Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.
THE PROVING GROUND

The Lived World of Nursing Students in Their Pre-Registration Clinical Experience

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Nursing at Massey University.

Louise Rummel 1993
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe and interpret the lived world of twenty one senior Comprehensive Nursing Students in their pre-registration experience. The study set out to answer the question "What is the lived experience of Comprehensive Nursing students in their pre-registration experience?" The pre-registration experience is a six to eight week block of clinical practice prior to sitting their State Registration Examination when the students work as soon-to-be staff nurses independent of close tutor contact. The study setting was in acute care clinical placements which included Emergency Departments, Theatre, Surgical, Medical, Paediatric wards and specialised Day Stay Clinics.

The study showed that students of nursing use an orientation period to gain confidence in a setting and engage willingly in their clinical practice. They use their theoretical knowledge to gain a "handle" on the demands of a nursing care situation, become involved in the client-nurse relationship which challenges their knowledge, skills and attitudes and opens new learning demands within the situation. They pursue specialised knowledge both directly and indirectly in order to function competently. Other registered nurses in the clinical setting are extremely important to facilitate the students learning and support the students in a host of ways from initiating opportunities to teaching specialised skills. The study re-iterates the importance of clinical experience to the gaining of nursing expertise.

A lack of job prospects was a dampening factor for the students but nevertheless, it did not inhibit their full engagement in their pre-registration experience.
The phenomenological method allows an experience to be captured in its wholeness to include the way the study participants thought, acted and engaged in nursing activities within a specific context. It is from the students' rich descriptions of their practice that this study gains its significance as it is the first phenomenological study of its kind in a New Zealand setting.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A thesis such as this could not have been accomplished without the assistance of many people. My family- my husband Stuart, Nan, Simonne, Diana and Matthew, to you I owe so much. You have loved me and kept me motivated and supported when at times, I felt I would not accomplish my goal. Thank you all for so much.

To my study participants, who gave of their time and their experiences so willingly for the substance of this thesis in spite of the data collection being at a critical point in their lives. To you I have a deep and lasting respect and an appreciation of nursing practice through your eyes that would not be possible if you had not become selflessly involved. You will always be special to me.

To my colleagues at Manukau Polytechnic who have kept me enthused and supported throughout this endeavour, I give my heartfelt thanks. I also give my sincere appreciation and thanks to my colleagues at Carrington who assisted me in the initial stages of this thesis.

To my Supervisor, Professor Irena Madjar, who shared with me her knowledge, wisdom and guidance throughout this thesis, who was patient with me and believed in me in spite of setbacks, to you I owe my achievement, and special debt of gratitude. My sincere thanks is given to Professor Norma Chick who knows me well, is always patient and encouraging and who also has assisted me in bringing this thesis to fruition. My special appreciation to Margaret Idour, my lecturer, mentor and friend who introduced me to Professor Nancy Diekelmann and her research assistant Lori Kondora of the University of Wisconsin- Madison School of Nursing, U.S.A. who opened to me new insights into Phenomenology in particular, the work of Martin
Heidegger (1962/1927) and the study of Heideggerian Hermeneutics inspiring me to continue this difficult scholarship.

To my friend Lorraine who painstakingly typed many of the transcripts, mastering a dictaphone machine to accomplish this, to Alan who assisted me with mastering the Computer to achieve this thesis, to my friend Colleen and her family who gave me food and shelter throughout my trips to Palmerston North for my Masterate studies without whom I would not have been able to persist and complete my studies. To my three initial Masterate study partners, Val, Joe., and Di., who endured with me in the early stages of establishing Block Courses for Nursing Masterate students at Massey University. To my friend and fellow student, Antoinette who has laughed with me, shared despair at times, but has persisted with me to complete our studies. To you all I owe a debt of gratitude; I thank you all sincerely for the part you have played in bringing this thesis to fruition.

I am indebted to the support given to me from the Nursing Education Research Foundation who granted me two sums of money to assist in the production of this thesis. The first grant enabled me to undertake the typing of the transcripts, a very costly affair and the second assisted me in my travel costs to attend the Nursing Institute for Heideggerian Hermeneutical Studies in the United States of America. The latter experience was invaluable and I gained a great deal from having participated in an international study experience directed by Professor Nancy Diekelmann, an inspiring nurse author leader, scholar and teacher. I have been invited back to an advanced Institute. This I hope to attend in 1994.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE OF CONTENTS</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER ONE:</strong> INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW **</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background to the Study</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context of the study</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical background</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing Education in New Zealand</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-political context</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic considerations</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital Environments</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The clinical environment</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational values and orientations</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance of the study</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure of the thesis</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER TWO:</strong> LITERATURE REVIEW **</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer of Nursing education to the general education system</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current relevant nursing literature</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand studies</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature from other countries</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER THREE:</strong> STUDY DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY **</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The choice of Phenomenology as method for the study</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The nature of Phenomenology</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assumptions of Phenomenological research</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Phenomenology as method ........................................ 38
Interviewing ............................................................... 38
Relationship between researcher and participants .................. 39
Research activities inherent in Hermeneutic Phenomenological method ........ 39
Key Phenomenological concepts as used in this study ................. 40
Hermeneutics ............................................................... 46
The Hermeneutical circle ............................................... 47
Transformations in the interpretation of text .......................... 47
The research process ...................................................... 48
The importance of the method for Nursing scholarship .......... 51
Summary ................................................................. 52

CHAPTER FOUR: THE RESEARCH PROCESS ......................... 53
Description of the study ............................................. 53
Gaining the study participants .......................................... 53
The participants ......................................................... 54
Table 1 ................................................................. 55
Table 2 ................................................................. 55
Study settings ............................................................. 56
Investigating the phenomenon - data collection methods ............. 56
External ethical monitoring of the study ................................ 58
Risks to the participants ................................................ 58
The choice of participants ............................................. 59
Informed consent .......................................................... 59
Anonymity ................................................................. 59
Research ethics ............................................................ 60
CHAPTER FIVE: THE PROVING GROUND .......... 65
BEING AN OUTSIDER
BECOMING AN INSIDER .......... 66
SPATIALITY .......... 66
Orientation .......... 67
Outsider-insider .......... 69
Becoming an insider .......... 74
Acquiring local knowledge .......... 77
Gaining a sense of predictability .......... 79
Summary .......... 87

CHAPTER SIX: DEVELOPING A SENSE OF WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A NURSE .......... 88
INTENTIONALITY .......... 88
Becoming connected with others .......... 89
Working at relationships .......... 90
Helpful and unhelpful experiences .......... 101
Becoming entrusted .......... 107
The giving over of responsibility .......... 108
Freedom to embody nursing .......... 110
Being part-student-part-nurse .......... 112
Summary .......... 113
CHAPTER SEVEN: DWELLING IN THE WORLD OF NURSING PRACTICE 115
BEING IN THE WORLD 'DASEIN' 115
Ensuring possibilities 116
Being able 124
Being in control of the self 126
Intuition 130
Problem facing 132
Caring ethical practice 133
Making clinical judgements 135
Recognising the moral demands in nursing practice 138
Being accountable 140
Being a competent practitioner 145
Summary 146

CHAPTER EIGHT: MAKING SENSE OF THE PAST - ANTICIPATING THE FUTURE 148
TEMPORALITY 148
Involvement 150
Foreground thinking and background thinking 150
Reviewing the past to make sense of the present 152
Value conflicts 153
Preparing for the State Examination 154
The situation as personally meaningful 155
Being aware of the self 156
Preparation for the future 158
Preparing for colleague Relationships 161
Clinical judgement that leads to advocacy 162