday. Is there a time and date that would be convenient to meet for an interview?

We can meet at my office, or I am open to any suggestions for location that are convenient to you.

Would you like me to send you another copy of the Letter of Information for the study?

**If no then:**

Thank you for your time and your consideration of my request.

**Appendix E**

## Consent Form

An Exploration of the Acculturation to Research Utilization within Undergraduate Curriculum

**CONSENT FORM**

I have read the Letter of Information, have had the nature of the study explained to me and I agree to participate. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

Name (please print):

Signature:

Date:

Name of Person Obtaining Informed Consent:

Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Consent:

Date:

## Appendix F

### Interview Guide for Student Participants

Table: Interview Guide for Student Participants

Theoretical Frame	Question
1. Overall Knowledge, Opinion, Experience, and Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will you tell me about your understanding of research in nursing?</li> <li>• Could you describe your experience of learning about using research in nursing?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prompts                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is it like?</li> <li>• When does it occur?</li> <li>• Where does it occur?</li> <li>• With whom does it occur?</li> <li>• How does it occur?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• What do you think about using research in nursing?</li> <li>• How do you feel about using research in nursing?</li> <li>• What are your thoughts about your personal experience of learning about research in nursing?</li> <li>• How do you feel about your personal learning experience?</li> <li>• In an ideal world what would learning to use research in nursing be like?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
2. Interactions, Transactions and Learning Environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is your experience of the process of teaching and learning research utilization within the classroom?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prompts                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you feel about the process of teaching and learning about research utilization in the classroom?</li> <li>• What is your view of the process of teaching and learning about research utilization in the classroom?</li> <li>• How is the process of teaching and learning in the classroom connected to research utilization?</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• What is your experience of the process of teaching and learning research utilization within the laboratory?</li> </ul>

- Prompts
  - How do you feel about the process of teaching and learning about research utilization in the laboratory?
  - What is your view of the process of teaching and learning about research utilization in the laboratory?
  - How is the process of teaching and learning in the laboratory connected to research utilization?
  - What is your experience of the process of teaching and learning research utilization within the clinical learning experience?
    - Prompts
    - How do you feel about the process of teaching and learning about research utilization in the clinical learning experience?
    - What is your view of the process of teaching and learning about research utilization in the clinical learning experience?
    - How is the process of teaching and learning in the clinical learning experience connected to research utilization?
  - What kinds of similarities or differences, if any, have you noticed between your learning experiences with research utilization in the classroom, laboratory, and clinical settings?
3. Connections Across Environments
-



## Interview Guide for Classroom Professor or Instructor

Table: Interview Guide for Classroom Professors or Instructors

Theoretical Frame	Question
1. Overall Knowledge, Opinion, Experience, and Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will you tell me about your understanding of research in nursing?</li> <li>• Could you describe your experience of teaching about using research in nursing?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prompts                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is it like?</li> <li>• When does it occur?</li> <li>• Where does it occur?</li> <li>• With whom does it occur?</li> <li>• How does it occur?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• What do you think about using research in nursing?</li> <li>• How do you feel about using research in nursing?</li> <li>• What are your thoughts about your personal experience of teaching about research in nursing?</li> <li>• How do you feel about your personal teaching experience?</li> <li>• In an ideal world what would teaching research utilization in nursing be like?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
2. Interactions, Transactions and Learning Environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is your experience of the process of teaching and learning research utilization within the classroom setting?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prompts                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you feel about the process of teaching and learning about research utilization in the classroom setting?</li> <li>• What is your view of the process of teaching and learning about research utilization in the classroom setting?</li> <li>• How is the process of teaching and learning in the classroom setting connected to research utilization</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
3. Connections Across Environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What kinds of similarities or differences, if any, have you noticed in research utilization education in the classroom, laboratory, and clinical settings?</li> </ul>

## Interview Guide for Clinical Instructors

Table: Interview Guide for Clinical Instructors

Theoretical Frame	Question
1. Overall Knowledge, Opinion, Experience, and Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will you tell me about your understanding of research in nursing?</li> <li>• Could you describe your experience of teaching about using research in nursing?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prompts                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is it like?</li> <li>• When does it occur?</li> <li>• Where does it occur?</li> <li>• With whom does it occur?</li> <li>• How does it occur?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• What do you think about using research in nursing?</li> <li>• How do you feel about using research in nursing?</li> <li>• What are your thoughts about your personal experience of teaching about research in nursing?</li> <li>• How do you feel about your personal teaching experience?</li> <li>• In an ideal world what would teaching research utilization in nursing be like?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
2. Interactions, Transactions and Learning Environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is your experience of the process of teaching and learning research utilization within the clinical learning setting?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prompts                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you feel about the process of teaching and learning about research utilization in the clinical learning setting?</li> <li>• What is your view of the process of teaching and learning about research utilization in the clinical learning setting?</li> <li>• How is the process of teaching and learning in the clinical learning setting connected to research utilization?</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
3. Connections Across Environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What kinds of similarities or differences, if any, have you noticed in research education in the classroom, laboratory, and clinical settings?</li> </ul>

## Interview Guide for Laboratory Instructors

Table: Interview Guide for Laboratory Instructors

Theoretical Frame	Question
1. Overall Knowledge, Opinion, Experience, and Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will you tell me about your understanding of research in nursing?</li> <li>• Could you describe your experience of teaching about using research in nursing?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prompts                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is it like?</li> <li>• When does it occur?</li> <li>• Where does it occur?</li> <li>• With whom does it occur?</li> <li>• How does it occur?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• What do you think about using research in nursing?</li> <li>• How do you feel about using research in nursing?</li> <li>• What are your thoughts about your personal experience of teaching about research in nursing?</li> <li>• How do you feel about your personal teaching experience?</li> <li>• In an ideal world what would teaching research utilization in nursing be like?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
2. Interactions, Transactions and Learning Environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is your experience of the process of teaching and learning research utilization in the laboratory?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prompts                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you feel about the process of teaching and learning about research utilization in the laboratory?</li> <li>• What is your view of the process of teaching and learning about research utilization in the laboratory?</li> <li>• How is the process of teaching and learning in the laboratory connected to research utilization?</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
3. Connections Across Environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What kinds of similarities or differences, if any, have you noticed in research education in the classroom, laboratory, and clinical settings?</li> </ul>

## CURRICULUM VITAE

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Education: Laurentian University, BscN  
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Dalhousie University, MN  
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2002-2003

Honours and Awards: Ontario Graduate Scholarship  
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#### Publications:

- Duncan, C., Duff Cloutier, J., Mossey, S., & Bailey, P. (2013). Teaching / learning strategy for the preliminary critique of qualitative research. *Journal of Nursing Education and Practice*, 3(1), doi : 10.5430/jnep.v3n1p138
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