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THE NURSING CLASSROOM CLIMATE:
COOLER FOR TRADITIONAL-AGE STUDENTS WHO ARE MALE

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Marietta Joyce Bell-Scriber

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**THE NURSING CLASSROOM CLIMATE:
COOLER FOR TRADITIONAL-AGE STUDENTS WHO ARE MALE**

By

Marietta Joyce Bell-Scriber

A DISSERTATION

**Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of**

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Department of Higher, Adult and Lifelong Education

2005

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ABSTRACT

The Nursing Classroom Climate: Cooler for Traditional-Age Students Who Are Male

By

Marietta Joyce Bell-Scriber

The purpose of this study was to describe the nursing classroom climate and the perceptions and experiences of traditional-age student nurses who are male as they relate to the nursing classroom. A qualitative research procedure in the form of a case study was used to answer the descriptive research questions: (a) What is the classroom climate for traditional-age students who are male? (b) If an inequitable or sex-biased classroom environment is found to exist for traditional-age student nurses who are male, what are the nursing faculty behaviors that contributed to this environment? (c) If an inequitable or sex-biased classroom environment is found to exist for traditional-age student nurses who are male, what are the student behaviors that contributed to this environment?

A purposeful sample included eight traditional-age nursing students, four who were male and four who were female. I interviewed these eight students to obtain their perceptions and experiences. Five themes emerged from the analysis of the data: faculty characteristics and behaviors, the students' learning experiences, other students' characteristics and behaviors, additional inside classroom factors, and outside classroom factors. Additional findings from interviews with faculty, classroom observations, and a review of the textbooks were added to provide breadth and depth to these descriptions. Findings from this study support a nursing classroom climate that is cool to traditional-age male students and warm to traditional-age female students. Coolness in

the classroom for men was caused by unsupportive faculty behaviors and characteristics, unsupportive male learning experiences, and additional inside classroom factors. There were also unsupportive factors described outside the classroom that contributed indirectly to an uncomfortable experience for the male students.

The findings of this study of differential treatment to men in nursing classrooms may result in a feeling of uneasiness, reduced student motivation and participation, and perhaps a change of major or withdrawal from the program by male students. Thus, nurse educators need to take measures to identify and eliminate bias from their classrooms.

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2005

To all of the men in nursing who bring unique and valuable gifts to our profession

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CHAPTER ONE

The Nursing Classroom Climate: Cooler for Traditional-Age Students Who are Male

There is a nursing shortage crisis (HRSA, 2002). The demographic make-up of nurses reveals that men represent only 5.4% of the nursing workforce (AACN, 2001). Therefore, there is a potential solution to the nursing shortage by bringing more men into nursing. But, a man is not just a warm body to fill a vacancy. Men also add value and enhance the quality of nursing care that can be delivered.

According to the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) (2002), the shortage of a national supply of registered nurses (RNs) was estimated to be 110,000, a 6% shortage, in the year 2000. The HRSA expects this shortage to grow to 12% by 2010 and to 20% by 2015. If this shortage remains unaddressed, it is projected to grow to 29% by 2020 (HRSA, 2002). Although there have been nursing shortages in the past, this shortage is different. Because women today have increasingly more career options available to them and intelligent women are seeking other career opportunities, nursing can no longer rely on an unlimited supply of women in the potential draft pool (O'Lynn, 2004). Therefore, it is important to increase the number of men in nursing to help fill the profession's vacancies (O'Lynn, 2004).

Data on the composition of nursing graduates reveals that 91% are female. The nation's population, however, is 49% male (AACN, 2001). Although men represent about one-half of the nation's population, today's nursing students do not reflect the characteristics of the population they serve (Brady & Sherrod, 2003). Thus, there is an opportunity to bring more men into the nursing profession.

Bringing more men into the nursing profession not only fills vacancies but also enhances the quality of nursing care. A nursing workforce that had more men would

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provide increased opportunities for nurses to provide care to clients who were of the same sex. Same-sex caregivers may reduce embarrassment and provide enhanced comfort for the client. In some religions, it is important that segregation by sex occurs. For example, for Muslims, same-sex caregivers should be assigned whenever possible (Galanti, 2005).

A relatively simple solution to increasing the number of men in nursing is to support and retain male nursing students in the education environment so they can be launched into the profession. However, it appears that nursing education is not retaining men. According to Villeneuve (1994), the attrition rate of male students in nursing education is higher than that of their female colleagues, with an attrition or failure rate as high as 100% among the men in some classes.

Little is known about what is contributing to this attrition or failure rate of men in nursing education. Men have been part of the nursing profession for centuries (Kelly, 1975; Meadus, 2000; Okraninec, 1990). However, there is a paucity of research regarding male student nurses and the needs, frustrations, and problems that occur in nursing programs (e.g., Fister, 1999; Kelly, Shoemaker, & Steele, 1996).

Background of This Study

Research findings (e.g., Callister, Hobbins-Garbett, & Coverston, 2000; Sherrod, 1991) that do exist related to nursing education suggest that male students experience role strain. This role strain may be related to feelings of inadequacy when caring for childbearing families. Role strain may also be attributed to a fear of sex stereotyping by other members of the health care team. Additional findings suggest that the experiences of male students are unique to their sex (Paterson et al., 1996). Such a unique experience has been described during the male student's experience of learning to care for patients. Another finding is that the experiences of male students may be frustrating and stressful

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(e.g., Callister et al., 2000; Fister, 1999; Kelly et al., 1996; Paterson et al., 1996). An example of a frustrating and stressful experience is when male students reported feeling discriminated against in the clinical setting.

These research findings for men related to role strain, frustration, and stress coupled with high attrition rates suggest there are barriers to success for men in nursing education programs. Although the exact relationship of these barriers to male student academic success, retention, and satisfaction is relatively unexplored (O'Lynn, 2004), it has been suggested that barriers contribute to male student attrition rates as high as 50% (Sprouse, 1996). Therefore, if barriers are contributing to the poor retention of men in nursing education, it is important to identify these barriers and develop strategies to reduce them (O'Lynn, 2004).

A recent study by O'Lynn (2004) described the prevalence and perceived importance of barriers to men in nursing education programs. In this quantitative study, practicing male nurses responded to proposed barriers for men in the nursing school environment. His findings suggest that nursing education has failed to provide an environment optimally conducive to retaining men as students. His findings also suggest that there are nursing classroom climate factors, such as gender-biased textbooks, faculty referring to the nurse as "she," faculty making anti-male remarks, and so on, that may be contributing to a less than optimal nursing education environment for men. Because this study is based on a recall of events occurring more than 10 years ago by the majority of men (61%) and the barriers were pre-determined by nursing faculty, the literature, and the researcher, it is important to explore the nursing classroom climate to determine if these barriers do exist.

There has been very little research on nursing education classrooms. As

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previously discussed, O'Lynn's (2004) indirect study addressed gender-based barriers for male students in nursing education programs and included some barriers related to the classroom. Additional minimal findings include students' perceptions of classroom environments being related to age, academic success, and personality types (Harrell, 1989; Letizia, 1989), the classroom being perceived as less than optimal, faculty and students perceiving the classroom differently (Letizia, 1989), and students being more attentive, interested, motivated, and so on when their perceptions were changed to a preferred environment (Fisher & Parkinson, 1998). Although there have been discussions in the nursing literature about the need to eliminate sexism (Shellenbarger, 1993) and how culture and diversity impact communication and learning in the classroom (Brown, 2001), there has only been one research study on the nursing classroom climate (Serex, 1997). This study's findings suggest that students, regardless of sex, do not perceive the climate to be chilly. However, this was not a study that was unique to nursing and has questions related to methodology that include a small sample and a modified survey (See Chapter Two). In contrast to the findings from Serex's (1997) study, findings from my pilot study in 2003 suggest that men perceive inequity and there are barriers to retention for men in nursing education. Therefore, there is a need for more research to assess the nursing classroom climate for students who are male to address this ambiguity and inconsistency.

Although there has been little research on nursing classrooms, there is a substantial amount of literature on other classroom climates, particularly as they relate to female students. Faculty characteristics and behaviors (e.g., Drew & Work, 1998; Hall & Sandler, 1982; Sandler, Silverberg, & Hall, 1996; Taylor, 1997), student characteristics and behaviors (e.g., Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; Carpenter, Friar, &

Lipe, 1993; Constantinople, Cornelius, & Gray, 1988) and additional inside classroom factors (Canada & Pringle, 1995; Ferguson, 1992; Sandler et al., 1996) have been suggested to contribute to what can be described as a chilly classroom climate for some students. Although most of the literature describes inequities related to female students, men may also face inequities in the classroom. These inequities may occur when they are students in a major that is considered nontraditional for their sex (Serex, 1997). Therefore, it is important to assess the nursing classroom climate for male students who are majoring in nursing because it is a career considered nontraditional for men.

Focus of This Study

The purpose of this study was to describe the nursing classroom climate and the perceptions and experiences of traditional-age student nurses who are male as they relate to the nursing education classroom. I explored the following research questions:

1. What is the classroom climate for traditional-age students who are male?
 - a. How do traditional-age students who are male describe their personal experiences in the nursing classroom?
 - b. How do these classroom experiences of traditional-age students who are male compare with the classroom experiences of traditional-age students who are female?
 - c. What are the underlying themes that account for these experiences?
2. If an inequitable or sex-biased classroom environment is found to exist for traditional-age student nurses who are male, what are the nursing faculty behaviors that contributed to this environment?
3. If an inequitable or sex-biased classroom environment is found to exist for traditional-age student nurses who are male, what are the student behaviors that

contributed to this environment?

Importance of This Study

It is important to create an environment in the classroom where students can feel supported and be successful in their learning (Brophy, 2004). There is a trend in the literature to refer to this type of classroom climate as warm and caring and to a classroom with opposite characteristics as cool or chilly. A warm classroom climate occurs in a social context where students feel comfortable asking questions, seeking help, and interacting with their peers (Brophy, 2004). It is also a climate where students feel safe, take responsibility for their own learning, and learn from each other (Beck, 1995). According to Maher and Tetreault (2002), creating a warm classroom climate can be a challenge because of the variables that both teachers and students bring to the classroom. One of these variables is the sex of the student. Whether a student is male or female may reveal complex and shifting relations of privilege that can be masked by any one ideological position. The goal is to reveal, challenge, and change any relationships or positions that are interfering with a warm and supportive classroom climate for all students.

The presence of men in nursing programs changes the demographic composition of nursing students and brings into question how male students are treated. Differential treatment may contribute to a feeling of uneasiness, reduced student motivation and participation, reduced help seeking behaviors, dampened career aspirations, a change of major or withdrawal from the program, and even a decision to leave an institution (Hall & Sandler, 1982; Serex, 1997). Women in discriminatory educational environments are suggested to begin to believe and act as though their presence is at best peripheral or at worst an unwelcome intrusion and their career goals are not matters for serious attention

or concern (Hall & Sandler, 1982). It makes sense that men may also have these perceptions and behaviors when they are in a discriminatory educational environment.

At the college level, sex-related treatment is suggested to contribute to recruitment problems when students spread the word about classrooms that are considered more stressful to individuals of a certain sex (Taylor, 1997). Classroom interactions that contribute to sexual bias may inhibit student achievement (Shellenbarger, 1993). An inhospitable classroom environment may happen particularly in majors that are dominated by one sex (Taylor, 1997), such as nursing. Discriminatory classroom behaviors may reinforce the invisibility of male students who are already feeling uncomfortable because of their minority status. Negative messages may convey to men their lack of importance and value, not only in the program, but also in the profession.

Identifying sex bias and inequality in the nursing classroom is important. Faculty who reinforce student perceptions that some fields of study are masculine and some are feminine may encourage students to shy away from majors considered inappropriate (Hall & Sandler, 1982). Because nursing is historically perceived as a feminine field of study, faculty may be inadvertently sending a message that only women are welcome. Thus, as other programs have lost female students with talent and potential who have perceived they are unwelcome (Hall & Sandler, 1982), nursing programs may lose male students if they perceive nursing is not a career option.

Nurse educators need more knowledge about nursing education classrooms and whether these environments are producing an unsupportive classroom climate for traditional-age student nurses who are male. This knowledge can facilitate improvement in classroom management and pedagogical strategies that will hopefully lead to an

improved educational experience. An improved educational experience may contribute to higher retention rates for traditional-age male students.

Conceptual Framework

Three bodies of literature were used to develop the conceptual framework for this study. This literature includes (a) gender issues in classrooms in higher education, (b) the nursing education classroom, and (c) student nurses who are male. The literature on higher education was explored because there is only a scant amount of research on the nursing classroom and nursing education is in the environment of higher education. The literature on gender issues in classrooms in higher education does address inequity related to sex and describes faculty characteristics and behaviors, student characteristics and behaviors, and additional classroom factors that contribute to a less than ideal climate in the classroom. The literature on the nursing education classroom and student nurses who are male describes research that has previously been done in these areas and provides a framework for placement of this study and its findings.

A model is conceptualized based on the literature and findings from this study. At the core of the model (see Appendix A1) is the concept that the climate of the nursing classroom is an important factor in nursing students' perceptions and experiences in nursing education. As the model illustrates, nursing students' perceptions and experiences in the nursing classroom are dependent on nursing faculty characteristics and behaviors, other nursing students' characteristics and behaviors, and additional inside and outside classroom factors. Faculty characteristics and behaviors in the classroom may be dependent on the teacher's sex (Brooks, 1982) and the presence of gender blindness (Bailey, Scantlebury, & Letts, 1997). Some examples of faculty behaviors that may contribute to an inequitable climate in the classroom is providing more time and attention

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to some students (Sadker & Sadker, 1986) and verbalizing sexist and discriminatory comments (Hall & Sandler, 1982).

Other students' characteristics and behaviors in the classroom may contribute to the classroom climate. Examples of some of these characteristics and behaviors include self-defeating behaviors (Brazelton, 1998; Carpenter et al., 1993) and peer sexual harassment (Allan, 2002).

Inside classroom factors that may contribute to an inequitable climate in the classroom include the physical arrangement of the classroom (Ferguson, 1992) and the absence of role models and mentors of the same sex (Allan, 2002). Dominance in the number of students of one sex in the classroom (Canada & Pringle, 1995) may also be a contributing factor

There may also be outside classroom factors that have an indirect effect on the students' overall educational experience that have not been previously discussed in the literature. Because classrooms do not exist in isolation and reflect the culture, values, and beliefs of the greater society in which the classroom is positioned, they may have an indirect effect on the classroom climate. This indirect effect happens because faculty and students bring these outside factors into the classroom and are included in behaviors, perceptions, and experiences.

Posited in this model is the notion that although faculty behaviors, student behaviors, and additional factors inside and outside of the classroom all contribute to creating the classroom climate, there can be different perceptions by students of different sexes about the warmth or chilliness of this climate. In other words, although the classroom climate is created, different populations can perceive and experience it very differently. A metaphor, as an example, is that it is 45 degrees Fahrenheit in Philadelphia,

which seems to be a mild climate to someone from the Midwest, a warm climate to someone from Alaska, and a cold climate to a Southerner.

Definition of Terms

To provide a common basis for understanding, the following definitions are included for terms that are used in this study.

Sex-bias. This term, sex-bias, refers to an inclination to be prejudiced against male nursing students and have a preference for female nursing students.

Classroom climate. The term classroom climate refers to the overall educational environment in the classroom. The perception of this climate can vary from warm to chilly depending on the prevailing conditions of support, acceptance, and equality.

Faculty characteristics and behaviors. These are faculty characteristics and behaviors specifically related to the faculty who taught in the classroom of study.

Discriminatory behaviors. This term refers to unjust or prejudiced faculty behaviors that make a distinction in treatment towards male students based on their sex.

Students' learning experiences. This term refers to learning experiences that occurred for both male and female students related to the classroom of study.

Inside classroom factors. These are factors inside the classroom of study that are in addition to the faculty characteristics and behaviors and the other students' characteristics and behaviors. These factors directly contributed to the climate of the classroom.

Outside classroom factors. These are factors outside of the classroom of study that contributed indirectly to the classroom climate for male students.

Sexism. This term refers to the assumption that one sex is inferior to another.

Role strain. Role strain is a component of role theory and has been defined as

difficulty in fulfilling role obligations (Goode, 1960).

Traditional-age students. Students who are of traditional-age for the university environment. These are students who are between 18 and 23 years of age.

Summary

In Chapter One, I have established that more men are needed in the nursing profession. Increasing the number of men would address a nursing shortage crisis and may enhance the quality of nursing care. A relatively simple solution to increasing the number of men in nursing is essentially to support and retain male nursing students in the education environment.

But there appear to be barriers to retaining men in nursing education where attrition has been reported to be higher than their female colleagues. A gain to the profession will not be realized if men enter nursing education and are not retained to graduation and launched into the field. These disgruntled students may also spread the word about an unsupportive learning environment that may discourage other men from entering the profession.

Although a recent study by O'Lynn (2004) supported perceptions by practicing male nurses that there are a number of barriers to men in nursing education programs, this study addressed the climate in the nursing classroom. There have been discussions in the nursing literature about how culture and diversity impact communication and learning in the classroom. There has only been one study on the nursing classroom environment to assess the nursing classroom climate. This study addressed this gap in the research by describing the classroom climate and the perceptions and experiences of student nurses who are male. Because previous research has supported that the student's age affects the perception of the nursing classroom climate, male nursing students were selected who

were of traditional-age for this study.

The next two chapters explore the related literature and the methodology for this study. Chapter Two is an overview of the reviewed literature and provides an in-depth look at the relevant studies conducted on gender issues in the classroom, the nursing classroom, and student nurses who are male. Chapter Three discusses the methodology that was used in this study and the rationale for the research design. In Chapters Four and Five, I provide the findings from this study. In Chapter Four, I discuss the findings related to the students who are male. In Chapter Five, findings related to students who are female are compared to students who are male. Finally, in Chapter Six, I provide an analysis of the findings and their relationship to the current literature. I also discuss limitations of the study, recommendations for future research, and implications of the study for nursing education.

CHAPTER TWO

Critical Review of the Literature

This study described the nursing classroom climate and the perceptions and experiences of traditional-age student nurses who are male as they relate to the nursing education classroom. There were three primary sources of literature that informed the conceptualization of this study. Because there has been very little exploration related to the nursing education classroom, the first body of literature is drawn from the higher education literature and addresses gender issues in the classroom. This body of literature is quite substantial and provides an overview of factors and variables that may contribute to gender bias and inequity in the postsecondary education classroom.

The second body of literature is drawn from nursing and addresses previous research that has been done related to the nursing education classroom. This literature is particularly scant. It does provide, however, a background to what has been previously explored and defines what is already understood about the nursing education classroom environment.

The third body of literature is drawn from nursing and focuses on student nurses who are male. Although there is a paucity of research in this area, it is very important because it provides a background for what is already known and understood about male students and their experiences in nursing education. First, I discuss the literature related to gender issues in the classroom. Next, I discuss the literature related to nursing education classrooms. I then discuss the literature on student nurses who are male. A conclusion about the literature related to these three areas is provided at the end of the chapter.

Gender Issues in the Classroom

Researchers used qualitative and quantitative approaches to study gender issues in the classroom and included samples of both male and female faculty and students. These researchers assessed classrooms in accounting, art, business, classics, communication, economics, education, engineering, fine arts, foreign language, health science, humanities, literature, math, natural science, psychology, social science, technology, and veterinary medicine. See Table 1 for methods used for data collection.

Table 1

Methods for Data Collection on Gender Issues in the Classroom

<u>Data Collection Tools</u>	<u>Researchers</u>
Observations	Boersma, Gay, Jones, Morrison, & Remick, 1981; Brazelton, 1998; Constantinople et al., 1988; Cornelius, Gray, Constantinople, 1990
Questionnaires	Crombie, Pyke, Silverthorn, Jones, & Piccinin, 2003; Drew & Work, 1998; Fassinger, 1995; Follet, Andberg, & Hendel, 1982; Heller, Puff, & Mills, 1985; Rosenfeld & Jarrard, 1985
Tape and Paper-and-Pencil Recordings	Brooks, 1982
The Student Instructional Report II	Centra, 2000
The Classroom Environment Scale	Rosenfeld & Jarrard, 1985
The Sex-Role Egalitarianism Scale	Rosenfeld & Jarrard, 1985

Table 1 (continued).

Methods for Data Collection on Gender Issues in the Classroom

<u>Data Collection Tools</u>	<u>Researchers</u>
Classroom Climate Survey	Serex, 1997

Researchers Hall and Sandler (1982) wrote a paper related to the classroom climate compiling information from several sources, including studies of postsecondary and other classrooms; reports and surveys by individual researchers, campus groups, and postsecondary institutions; and individual responses to a call for information related to their project. This paper was followed by Sandler et al. (1996) in a landmark report on a chilly classroom climate for women that included quantitative and qualitative studies conducted in classrooms at all levels and in related settings; observational data; surveys; interviews; conference proceedings; institutional publications; and research in fields such as linguistics, communication, sociology, education and women's studies. These researchers also analyzed videos, electronic mail discussions, anecdotal information, and reports from campus commissions and committees to inform and support their report.

However, because of its subjective nature, the literature related to gender inequity in the classroom has been questioned and sometimes declared as largely descriptive and anecdotal (Pascarella et al., 1997). Even when attempting to declare supporting evidence, the findings have been inconsistent and contradictory (Drew & Work, 1998; Sandler et al., 1996). Faculty characteristics and behaviors, student characteristics and behaviors, and additional inside classroom factors will be discussed as variables that may contribute to what has been described as a chilly classroom climate (Sandler et al., 1996) for some students.

Faculty characteristics and behaviors. Most of the faculty characteristics and behaviors that have been described in the literature relate to inequitable classroom climates for female students. Although most faculty would probably report that they create classroom climates that are warm and equitable for all students, this may not always be the case. The reason for this perception of a warm environment is what some have referred to as “gender blindness” (Bailey et al., 1997, p. 29). This “blindness” forms a gap between espoused theory and theory in practice where teachers are typically unaware of the reality and significance of their behaviors and how they may contribute to an inequitable environment (Sadker & Sadker, 1986). This lack of awareness is proposed to result from teacher education and staff development programs, which may do little to prepare teachers to see the subtle, unintentional, but damaging gender bias that may characterize classrooms (Sadker, 1999).

This lack of awareness is not gender-specific. Although one might expect that a member of the faculty would provide a classroom climate that is more equitable to a student who is of his or her gender, this may not always occur. Because men and women learn cultural expectations of gender roles, faculty of both genders may behave in ways that create gender inequity and uncomfortable classroom climates for students (Allan, 2002). Some of these faculty behaviors include verbalizing sexist and discriminatory comments against women and displaying the female body in an uncomfortable and sexist way (Follet et al., 1982; Hall & Sandler, 1982)), providing more attention and time to male students (Sadker & Sadker, 1986), communicating lower expectations for women students (Sandler et al., 1996), exhibiting behaviors that reflect the influence of internalized stereotypes (Sandler et al., 1996), excluding women from class participation (Sandler et al., 1996), treating men and women differently when their behavior or

achievements are the same (Sandler et al., 1996), not including women in informal relationships and research work (Drew & Work, 1998), singling women out by offering special sessions for them away from other students (Taylor, 1990), and sexual harassment (Sandler et al., 1996). The gender of the teacher and how well students like the class may have an effect on whether or not the students will be offended by these behaviors.

According to Follet et al., (1982) who compared attitudes and perceptions of male and female students in a professional school environment, women (50%), more than men (30%) perceived sex discrimination existed in the college of veterinary medicine, primarily to the disadvantage of women ($p < .01$). Some examples of this discrimination were where students reported sexist remarks and depictions of nude women in slide presentations.

Hall and Sandler (1982) also reported discriminatory comments that were unsupportive to female students. These behaviors included: (a) comments that disparaged women in general, (b) comments that disparaged women's intellectual ability, (c) comments that disparaged women's seriousness and or academic achievement, (d) using a tone that communicated interest when talking to men and a patronizing or impatient tone when talking to women, (e) favoring men when choosing student assistants, and (f) provoking and reinforcing expected behaviors that have a negative value in the academic setting. Lack of support also included eliciting nonverbal behaviors as a silent language to send a message of inclusion or exclusion. This silent language indicated interest or attention that was opposite to what was being said, communicated expectations of success or failure, and fostered or impeded students' confidence in their own abilities. General studies of nonverbal behavior have supported that women may be more sensitive to nonverbal cues than men (Henley, 1977).

Another faculty behavior described as contributing to gender inequity in the classroom for female students occurs when faculty direct more attention and time to male students (Sadker & Sadker, 1986). According to Sandler et al. (1996), some of this attention may be displayed in (a) calling on men by name and more frequently than women; (b) coaching men but not women; (c) nodding, gesturing, and paying more attention when men speak; (d) waiting longer for men to answer questions; (e) making eye contact with men more often than with women; (f) responding more extensively to men's comments; (h) standing closer to male students; (i) giving female students less feedback, help, and praise; and (j) engaging in more informal conversation with men than women before, after, and outside of class. These behaviors may communicate to female students that their ideas are not important enough to probe further or they are not intellectually capable of succeeding (Cooper, 1993). This effect may compound in a classroom that is predominately male. One woman who received her Ph.D. in computer science recalls such an experience as a student.

I can't tell you how many times in a math class I gave a suggestion for a proof and got no response from the professor, only to have one of the nearby males in the class suggest the same thing a few moments later and be congratulated for a good suggestion. (Klawe & Leveson, 1995, p. 31)

According to Taylor (1997), although there are some female students who may feel put down and disregarded when they ask a male faculty member a question and he will not meet her gaze, there are other female students who may not even recognize these behaviors or if they do, they do not feel they are being treated inequitably. It is important to determine how much of a student's self-confidence and self-esteem interplay with perceptions when passing judgment on faculty behavior that is perceived as inequitable.

Sandler et al. also reported (1996) findings that included faculty behaviors that communicated lower expectations for women students. These behaviors included: (a) asking women easier questions, (b) grouping women in ways that indicated they have less status, (c) implying women are not as competent as men, (d) doubting women's work and accomplishments, (e) expecting less of women students in the future, and (f) calling males men and females girls or gals. There were additional faculty behaviors that yielded the possible influence of internalized stereotypes. These behaviors included: (a) using classroom examples that reflected stereotypes about men and women; (b) addressing women as honey, dear or cutie, emphasizing their social or sexual roles, rather than intellectual ones; (c) describing women by their physical characteristics, which focuses on a woman's physical attributes, rather than her accomplishments; (d) expressing stereotypes that discourage women from pursuing academic and professional careers; and (e) downgrading women who are not attractive or attentive to their appearance. Faculty behaviors were reported that excluded women from class participation. These faculty behaviors included: (d) ignoring women students while recognizing men students; (e) addressing the class as if there were no women present, and (f) interrupting women students or allowing peers to interrupt them. Sandler et al. (1996) also reported that faculty treated men and women differently when their behavior or achievements were the same. This behavior included attributing women's achievements to something other than their abilities.

According to Drew and Work (1998), female students do not report interacting informally with faculty after class as often as do male students. They also do not interact with faculty as much on research projects. Women, therefore, may be missing informal relationships and research work that may lead to enhanced opportunities.

Although faculty who single women out by offering special sessions for them could be seen as demonstrating a positive or supportive behavior, it is not always perceived this way by students. Sometimes these special sessions communicate that the students who are singled-out need more help than their male counterparts (Taylor, 1990). This separation may send a message that they are not capable of achieving success on their own.

According to Sandler et al. (1996), sexual harassment has also been reported by women. Twenty to thirty percent of women undergraduates have reported some form of sexual harassment from male faculty. This harassment may make them feel uncomfortable or angry and cause them to drop courses, leave school, or suffer emotional damage.

It is interesting, however, that only 10% of male and female students have reported feeling occasionally or frequently offended by faculty behaviors (Follet et al., 1982). One explanation for why they did not feel offended is because they liked the class. Both male and female students will perceive professors as less sexist if they like the class (Rosenfeld & Jarrard, 1985). Another reason could be that the professor of the class was of the same gender. Students tend to rate same-gendered teachers a little higher than opposite-gendered teachers (Crombie et al., 2003; Feldman, 1993), particularly with female students' ratings of female teachers (Centra, 200). Another consideration was that the professor was female. Overall, female professors tend to be perceived as less sexist than male professors (Rosenfeld & Jarrard, 1985).

Just as gender-biased faculty behaviors have been reported, there are other studies that contradict these findings. In several studies (Boersma et al., 1981; Constantinople et al. 1988; Cornelius et al. 1990; Heller et al., 1985), there were no reported differences

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based on a student's gender in the behavior of male and female teachers, nor did students feel they were treated differently when they solicited advice or participated in class. In fact, Heller et al. (1985) found some evidence to suggest that women in psychology and economic classes have been treated as if they were more capable than men.

There are also some studies whose findings support faculty characteristics and behaviors not being related to student behavior. Constantinople et al. (1988) reported that the gender of the teacher does not have an effect on student participation. Cornelius et al. (1990) reported in a follow-up study that attribution differences in participation rates were a result of students bringing different expectations of appropriate behavior into the classroom as opposed to differential treatment by faculty. Fassinger (1995) also found that a professor's interpersonal style is not directly related to higher student participation rates. Instead, participation rates were found to be related to the way professors design their courses and the traits students bring to the classroom.

Student characteristics and behaviors. Along with faculty behaviors, there are student characteristics and behaviors that may contribute to an uncomfortable classroom climate. Most of the discussions and findings in the literature relate to student characteristics and behaviors that affect female students. In research studies, classes from accounting, the arts, engineering, natural science, and social science were assessed utilizing observation (Brazelton, 1998; Constantinople et al., 1988), interviews (Belenky et al., 1986), and questionnaires (Carpenter et al., 1993). There was also discussion (Sadker & Sadker, 1994), reviews of the literature (Allan, 2002; Frenkel, 1990; Richardson & King, 1991; Taylor, 1997), and evaluation of faculty workshops (Henes, Bland, Darby, & McDonald, 1995). Sandler et al.'s (1996) landmark report also included findings related to student characteristics and behaviors. Factors claimed to affect female

students include male student behaviors (Constantinople et al., 1988), student learning styles (Belenky et al., 1986; Richardson & King, 1991; Sadker & Sadker, 1994), a sense of isolation (Frenkel, 1990; Henes et al., 1995), self-defeating behaviors (Brazelton, 1998; Carpenter et al., 1993; Hesse-Biber, 1985; Taylor, 1997), and sexual harassment (Allan, 2002). The gender of the teacher may affect whether these factors are present.

Male student behaviors are reported to contribute to gender inequity for female students in the classroom (Sadker & Sadker, 1986). One such factor is the differential use of speech and language (Allan, 2002). Constantinople et al. (1988) reported male students to be more active in classroom communication than female students. With aggressive behavior, men can interrupt and dominate classroom discussions (Sadker & Sadker, 1986; Sandler et al., 1996). Brooks (1982), however, found that classrooms run by male professors reflected no differences in speech duration or frequency between male and female students. It was suggested that the attribution of a higher status to male professors by male students tended to dampen these students' dominance behavior.

It is also interesting to note that it is not only male student behavior that may contribute to silencing women. Even when not silenced through interruption, women may make more self-effacing statements by discounting their own comments and the relevance they bring to the discussion (Brazelton, 1998). Female students may be more reluctant to participate in class discussions, less willing to speak out and question, and less likely to feel they could hold their own in discussions with male peers (Hesse-Biber, 1985).

There are conflicting views as to whether students' learning styles are related to gender and contribute to inequity in the classroom. The collective scholarship on the

education of women has suggested that female students employ learning strategies that are inconsistent with a historically male-oriented approach to teaching (Belenky et al., 1986; Richardson & King, 1991; Sadker & Sadker, 1994). Women tend to be more collaborative, place a higher value on interpersonal relationships (Ferguson, 1992), use a different voice when making decisions (Gilligan, 1982), and communicate differently from men (Tannen, 1990). Male students have been reported to thrive in classrooms that are competitive and concerned with separate, analytical, and rational approaches to learning (Maher & Tetreault, 2002). Conversely, learning styles inventories, such as Kolb (1984), do not indicate that learning styles are gender-based.

Female students may experience a deep sense of isolation in male-dominated classes (Frenkel, 1990; Henes et al., 1995). Isolation may be detrimental to these female students because it does not facilitate learning. According to Sorcinelli (1995), students who feel isolated do not either have or take the opportunity to cooperate and work with other students to increase their involvement in learning. This lack of involvement may diminish their learning outcomes. Learning outcomes are enhanced when students are involved with other students and take what they think they know and offer it as community property among fellow learners. This sense of knowing can then be tested, examined, challenged, and improved before they internalize it (Shulman, 1999).

It is not always other students' characteristics and behaviors that contribute to differences in the classroom. Even when women's course grades are equal to men's, they may have lower course expectations (Carpenter et al., 1993). Women may also have unreasonably high expectations for their academic performance and experience a crisis in self-confidence when they do not achieve that level (Taylor, 1997).

Taylor (1997) has suggested that when women experience anger, frustration, and

disappointment in the classroom, they may respond to these feelings by crying. Men may react differently and are more likely to swear and or gesture. Crying could be perceived as a healthy response to anger or stress. However, it may also be considered dysfunctional in a classroom, especially one that is male-dominated.

Although not described as contributing only to female students' classroom experiences, another student behavior that has been discussed as contributing to a chilly classroom is peer sexual harassment both inside and outside the classroom (Allan, 2002). Just as sexual harassment may affect the work environment, it may also affect the learning environment. When one is sexually harassed, a power structure is established that provides a restrained environment of intimidation and aggression (Stop Violence Against Women, 2003). Interestingly, Cranston's (1989) findings suggest that men in a counseling program were more likely to report discrimination against women than women were against men. It was suggested that perhaps men witness more indirect inequities than do women. Another interpretation is that men in this study were found to be more sensitive because of the characteristics of a male student who is more likely to enroll in a counseling class. An additional interpretation is that women may be unaware of discriminatory behaviors that they may perceive as normal.

Additional inside classroom factors. Along with faculty and student characteristics and behaviors, there are additional inside classroom factors that may affect the climate of the classroom. Most of the literature describes these factors in their relation to their effect on female students. A study at a state college using questionnaires (Ferguson, 1992), a study at a small liberal arts college using observation (Canada & Pringle, 1995), and a review of the literature (Allan, 2002) described additional inside classroom factors affecting the classroom. Sandler et al.'s (1996) landmark report also

included findings related to additional classroom factors. These factors include the physical arrangement of the classroom (Ferguson, 1992), the creation of a mixed-sex classroom from a single-sex classroom (Canada & Pringle), a lack of female role models (Allan, 2002), a lack of women's perspectives in textbooks (Allan, 2002), and the number of men in class (Canada & Pringle, 1995).

Sometimes environmental factors in the classroom may contribute to supporting a male-dominant atmosphere. One of these factors is the physical arrangement of a classroom. A classroom that discourages face-to-face discussions and encourages a more competitive atmosphere (Allan, 2002) does not favor the female student who is traditionally more interactive (Ferguson, 1992) and may not want to compete.

Another environmental factor affecting the classroom climate, according to Canada and Pringle (1995), is when single-sex classrooms become mixed-sex classrooms with the addition of men. When a coed environment is created, changes in faculty behavior may be triggered. While some professors might welcome verbal aggressiveness that men may bring to the learning environment, some may be more sensitive to it. This sensitivity especially may occur if faculty are women or favor a more egalitarian and noncompetitive pedagogy. These faculty might feel disconcerted and challenged for leadership in their own classrooms and this environment of competition may affect their interactions and relationships with male students (Canada & Pringle, 1995).

Much has been written in the literature about the importance of female role models for women students (Sandler et al., 1996). A lack of role models and mentors for women is especially seen in the more male-dominated professions, such as engineering, math, and physics (Allan, 2002). The lack of a critical mass of female instructors and role models may create a non-supportive environment for women. It is important for students

to observe other people of the same gender being successful in the field, as well as having positive role models for mentoring and support. Unfortunately, it is still possible for female students to obtain an undergraduate degree without ever having studied with a female faculty member (Sandler et al., 1996).

There is a lack of women's contributions and perspectives in classroom textbooks where stereotypes are common (Sandler et al., 1996). This may send a message to female students that women have either not achieved successfully or are not recognized for their achievements. It may also send a message in a male-dominated profession that the woman is not accepted and unwelcome.

The chilly classroom climate sometimes begins with numbers. Women who are low in number in male-dominated fields are more visible and may be subject to greater scrutiny. Being a minority may also contribute to feelings of isolation (Sandler et al., 1996). Also, increasing the number of men in the class has been reported to have a negative effect on women's participation (Canada & Pringle, 1995). As the number of men increases, the participation of women decreases. This decrease in participation could be due to men interrupting and dominating communication (Sandler et al., 1996). Interestingly, older female students may not find an increased number of men as intimidating as younger female students. Older students perceive themselves as participating more (Crombie et al., 2003), which could reflect increased self-confidence and less sensitivity to a male-dominated environment. Additional studies would be necessary to determine if this perception was accurate.

Summary. Most of the literature describes inequities in the classroom related to female students. Although some of the reports are inconsistent and ambiguous, there are findings that support a chilly classroom climate for some students. Although faculty

characteristics and behaviors play a role in creating the classroom environment, there are also other factors, such as students' characteristics and behaviors that may contribute to the amount of student participation and success. Some student behavior may be dominating and controlling. But even when not silenced by interruptions and aggressive communication, students themselves may play a role by setting unreasonably low or high expectations for their academic performance. Other factors that may contribute to an inequitable classroom environment are the physical arrangement, a lack of role models, gender-biased textbooks, and a change in the gender composition of the class.

Because there is ambiguity and inconsistency in the literature and some of it is claimed to be anecdotal, there is a need for additional research to better understand and control factors that contribute to an inequitable classroom learning environment. Most of the literature addresses gender issues related to female students. Therefore, there is a need for additional research that addresses gender issues in the classroom for male students. Men may also face inequities in the classroom. This inequity occurs when they are students in a major that is considered nontraditional for their gender (Serex, 1997), such as nursing.

Nursing Education Classroom

In the last 20 years, there have only been a few studies on nursing education classrooms. These studies have been limited to a quantitative approach, utilizing classroom environment scales and inventories (Fisher & Parkinson, 1998; Harrell, 1989; Letizia, 1989), classroom climate surveys (Serex, 1997), and personality type inventories (Harrell, 1989). Varying from studying 2 to 66 classrooms and up to 426 students, these studies have assessed both student and faculty perceptions of the classroom environment. Findings support that the student's age affects the perception of the nursing classroom

climate, the nursing classroom is perceived as less than optimal, and faculty and students perceive the classroom climate differently (Letizia, 1989); academic achievement and age are associated with students' perceptions (Harrell, 1989); students are more attentive, interested, motivated, cohesive, cooperative, and helpful to one another when perceptions are changed to a preferred environment (Fisher & Parkinson, 1989); and regardless of gender, students do not perceive the climate to be chilly (Serex, 1997). There is also discussion in the literature that sexism may exist in the nursing classroom (Shellenbarger, 1993).

Letizia (1989) studied classrooms that were predominantly (93.8%) female in diploma nursing schools to understand how age-integrated students and nurse educators perceived the social climate. Her findings suggest that age-integration affects the perception of the nursing classroom climate. Pre-adult students, defined as less than 21 years of age, described the ideal classroom as an environment where they liked the teacher and the teacher was supportive. Adult students, over 21 years of age, perceived teacher support and clear, organized classrooms to be most important. Both age groups perceived the actual classroom environment as less than optimal. Further findings suggest that teachers perceive the classroom climate differently from students.

Additional studies have been done on student nurses' perceptions of the actual or real and preferred or ideal classroom environment. In 1989, Harrell investigated students' perceptions of real and ideal social environments in nine nursing classrooms. Differences in personality types and academic performance were explored as they related to discrepancies in students' perceptions. The sample, 4% of whom were male, included registered nurses (RNs) and basic nursing students (working towards their RNs) who were working to acquire their bachelor's degree in nursing. Basic nursing students

perceived classes to be more business-like with very little teacher-directed fraternization. Classes in which registered nurses were the majority were perceived by students to be more personable and flexible. Although academic achievement and age were found to be associated with students' perceptions, personality types were not.

Fisher and Parkinson (1998) assessed student nurses' perceptions of actual and preferred classroom environments. These researchers studied two courses taught by the same instructor to gather data on students, 32% of whom were male. Data were collated and graphed to compare the actual to the preferred classroom environment. The researchers discussed the results with the students who then made suggestions for improvement. After implementation of selected strategies for two weeks, the researchers reassessed the students' perceptions to determine the effectiveness of the changes. Students' perceptions now reflected that the actual was closer to the preferred environment. Following the implementation of the strategies, the students were more attentive, interested, motivated, cohesive, cooperative, and helpful to one another.

Serex (1997) studied the perception of classroom climate by students in non-traditional majors for their gender. Including nursing students with students majoring in accounting, education, and engineering, Serex (1997) examined the interaction of gender and academic discipline and perception of classroom climate. Her findings indicated that, regardless of gender, students in these majors did not perceive the climate to be chilly. In fact, students, regardless of gender, in both education and nursing perceived a warmer classroom climate than those in accounting and engineering. It is important to mention here that the findings of this study bring forth questions related to validity. Although Serex reported reestablishing reliability with an internal consistency of .8731 with her modified survey, she did not report reestablishing validity. The obvious

question then is whether the instrument measured what it was purported to measure.

Shellenbarger (1993) proposed that sexism occurs in nursing classrooms. An example of sexism is where there is a lack of gender and lifestyle balance in the narratives and examples used by the teacher. This lack of balance may reflect that one sex is inferior to another. According to Shellenbarger (1993), sexism may occur without the teacher or students being aware. Suggestions for determining whether sexism exists are videotaping or audio taping and observing the class. Methods for facilitating less sexism are for teachers to write reminders on lecture notes to call on different students, rotate among students and encourage other students to participate. Other suggestions for teachers to eliminate sexism include: (a) using non-sexist textbooks; (b) eliminating competition; (c) enhancing connection by establishing an environment that allows students to grow and develop self-esteem by praising and encouraging students, encouraging class discussions and group projects, and admitting the teacher does not know everything; (d) eliminating sexist communication patterns, such as sexist pronouns, sexist nouns and generalizations about groups; and (e) achieving a gender and lifestyle balance in narratives and examples.

Summary. Researchers have studied the social climate of nursing education classrooms by assessing nursing students' and faculty's perceptions of the actual or real and preferred or ideal classroom environments. Findings include that teachers and students perceived the classroom climate differently and the perceptions of students are affected by academic achievement and age. Further findings support that while pre-adult students found classrooms to be business-like and described the ideal classroom as one where they feel liked and the teacher is supportive, adult students perceived teacher support and clear, organized classrooms to be most important, and found the classrooms

to be more personable and flexible. It was determined that it is possible to improve the learning environment of a nursing education classroom by implementing an agreed upon plan of action between the faculty and students.

Only one research study (Serex, 1997) specifically studied gender and classroom climate. Although the findings supported the claim that nursing students did not perceive the classroom climate to be chilly, this was not a study that was unique to nursing and included students from several other majors. Because there has been discussion about the need to take measures to identify and eliminate sexism in the nursing classroom, there is a need for additional research, beyond one study and unique to nursing, to determine whether there is consistency and validity to this finding.

Student Nurses Who Are Male

Older research studies (Aldag & Christensen, 1967; Shoenmaker & Radosevich, 1976; Snaveley & Fairhurst, 1984) on student nurses who are male focused on entry-level students. These studies included 1 to 10 nursing programs, an entire state's roster of registered nurses, and had samples ranging from 6 to 367 men. Findings of past research sometimes reflected inconsistent results. Shoenmaker and Radosevich (1976), utilizing questionnaires, found male student nurses struggling with a particular set of problems related to choosing nursing, future plans, having a different model for nursing, a desire to leave nursing at one time, role strain, and relationships with women in authority. Also utilizing questionnaires, Egeland and Brown (1988) discovered male nurses experiencing role strain, support from their families, and inadequate pay as a major source of strain in their work. Snaveley and Fairhurst (1984), collecting data with questionnaires, a social isolation instrument, and the Situational Communication Apprehension Measure, found an absence of a statistically significant difference between male and female students on

their experiences of social isolationism and tokenism within the profession. Becker and Sands (1988) and MacDonald (1977) utilized the Interpersonal Reactivity Index and questionnaires to suggest that men have an equal or higher aptitude for empathy to their female counterparts. Aldag and Christensen (1967) used personality inventories and found the personality profiles of female and male nursing students to be similar and categorized as feminine.

More recent studies from 1991 to the present (Baker, 2001; Boughn, 2001; Callister et al., 2000; Fister, 1999; Fister, 2000; Kelly et al., 1996; Okrainec, 1994; Patterson & Morin, 2002; Paterson et al, 1996; Sherrod, 1991; Streubert, 1994) have used quantitative, qualitative, and mixed method approaches, experimental and non-experimental design, and phenomenological and narrative strategies. They included both purposeful and convenience samples, ranging from 8 to 184 men, who were from 18 to 63 years of age. These studies have extended beyond the entry-level students of previous research to include first, second, third, and fourth year nursing students in diploma, associate, and baccalaureate programs and male nurses who were members of the American Assembly of Men in Nursing and those licensed in the state of Montana. Current research methods include role strain scales (Baker, 2001; Callister et al., 2000; Sherrod, 1991), questionnaires (Baker, 2001; Okrainec, 1994; O'Lynn, 2004), journal interpretation (Callister et al., 2000) and interviews using individuals, focus groups and case narratives (Boughn, 1994, 2001; Fister, 1999, 2000; Kelly et al., 1996; O'Lynn, 2004; Paterson et al., 1996; Patterson & Morin, 2002; Streubert, 1994). Although a study had been done at one Canadian university with multi-campus sites (Paterson et al., 1996), most of the studies have not extended beyond one setting. In these recent studies, three themes emerged for student nurses who are male: why men choose nursing as a career,

role strain, and the perception of their experiences.

Why men choose nursing as a career. Fister (2000) reported male students choosing nursing because of the blurring of gender roles, a broadened understanding of nursing, and emotional support from family and friends. Two studies by Boughn (1994, 2001) also assessed why men chose nursing. She found no differences in male and female students' desire to care for others, and both men and women had a strong interest in power and empowerment. Although women expressed an interest in empowering the patient, the men were more inclined to empower the profession as a whole and themselves as professionals.

Okraineec (1994) found men considered nursing as a career later than did women. Men and women were discovered to be quite similar in their reason for entering nursing education and nursing education was perceived as more challenging than expected by the same percentage of male and female respondents. An additional finding was that more men than women would recommend nursing as a career to men.

Role strain. Baker (2001) measured the degree of role strain experienced by first, second, and third year, male, diploma nursing students. His findings suggest that the level with which men identify with the male sex-role does not affect role strain. However, the level of male sex-role characterization did become a significant factor when it was combined with the level of female sex-role characterization. Respondents in the feminine and undifferentiated sex-role categories reported significantly more role strain than those in the androgynous category. The least amount of role strain occurred with men who had high masculinity scores or were identified as androgynous, possibly reflecting greater sex-role confidence and resistance to role strain. Role strain for male students was found to be significantly greater during the first and third years of 3-year nursing programs.

One speculation as to why role strain dropped the second year was that the community was a greater source of role strain in the first year when students were getting used to explaining their career choice to family and friends. The increase from the second to the third year was suggested to be due to students preparing to face and finally take on the occupational label of nurse in the real world.

Role strain for student nurses who are male has also been explored in the maternal and newborn practice setting by Callister et al., (2000) and Sherrod (1991). Findings suggest there were significant gender differences in role strain with male students having higher levels of reported role stress. There appeared to be a conflict between gender behavior and the behavior expected of a nursing student when caring for childbearing women and their infants. Two themes were identified that contributed to this stress: (a) feelings of inadequacy in caring for childbearing families, and (b) fears of gender stereotyping by other members of the health care team.

Perception of experience. Okrainec (1994) found 70% of male and female students were satisfied with their overall nursing education. Men were most satisfied with their relationships with nursing instructors (81%), relationships with peers (79.8%), and the length of the nursing program (75.9%). Female respondents were most satisfied with peer relationships (83.2%), the responsibilities of students in the clinical area (76.6%), and relationships with nursing instructors (75.8%).

The maternal-child setting is closely situated to the female student because of the woman's already inherent role as a child bearer and mother. The male student, however, may be less closely situated to this setting because of his supportive role in childbearing and his paternal role as father. Although one could anticipate that this environment could be stressful for students who are male, research findings related to the maternal-child

clinical setting have been contradictory. Although some studies have identified the obstetrical clinical setting as stressful (Callister et al., 2000; Sherrod, 1991), a qualitative study by Patterson and Morin (2002) found that men perceived this setting as providing an overall positive experience. Students who are male began this rotation with feelings of anxiety, fear, and possible rejection, but they found the birth of a child and the opportunity to teach as positive elements.

In another qualitative study, Fister (1999) reported men who experienced both favoritism and discrimination in the nursing education setting. Although they experienced the advantages consistent with male privilege in the classroom setting, they felt discriminated against in the clinical setting. These findings illustrate how stereotypic notions of gender may be embedded in our discourse and contribute to discrimination.

One theoretical approach for nursing practice has been based on the philosophy and science of caring (Tomey & Alligood, 2002). There have been conflicting findings (Okraimec, 1994) related to male and female students and whether a caring attitude is equal in both genders. Paterson et al. (1996) explored the experience of learning to care with student nurses who are male because caring had been perceived to come naturally to women and to be more difficult for men when relating to patients in a caring manner. Their findings suggest that perceptions of learning to care are perceived uniquely by gender. The male students felt they had to learn aspects of caring for patients that came naturally to their female counterparts. Their findings also suggest there is a lack of awareness by the faculty of the unique needs of nursing students related to gender. Additionally, there may also be a lack of preparedness for gender issues men may encounter in nursing.

Streubert (1994) described male students' perceptions of the nursing clinical

experience. The uniqueness for students who are male in the clinical experience was found to include role-related boundaries and the need to deal with their feelings about being men in settings that traditionally value women as primary care givers for intimate bodily functions. To adjust, it is suggested that men need to feel they are valued and members of the team.

In a landmark study by Kelly et al. (1996), male students perceived that they were treated differently from the female students, which contributed to feelings of isolation and exclusion. The students' beliefs that society perceived the nursing profession as feminine was an underlying thread to many of their perceptions and feelings. There was an expression of a need for male role models whom they believed would diminish the difficulty of being in a female-dominated profession.

According to O'Lynn (2004), barriers confronted by men in nursing school are pervasive, consistent, and have changed surprisingly little during the past few decades. A recent study by O'Lynn (2004) addressed male nurses' perceptions of the prevalence and perceived importance of gender-based barriers in nursing education programs. Some of the identified barriers included textbooks that referred to the nurse as she, an absence of male faculty, and faculty referring to the nurse as she. Additional identified barriers included male students not feeling welcome in the clinical setting and their decision to pursue nursing as a career not being supported by important people in the students' lives. There were also anti-male remarks made by faculty in classroom and different requirements and limitations for male students in obstetrics and gynecological clinical rotations. O'Lynn identified additional barriers, such as no other men in nursing class and no opportunity to work with male nurses in the clinical setting. Male students also felt they had to prove themselves because people expect nurses to be women.

In 1999, the *Wall Street Journal* reported a case of sexual discrimination against a university administrator who was charged with creating a hostile and intimidating environment for male nursing students. A male student reported twice failing a course in an atmosphere of sexual intimidation that he needed to graduate. He claimed that sexual intimidation contributed to his fear of failure and became a self-fulfilling prophecy (Dion, 1999).

In 2003, I performed a pilot study to examine the perceptions of student nurses who are male and their experiences in nursing education. I enlisted three men who were currently in or had completed a primary program for nursing education. Data collected from interviews found the experience of boredom and a lack of male mentors, faculty, and role models as barriers to retention. These men also perceived inequality in the nursing education environment. These perceptions included: (a) being assigned fewer female clients, (b) having female clients request not to have male students care for them, (c) experiencing prejudice from other students, and (d) feeling at a disadvantage when studying maternal and child nursing.

Summary. In summary, there have been only a few quantitative and qualitative studies on gender issues affecting experiences for nursing students who are male. Findings from previous research reveal why men choose nursing as a career and suggest that men experience role strain, which may be related to feelings of inadequacy and a fear of gender stereotyping. Additional findings also suggest that the experiences of male students are unique because they are men. Male students' experiences may be frustrating and stressful and may contribute to a perception of inequality. There is also the perception of gender-based barriers in nursing education by practicing male nurses and a report of sexual discrimination by a university administrator against a male nursing

student. However, because of the small amount of studies in this area, there are still significant gaps and areas that have not been explored. An area that contains a substantial gap in the literature is the nursing education classroom. As previously reported, there has only been one study (Serex, 1997) related to the nursing classroom climate. There have been no qualitative studies to determine whether nursing education classrooms have environments that contribute to the frustrating, stressful, and perhaps inequitable experiences of student nurses who are male.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I reviewed three bodies of literature: gender issues in the classroom in postsecondary education, the nursing education classroom, and student nurses who are male. Each of these areas provided a solid foundation for this study. I will now discuss how each body contributed to this foundation.

The review of the literature on gender issues in the classroom is somewhat inconsistent and ambiguous. However, most of the findings related to female students suggest that a chilly classroom climate may exist for some students. The gender of the teacher and gender blindness are nursing faculty characteristics that may contribute to an inequitable classroom environment. An inequitable environment for students of one gender has been suggested when faculty direct more time and attention to students of another gender. Other faculty behaviors that may contribute to an inequitable environment are using sexist and discriminatory comments, communicating lower expectations to some students, exhibiting behaviors related to stereotypes, excluding some students from class participation, treating some students differently than others, excluding some students, singling out students, and emitting sexual harassment. Faculty of both genders may be unaware of the reality and significance of these behaviors. The

gender of the teacher and how well the students like the class may have an effect on whether faculty behaviors are found to be offensive to students.

Student characteristics and behaviors may contribute to an inequitable classroom environment. These characteristics and behaviors include a sense of isolation, student learning styles, gender domination, self-defeating behaviors, and peer sexual harassment. Classroom factors that may contribute to an inequitable environment for students include the design and physical arrangement of the classroom, absence of role models and mentors, gender-biased textbooks, and the presence of a dominant number of students of one gender in the class.

The literature on the nursing education classroom suggests that teachers and students perceive the classroom climate differently. Students, whose perceptions are affected by academic achievement and age, perceive the actual classroom environment as less than ideal. When students and faculty agree on suggestions for improvement, and the strategies are implemented, the classroom environment is closer to students' preferences. There was one study, not unique to nursing, which claimed nursing students regardless of gender did not perceive the climate to be chilly. There has also been discussion in the literature that sexism may exist in the nursing classroom (Shellenbarger, 1993).

Although the literature on student nurses who are male is somewhat ambiguous, it suggests that these students experience role strain, have feelings of inadequacy, and fear gender stereotyping. Additional findings suggest that the experiences of student nurses who are male may be frustrating and stressful. There may be feelings of isolation and exclusion. Although there is support that they can experience advantages in the classroom consistent with male privilege, there is also support that male students have a perception of inequality and discrimination. There is also a lack of awareness by the faculty of the

unique needs of students related to gender and a lack of preparedness for gender issues men may encounter in nursing. Therefore, there is a need for additional research related to student nurses who are male. It is important to address this ambiguity and increase faculty awareness of factors that may contribute to an inequitable learning environment for male students.

There is a paucity of literature on student nurses who are male. There is also a minimal amount of research on the nursing education classroom. Although there is a substantial amount of discussion in the literature about factors that may contribute to an inequitable classroom environment and the perception by practicing male nurses that there are barriers in nursing education related to the nursing classroom climate, there has been only one study that has addressed male students' perceptions of the climate in the nursing classroom. There has been no research that has included nursing classroom observations or compared male and female student perceptions of the classroom environment. Therefore, this study addressed these gaps and contributes to a sparse knowledge base about nursing classroom climates. In addition, this study is important to the existing literature base because of the depth and breadth of this investigation. In the next chapter, I will discuss the methodology used for this important investigation.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to describe the nursing classroom climate and the perceptions and experiences of traditional-age student nurses who are male as they relate to the nursing education classroom. A review of the literature reveals that nursing students who are male may experience role strain, have feelings of inadequacy, and fear gender stereotyping. Additional findings suggest that the experiences of male nursing students may be frustrating and stressful. There may be feelings of isolation and exclusion. Although there are many factors that have been perceived as gender-based barriers for male students in nursing education, this study focused on the nursing classroom. The research questions that guided this study are:

1. What is the classroom climate for traditional-age students who are male?
 - a. How do traditional-age students who are male describe their personal experiences in the nursing classroom?
 - b. How do these classroom experiences of traditional-age students who are male compare with the classroom experiences of traditional-age students who are female?
 - c. What are the underlying themes that account for these experiences?
2. If an inequitable or gender-biased classroom environment is found to exist for traditional-age student nurses who are male, what are the nursing faculty behaviors that contributed to this environment?
3. If an inequitable or gender-biased classroom environment is found to exist for traditional-age student nurses who are male, what are the student behaviors that contributed to this environment?

Design

I used a qualitative research procedure in the form of a case study to answer the descriptive research questions. I chose qualitative research because the classroom environment for nursing students has been relatively unexplored. Qualitative research is useful for exploration, especially when the topic has not been previously addressed with a certain sample (Cresswell, 2003).

I selected a case study approach because it allowed an in-depth exploration (Cresswell, 2003) of nursing classroom climates. I used three methods to collect data: semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and a review of the textbooks. I observed one classroom, 22 times, over the course of the semester for a total of 42 hours of observation. Because this study is part of a larger research study, I interviewed 6 instructors and 6 male and 15 female students from the classroom for a total of 21 interviews. The data relevant to this dissertation includes 4 male and 4 female student interviews and the interviews from the 6 instructors. I also reviewed the readings in the textbooks that were related to this course.

I used a qualitative approach. Therefore, there are qualitative assumptions that guided this study. The following distinctions and characteristics, identified by Gillis and Jackson (2002) and Streubert and Carpenter (1999), formed the assumptions that provided the framework for this study:

1. There are multiple realities when describing a phenomenon.
2. Reality is socially constructed and context interrelated.
3. The discovery of meaning is the basis of knowledge.
4. The researcher is committed to identifying a perspective to understanding that will support the phenomena being studied.

5. The researcher is committed to a rich reflection of the participants' point of view.
6. Inquiry should not disturb the natural context of the phenomena studied.

The Setting

This study took place at one purposely selected site in Michigan: a four-year university. I chose a university rather than a community college because there was a higher probability that it had more students on campus who were directly out of high school and would reflect the more traditional-age college student. This site was also carefully selected because it currently reflected one of the two main education pathways for registered nurses, baccalaureate degree programs. The baccalaureate degree program prepares the student for entry into nursing as a registered nurse.

The university selected is a public university that had an enrollment for the 2004-2005 academic year of 22,063 students, 18,393 of whom were undergraduate students. I was not able to obtain the racial or ethnic data of the university's student population, but the racial make-up of the city in which the university is located is 67% White, 20% African American, 13% Hispanic or Latino, <2% Asian, <1% Native American, and <1% Pacific Islander. This is a non-secular community with many private, religious schools and colleges. Primarily a four year institution, this university has a large health professions program that includes professions like nursing. Admission to the undergraduate nursing major is selective and highly competitive. It is important to note that this is a university in which I am not a faculty member and do not teach any classes.

After receiving approval from human subjects' committees at both Michigan State University and the university where I was going to do my research, I contacted the university and inquired about the availability of a medical-surgical classroom for study. I

selected the medical-surgical classroom because it provides nursing students the basic knowledge and skills for entry-level nurses and does not provide an environment that has already been described in the literature as uncomfortable to one gender. Such a gender experience has been reported in maternal-child nursing courses where male students described the environment as uncomfortable and stressful (Callister et al, 2000). Adult medical-surgical nursing courses also serve as the introduction to nursing and to all nursing courses that subsequently follow (Morse, 1995). Thus, they set the stage, establish an outlook, and provide the foundation for further learning (Morse, 1995).

Sample

Observation sample. The purposeful observation sample consisted of one adult, medical-surgical, nursing classroom during fall 2004. I selected a purposeful sample because it provided participants who had firsthand experience with medical-surgical classrooms, which were under investigation. The classroom I selected had 53 students and included 8 (15%) men and 45 (85%) women. There were 7 faculty members who taught this course. I approached all faculty members for permission to observe the classrooms in which they taught. Six faculty members provided me signed informed consent and one faculty member declined. Thus, there were 5 classroom observations that included 9 hours of instruction that I did not observe. These observations were mostly related to the one faculty member who did not desire to participate. Therefore, 22 classroom observations were completed for a total of 42 hours. All students in the classroom also signed consent forms (see Appendix B) indicating their consent to have me, as researcher, observe the classroom. There was one student who declined to have the classroom tape-recorded, therefore I manually took ethnographic notes.

Interview sample. As previously stated, the interview sample for this dissertation

consisted of 6 faculty and 8 students. I approached all of the teachers who were teaching in this classroom during this semester for permission to interview. Six of seven teachers agreed to be interviewed. From the 44 students who agreed to be interviewed, 6 were men. I interviewed all six men, but selected the 4 men who were traditional-age college students, 20-22 years, as participants in this dissertation. Because this study focuses on traditional-age college students, I am excluding interview data from the other two men who were 32 and 33 years of age. Four female students were then selected from the female volunteers by matching them to the 4 male students according to age (20-22 years), ethnicity (Caucasian), and grade point average (GPA). When I needed to make a decision as to whether to match the student's age or GPA, I selected age. A small number of student participants were selected because of the extensive documentation that needed to occur from their narratives. The sample was large enough, however, to provide a rich and comprehensive description (Gillis & Jackson, 2002) of the classroom climate.

Data Collection

Prior to the fall 2004 semester, I made initial contact with a representative from the nursing school at the selected university via email. At this time, I explained the study and asked for participation. During this verbal discourse, two potential medical-surgical nursing courses were identified for the fall 2004 semester. I obtained information on the number of faculty and students.

After receiving approval from the human subjects' committees, I selected the medical-surgical course that was the earliest in the nursing program rotation. This course occurred during the seventh semester of this baccalaureate program with two semesters scheduled to follow for a total of nine semesters in the program. In addition to general education, science, mathematics, English, and psychology courses, there were three

nursing courses that had proceeded this semester. These proceeding three nursing courses included: an Explorations in Nursing course, a Self-Health and Wellness course, and a Health Assessment course. However, students had taken only one other theoretical nursing course that included a clinical and lab component prior to this course and there were two additional theoretical nursing courses with clinical and lab components scheduled for the following two semesters. This other theoretical nursing course had occurred the previous semester. Selecting a classroom beyond the first semester is appropriate because many of the detrimental effects reported in the literature accrued over time (Heller et al., 1985).

I then approached the nurse educators related to this course and asked permission to observe their classrooms. Proceeding to observe without informing the participants is an ethical dilemma (Gillis & Jackson, 2002). Therefore, I did not attempt to hide my observer role from the faculty and students. When they agreed, I had them sign a consent form (See Appendix B for consent form). I held a meeting with the course coordinator before the beginning of the semester to discuss my purpose and provide general background information related to my study. I also attempted to briefly meet with as many faculty members as possible before observing their classrooms.

At the first class meeting, I attended class and asked the students for permission to observe and record the classroom. All of the students returned signed consent forms (see Appendix B for Consent Form) providing me permission to observe the classroom. Because one student declined to have the classroom audio-taped, I manually took ethnographic notes about the classroom setting.

Approximately mid-semester, I provided the students in the classroom with student information questionnaires to collect demographic data (see Appendix C). At this

time, I also told them to note on their returned forms if they did not want to be interviewed. One female student who returned an information questionnaire requested not to be interviewed.

Observations. Observations were the first method for data collection. I observed the classrooms as a whole because there were not any formal small group interactions. As an observer, I recorded the students' and faculties' behaviors (see Appendix D for how observation is related to the research questions). I used focused observation where certain factors, defined as irrelevant, were ignored (Angrosino & Mays de Perez, 2000). Although I asked permission of all students and teachers to use a tape recorder to capture "reality" in a way that transcends my relatively limited capacity to interpret (Angrosino & Mays de Perez, 2000), one student declined. Therefore, I used my observation skills to capture as much of the classroom reality as humanly possible.

A typical classroom session that I observed was in a lecture-style format. The teacher often used an overhead, whiteboard, or computer with PowerPoint as tools to enhance the presentation. Some faculty members brought props (e.g., a baby mannequin) to the classroom. These props were either used in the front of the classroom as a display or the students were asked to pass them around for closer observation. The students were often asked questions as a whole and handouts were provided on the course's Blackboard site or passed out by the faculty member during class. There was usually a 10 minute break between the first and second hour of class time where the students were allowed to leave the room and converse with other students. On only rare occasions did the teacher excuse the class a few minutes early because she had covered the material for that session.

I collected information about the time, place, and date of the observation, made a

detailed sketch of the setting, and kept descriptive and reflective notes. The detailed sketch included the arrangement of desks, students, and location of the teacher. Reflective notes included speculation, feelings, problems, ideas, hunches, impressions, prejudices, and notes of other occurrences within the classroom.

I tested all observation tools for user-friendliness and ability to capture the classroom environment. This pilot was done in summer 2004 in a medical-surgical classroom at the university where I am employed. Permission was provided by another faculty member to observe her classroom and test these tools.

Interviews. For further in-depth probing, the second method of data collection was face-to-face interviews. I interviewed students and faculty in the last third of the semester. These interviews varied from 45 to 75 minutes, with 60 minutes being the typical time-frame. I asked different open-ended questions to students and teachers, which allowed them to describe the essences of their experiences from their different perspectives (See Appendixes E & F for Interview Protocols).

Prior to data collection, I interviewed one teacher and two students in nursing education at a different university during the summer of 2004 who were not eligible for the study (see Appendix D for how the interview schedules relate to the research questions). This piloting of the interview questions assisted me in determining if the interview questions were answering the research questions in the manner they were intended. I asked the interviewees about the clarity of the questions, their level of comfort in answering them, and if they felt any questions need to be added or removed. Changes were then made on the interview schedule reflecting this feedback (See Appendixes E & F for interview schedules for the major questions that I asked).

Data Analysis

After the interviews and observations were completed and the interview tapes were transcribed, I began data analysis. For this study, I used a phenomenological approach to data analysis. Because the purpose of this study was to describe the nursing classroom climate from traditional-age students' perceptions, the bulk of the data related to the findings was taken from traditional-age students' interviews. Additional data from faculty interviews, classroom observations, and an analysis of the textbooks were used to support or refute the students' perceptions when it offered a broader description of the classroom.

Coding was completed to assign meaning to the descriptive information compiled from the interviews during this study utilizing guidelines from Miles and Huberman (1994). As the students' interviews were reviewed, codes were attached to phrases and sentences. A "start list" (Miles & Huberman, 1994) was created from the conceptual framework, research questions, and key variables. Using this start list as a guideline, I coded and re-coded four interviews, two who were students and two who were teachers, to check reliability. The start list was then redefined and codes were discarded. After I had code-recode reliability >90% related to these four interviews and had a list of codes that I felt were representative of the data, I check-coded (Miles & Huberman, 1994) the data by having another nursing faculty member and nursing student who were not participants in the study code these same data sets. Codes were then expanded or amended according to my agreement with the others to achieve intercoder agreement of 94%. Participants were grouped as their interview data was coded, matching similar coded data together. Broader categories or themes were developed as they were conceptualized.

I discuss all information, even if it did not fit with the major themes, and introduce alternate ways to look at the data (Angrosino & Mays de Perez, 2000). I address rival explanations to offer internal validity to this study (Yin, 2003). Also, because I am not a faceless subject and invisible, I “deconstructed” the text where my biases and taken-for-granted notions were exposed (Angrosino & Mays de Perez, 2000).

Validation of Accuracy of Findings

This study offered triangulation of the data sources that included classrooms, teachers, and male and female students. The different data collection methods, which included observations and interviews, offered additional ways to compare the data. I used evidence from all of these sources to build a coherent justification for themes. Another strategy I used to assist with accuracy is a description of the findings with depth and breadth (Cresswell, 2003).

Because I have been a nursing student and am currently a member of the nursing faculty, I was placed in a particularly close relationship to the topic. Therefore, it was important for me to participate in bracketing before this investigation was started. According to Gillis and Jackson (2002), bracketing is a cognitive process used by researchers to assist them in setting aside their biases and personal perspectives about the research topic. Its purpose is to make known what the researcher believes about the topic so it can be approached honestly. Therefore, I kept a diary in which I wrote personal thoughts and feelings about the topic. After these ideas were disclosed, I set them aside and reviewed them during data collection and analysis. This assisted me in data collection and analysis in determining what was reflecting my personal beliefs rather than what was observed or reflected by the participants.

The fact that I am female cannot be ignored as a filter by which the data was

gathered and interpreted (Fontana & Frey, 2000). Along with bracketing, I provided an open and honest narrative to reflect the biases of this female researcher. I also used peer debriefing, where the study was reviewed by another researcher (Cresswell, 2003), to enhance the credibility of my findings.

Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the methodology that was employed to carry out this study in terms of logistics and data analysis. I reviewed the research questions and described the design of a qualitative procedure utilizing a case study approach. Assumptions that guided this study were discussed. I framed my role as researcher in this study and described the sample and setting. I then presented data collection and data analysis procedures and discussed how I attached validity and reliability to my findings. In the next two chapters, I will discuss the findings from this important investigation.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results-Part I

Generally, I describe this nursing classroom climate as warm to students who are female and cool to students who are male. This finding is supported by a thick description by 8 students, 4 who were female and 4 who were male. The following five themes emerged from analysis of the data: (a) faculty characteristics and behaviors, (b) the students' learning experiences, (c) other students' characteristics and behaviors, (d) additional inside classroom factors, and (e) outside classroom factors. There was support of a cooler classroom climate within three of the themes: faculty characteristics and behaviors, students' learning experiences, and additional inside classroom factors. Outside classroom factors may also have impacted the male students' experiences. Classroom observations, an analysis of textbooks, and teacher interviews were utilized to supplement the students' perceptions when I perceived that additional bound data provided a broader sense of the description of the classroom. Because nursing students' classroom experiences do not happen in isolation from learning experiences that occur concurrently in the nursing lab and nursing clinical settings, students' descriptions of experiences related to the classroom that were occurring in lab or clinical were included. Although this classroom was the main interest in this study, experiences from previous semesters were also included for sense-making purposes when it made sense to provide a broader description of the students' learning experiences in the program.

I begin this chapter by providing a brief description of the classroom, background descriptions of the 8 students, and characteristics of the 6 professors. I then discuss the male students' perceptions related to all of the themes, and include supplements from my observations as researcher and additional data from faculty interviews when they are

pertinent and relevant. At the end of this chapter, I provide a summary of the findings related to these themes and distinguish the findings that contributed to a warm, neutral, and cool classroom climate for the male students. In the next chapter, I discuss the female students' perceptions and compare and contrast them to the male students' perceptions. At the end of the next chapter, I provide an overall summary of the findings from both chapters and distinguish the factors that contributed to a cooler climate for the male students.

Description of the Classroom

The classroom was arranged in a traditional lecture style. There were 29 tables in three rows with a double row of tables in the center. Each table had three to four chairs, depending on its length. On one occasion, one of the professors arranged the room with the desks in the shape of a horseshoe because she wanted to be able to see the students better and include more students in the discussion. When the students were asked at the following class to vote whether they liked the arrangement better and would like to keep it that way, more students voted to change the classroom back to the traditional lecture style. Thus, other than on one occasion, the classroom was arranged in lecture style.

There was a whiteboard across the front of the room with a screen in front of it that some of the professors used for displaying overheads and PowerPoint slides. On the left side in the front of the classroom, there was a computer console and desk. As can be present in classrooms, most of the students selected to sit in the same area by the same students. In an attempt to be as non-obtrusive as possible, as researcher, I sat in the back row either on the left or right side of the classroom. The classroom's temperature was a frequent topic of conversation for the students and faculty who needed to layer clothing to keep warm.

Description of Students

There were 53 students in this classroom with eight (15%) of them being men. Of the 45 students who returned student information forms, 39 were female students and 6 were male students. The female students' ages ranged from 20 to 49 years and the male students' ages ranged from 20 to 33 years. The majority of the students were Caucasians. Only a few female students were more diverse in their heritage. These students included: (a) one Asian-American, (b) one Mexican-American, (c) two Hispanics, and (d) one American-Indian. There was only one Black man in this class, who always sat by himself on the far left side of the classroom. This student minimally interacted with the other students, remained in his seat during break, and then only talked when others talked to him first, which was on a rare occasion. I was told by the lead professor that he was a repeating student and was asked by her to not include him in my study because of the uniqueness of his situation. Because I felt it was important as a researcher to provide every student an equal opportunity to participate, I approached him one-on-one and personally asked him to participate in the study. He looked at me with reddened eyes that contained tears, nodded that he understood, but did not respond nor return a student information form, and thus was not included in this study. I sense he has an important story about his experience in nursing education that will sadly never be told.

From the 44 students who agreed to participate, 21 students, 6 men and 15 women, were interviewed as part of a larger study. For this dissertation, the four men who were traditional-age college students, 20-22 years, were selected, excluding the other two men who were 32 and 33 years of age. Four female students were then selected by matching them to the four male students according to age (20-22 years), ethnicity (E) which was Caucasian (C), and grade point average (GPA). When I needed to make a

decision as to whether to match the student's age or GPA, I selected age. Therefore, male students had GPAs that ranged from 3.0 to 3.3 (average GPA of 3.1) and the female students had GPAs that ranged from 3.0 to 3.66 (average GPA of 3.4). Students were asked to rate their expectations for this course as either low or high. All of the female students reported high course expectations (CE). Only two of the male students reported high course expectations. One of the men reported low course expectations and one of the men placed a circle between low and high and wrote "medium" as his rating for expectations related to this course. These self-reported student characteristics are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2

Students' Characteristics

Men					Women				
Name	E	Age	GPA	CE	Name	E	Age	GPA	CE
George	C	20	3.0	High	Nicole	C	20	3.66	High
Charles	C	22	3.3	High	Marie	C	22	3.65	High
Bill	C	22	3.1	Med.	Joy	C	22	3.1	High
Yoshi	C	22	3.0	Low	Jan	C	21	3.0	High

George

George is single, lives at home, commutes to school, and does not have any other responsibilities other than school. Both of George's parents are in health care and are very supportive of him. Initially, he was in school to become a physician's assistant (PA). He switched to nursing when he talked to a woman who was going into nursing and

learned about the nurse practitioner role. He claims he is glad he made the switch and prefers nursing because it is more holistic. He plans to further his education by obtaining his master's degree and is thinking about becoming a pediatric nurse practitioner.

George declares that he works hard to obtain his grades and that school does not come easy for him. He feels clinical learning comes easier for him than book learning. He feels this is partly due to the fact that he gets test anxiety and enjoys the "hands-on stuff" more than he enjoys testing. George stated that he liked the professors as people, but liked some teachers better than others. Although George reflected that he enjoyed being a student in this classroom, he admitted to getting very bored in class and would have liked different kinds of activities to make it a little more interesting. George felt that the role plays were "kinda dumb" and made him uncomfortable. He says, "I can't get into it because I'm not an actor and I don't like being in front of the class."

George states that he tends not to blame others if he does not do well on something. He reflects that he does not complain a lot because he believes things are the way they are for a reason. He perceived his successes as learning how to apply what he was learning in the classroom to the clinical setting and understanding why things are done a certain way.

It was fun to watch George in class and his interactions with the female students. Often a couple of women would walk into class with him. Sometimes, however, when the group of them got to the tables and chairs, George would be teasingly "ordered" to sit somewhere else. One female student in particular would smile and declare, "Don't sit by me!" She would tell George they just could not sit together because they socialized too much. Only on three occasions did George actually sit somewhere else. But, on these occasions, he actively socialized with the women during break, before, and after class.

You could tell that it was actually a compliment to George that the women could not sit by him. When they did sit together, which was often, they sat on the right hand side, in the back close to where I was sitting. Because of their close proximity to me, I could readily hear their conversations and the laughter and teasing that occurred frequently between them.

Charles

Charles is single, lives at home, is the youngest child in his family, and commutes to campus. He described himself as self-reliant and a bit of a loner. He admitted to having lived a sheltered life by attending private schools throughout his primary and secondary school years with people whom he described as having the same value system and priorities. He revealed that he holds a part-time job but works only during semester breaks.

Charles said he liked the professors. He described himself as a slightly above-average student and perceived that he worked as hard as he should, but felt somewhat disorganized. He thinks if he would read and study more, he would do better.

Charles stated that he prefers taking his own notes and is not a big fan of “this slide thing” because sometimes the professor just read them and did not teach the material. He claimed that he prefers less detailed notes and would like it if faculty would actually “get into the material.” He thinks he learns better when he can use as many senses as he can in learning. He said, “If I write it, watch it, and hear them doing it, I learn a lot better, a lot quicker.” He declared however that he could not keep up with the amount of information that was coming “rapid fire” during this course so he stopped taking his own notes and started using the handouts. He feels that he gets pleasure from a sense of accomplishment. He considers himself a good writer and gets pleasure when he

completes a big paper. Charles viewed his success as passing where he is not “just squeaking by,” but getting “a grip on the material.”

I noticed that Charles either sat alone or by another thirty-something male student on the far left side of the classroom, near the back. He infrequently interacted socially with the other students. He was curious about my presence, however, and approached and asked me, “What are you looking for specifically?” He was one of only a few students who asked questions about my purpose for being in the classroom beyond my initial verbal and written explanations.

Bill

Bill is single, a commuter student, and living at home with his parents. He holds a part-time job and finds sometimes he has to cram for a test because he had to work. He described both of his parents as outgoing and reasons that is why he is a people person. He felt he was growing as a person and perceived college as a great experience.

When Bill was younger, he said he was on Ritalin and struggled in school because his mind was always wandering and he daydreamed all the time. He admitted that it is still a challenge for him to pay attention all of the time. Although he described himself as a good student, he stated he has always been a “B” or “C” student and has to work hard to get these grades. He admitted to procrastinating a lot and recognized that he struggles with learning. He “deals with it” by making sure the professors know that he might need a little extra help and admittedly tries to get on the good side of faculty so they want to help him.

Bill said he liked the faculty a lot. He would have liked to have been chosen to participate in the role plays because he does not have any problem speaking in front of people. Because he notes other students get nervous and look away so they are not

selected by faculty, he would be glad to participate to help out the other students. “That’s an easy grade for me. I’ll role-play with anybody. Give me a script,” he offers.

Bill says he likes PowerPoint slides because all of the information is on the slides and he finds them helpful in studying for the test. He declares that he likes pictures and that is why it is hard for him to conform to reading off of a paper. He feels he needs a connector to help him with his learning and likes it when somebody in class tells a story related to the topic. He stated that studying hard for a test and doing well on a test is rewarding for him. He recognizes that he needs reassurance to build his self-esteem and likes getting compliments on his work from faculty and being noticed for how hard he worked. Bill perceived his growth in knowledge, maturity, and skill as his successes.

I noticed that Bill would often make humorous remarks in class and probably would be described by some students as the class clown. On one occasion when he provided an answer the professor said was not correct, he quipped, “Yeah, but it was still a great answer, don’t ya think?” Bill always sat with the same group of women and interacted very socially with them. I often heard Bill’s voice followed by female students’ laughter.

Yoshi

Yoshi is married and a commuter student. As he described, he does not consider himself a feminine man, but rather a normal guy who just wants to be a nurse. He is a certified nurse assistant and therefore has had previous clinical experience. He said that he may get his master’s degree eventually, but he does not plan on obtaining a doctorate. Yoshi is the oldest of six children in his family. He attributed this as to why he is interested in pediatric nursing. “I’m used to having a lot of kids, taking care of them and...putting stuff on cuts,” he said.

Although Yoshi said he enjoyed this class, learned a lot, and the class was able to keep his attention, he described himself as a “B” or “C” student. He related this to test-taking. “I’m just not a great test taker,” he admitted. He said he studies hard but he does not always do well on the tests. He reflected that he seems to do better with the skills and relates this to being more of a hands-on student.

As far as liking the teachers, Yoshi said it depends on the person as to how well he likes them. One of the things Yoshi declared that he does not like about nursing school is getting used to different professors, each with her own style of teaching and test questions. Yoshi described an excellent educator as one who seems to know how to bring things across to students. He feels it is important to him that what is provided in lecture is applicable. He likes when faculty provide case studies and finds examples and pictures help him to remember better and apply what is learned to the clinical setting. Yoshi perceives success when he passes everything without too much of a problem.

I noticed that Yoshi was a very quiet student who rarely spoke up in class. He always sat with the same female student in a row by themselves towards the back of the classroom on the left hand side. He did not interact very often with other students, but was always cordial in his interactions when he did. I was surprised when he agreed to be interviewed as I had suspected he would probably refuse.

Marie

Marie is single and lives in an apartment with four other students on the main campus. She feels that nursing is a good fit for her and looks forward to graduation. She stated that she loves the clinical experiences and was enjoying her current pediatric rotation.

Marie reflected that she liked the professors and loves learning. She felt she has

learned a lot in a short period of time. She hates procrastinating and tries to stay current with the material. She finds it difficult to sit and listen, likes it when the professors change things so their presentations are not so plain, and is aware that writing and visuals help her comprehend better. Marie stated that she studies a lot, but still finds the testing difficult. Part of this testing difficulty she attributed to test anxiety. She found that the amount of energy she put into studying did not correlate with her current grade for this course. She often perceives initially that she has done well on an exam, only to discover when she receives her grade that she missed small details that made her misinterpret the questions. A professed visual learner, Marie finds pictures and diagrams helpful. She stated that she liked the role-plays but would rather sit back and watch so she can take notes. She admitted that she would rather not participate because she does not like to speak in front of people.

Marie admitted the most frightening thing to her would be not to pass. Although she perceives that she will pass, she usually gets anxious towards the end of the semester, remembering other students who previously were not successful. She felt that comprehending the material and learning how to take the tests, which simulate the state board exam, have been her successes.

I observed that Marie always sat in a group of female students on the far left side of the room. She always sat next to a thirty-something female student and I could tell the two of them were good friends.

Nicole

Nicole is one of the youngest students in the class, is single, lives with her family, and commutes to school. She said she was raised in a “bible-believing” family. Sensitive to her young age, she stated that she does not usually tell people how old she is unless

they ask. She does not feel the need to publicize her accomplishments as a younger student and perceives publicizing her young age would be bragging unnecessarily. She comes from a home school background and did not attend a public high school. Although she was not previously in a social learning environment, she is not a shy person and is socially interactive with the other students. She said that her goal was to learn everyone's name in class. I noticed that she actively approached students to say hello and exchange names.

She revealed that she lives somewhat of a sheltered life where there is no discussion about what she calls "common sense things." She said that one of the common sense things that is not talked about much in her home is sexual activity. Although she learned about the sexual physiological process from her mother who is a nurse, she said there was not any discussion about other things, such as sexually-transmitted diseases or birth control. Thus, she declared that when these topics were discussed in class, they seemed very foreign to her. She exclaimed, "I have never seen any of this stuff before in my life. I have nothing to tie it back to."

Nicole described the professors as very supportive. As people, she says she liked them. She declared that she had not had any problems with the teachers because she says she looks beyond any abrasiveness. She felt her successes were learning time management and the nursing field. She described learning the field as learning where to find answers, rather than learning "a bunch of stuff."

I noted that Nicole usually sat in a group of female students in the middle of the room. She was friendly to other students, but not what I would describe as good friends with them. Interestingly, on one occasion, she brought her younger sister who looked to be around 7 or 8 years old to class. The young girl sat in a chair very quietly next to

Nicole and colored pictures the entire two hours, sipping on a drink and eating a snack. Nicole was very attentive to her sister when she needed something, but her younger sister rarely disturbed her or anyone else. I got the sense watching Nicole's younger sibling that this may have been an accurate representation of Nicole 12 years ago.

Jan

Jan is single, lives in an apartment by herself, does not work outside of school, and commutes to campus. By not working outside of school, she finds she is able to concentrate on school. Looking forward to graduation, she described herself as a good student who proudly reads all of the material and "studies her butt off."

Jan thought the professors were absolutely amazing, liked them a lot, and felt they were more supportive than in other classes she had taken the previous semester. She would like faculty to stay away from PowerPoint because she described this teaching technique as "getting very old." She said that faculty were motivated and seemed excited about what they were teaching. Compared to her learning in previous semesters, she said she was gaining a lot more out her education although this increased learning was not reflected in her exam grades. She said she used to be nervous in the clinical setting, but felt more confident this semester. She revealed that it bothered her that others talked in class, did not study as hard, but seemed to perform better on the exams. She described her successes as passing the exams and gaining knowledge and confidence.

I did not notice Jan or where she sat until after our interview. Because she so easily blended into the class, it was hard to distinguish her from the other young, female traditional students. When I did notice her, she sat in the middle in a group of female friends. I could tell she was very social and friends with several of the female students.

Joy

Joy is single, lives at home with her parents, and works part-time. She is admittedly shy. She was planning her wedding, which she said was a little distracting. She found the faculty helpful, well-educated, and generally supportive to students. She liked the faculty and described herself as a motivated student. However, she said she gets antsy in class and finds it difficult to pay attention for two hours. She liked the class but with the number of professors, found it could be confusing. Joy said she does not like it when the professor puts everything on the PowerPoint and she does not have to write anything down. She said she likes it when the professors tell their own stories from life “so you know they’re an average person.”

She admitted to sitting with friends who distracted her and understood if she sat away from them, she would probably learn better. She worried that she was categorized by the teachers as part of a group of students who were not as engaged in the classroom. She described the group she “hangs out with” as having been together since the previous semester. She perceived her successes as receiving an “A” on her paper and improving on the exams.

Again, I did not readily notice Joy in class. She blended in very well with the other young, female students. When I did notice her, she was very social with her friends and sat in the middle of the classroom.

Description of Faculty

Concerning gender characteristics, all seven professors in this classroom were women. Because one of the professors did not agree to participate in this study, the only characteristic I am able to report related to this professor is the number of times she taught in the classroom, which was reflected on the lecture schedule. She is referred to as

Professor X in the table below. It is important to note however that students were not advised to omit this professor from their discussions. The six professors' teaching experience in years, the number of times they lectured in class, as well as the depiction of the characteristics of the lead professor, are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3

Professors' Teaching Experience

<u>Name</u>	<u>No. of Years/Faculty</u>	<u>No. of Years/this Univ.</u>	<u>No. of Times Lectured in class</u>
Hershey	10	5	2
Patty ⁺	17	3.5	9 [^]
Sarah	34	26	6 ^{^*}
Anne	10	6 (adjunct)	1 ^{**}
Lynne	4	1	1
Kathy	16	1.5	5
Professor X	unknown	unknown	5 ^{***}

⁺lead faculty/coordinator of course

^{*}one class not observed

[^]one class co-taught

^{**}third time lecturing; first time lecturing in this class

^{***} all unobserved by researcher

Male Students' Descriptions of Experiences According to Themes

Faculty Characteristics and Behaviors

In this theme, I describe faculty characteristics and behaviors. First, I describe these characteristics and behaviors primarily as perceived by the male students with some observations from me, the researcher, that are directly related to the students' perceptions. Next, I describe additional faculty characteristics and behaviors observed by

myself as researcher and reported to me in interviews by other faculty.

Descriptions from male students with some related observations. Yoshi noticed that the professors taught differently from those in classes he took previous to the nursing program. He noticed that some professors, although very good nurses, were not good educators and vice versa. He described Kathy as a very, very good teacher who seemed to know how to bring things across to students. He described what he liked:

Her lectures have been very informative and interesting at the same time without being boring. She does case studies at the end of every...section. (This) gives us an example. The examples and pictures...show what they're trying to say (and) helps me remember things...to apply...in clinical settings.

He perceived Patty as an excellent nurse from his conversations with her. He felt, however, that her lectures tended to be a lot of information and not always something that could be applied. He said, "I like her. It's nothing against her. It's just her teaching style."

George perceived the faculty as pretty down-to-earth and easy going. He said the classes were more organized than the previous semester. He also admitted that some things in class, like the absence of dates on lecture notes, were confusing for him. He also believed certain faculty were more interesting to listen to than others because they were better at getting his attention. He felt some faculty were more approachable than others, not because they were intimidating but because they were not as outgoing. He perceived that faculty "make learning hard where the students can't just breeze through it" and thought that faculty expected a lot from the students. He also felt faculty seemed very interested in student success.

Charles described the faculty as professional. He thought that the majority of them had been nice and congenial with the students. He also thought that the faculty

“loaded on a lot of paperwork.” Although said he could see the value of the paperwork, some of it he perceived as just “busy work.” Bill agreed with some of the workload being just busy work. He felt it was particularly bothersome when he was putting a lot of time into the assignments and he was not “getting credit for it.”

Bill felt that some teachers made him do more work than others and that this was a reflection of their teaching style. But, he also felt that they were always there to help. A problem he was having with the classroom was the different number of faculty who taught. He found the different teaching styles and personalities a little difficult to adjust to as a student. He said one teacher let students talk and another teacher let students know that it would be a quiet class with little disruption where no one would leave until break. The six professors that I observed mostly let the students talk. On occasion, comments would be made, such as, “We’re having class here!” or “Okay, let’s get back to our professional behavior.” But those kinds of class control comments came infrequently in the classes that I observed.

Not only were there were no male faculty members in the classroom, but half of the men had the perception that there were also no male faculty members in the entire nursing program. Interestingly, however, there was one male presence at the nursing school that all of the men seemed to have located with their radar but had not formally met. It was interesting how the role of this person was perceived differently by the male students. Some of the men perceived him as a faculty member, one as a helper, another as part of administration, and a fourth as a combination of both. Yoshi described him as this man in the distance who “seems to be more of... administration than anything. He does not show up in our classes...or...do anything that has to do with class.” Bill described this person as someone who is not an instructor, but who helps out with the first semester

of nursing. George stated, "There's one guy...who is ...part of the faculty. He's the only male faculty member in nursing." Charles agreed that this person is a faculty member. He stated that the reason that he did not teach anything is because he did not have his master's degree yet. His perception was that this person helped out with the equipment and the running of the nursing program. He perceived this man as caring about him, even from a distance. He declared, "Whenever he sees me in the hall, he says hey, how are you doing? And makes sure he makes a point of saying hi to me." During the time I was observing, I did not observe this man or see a man interacting with the male students in or outside of the classroom.

Although George was not bothered that there were not more men in the faculty, Yoshi said that he would like to see more men in the faculty because he would like to be able to interact with them and learn from their experiences. He added, "I would...like...(to ask)...(What was) it like? What kind of things did you have to go through?" He declared that he would like more access to male professors and suggested to have them come and do a guest lecture. But, he said he would like more male faculty even if they were not presenting. "I would like to see at least one male professor somewhere," he said.

Bill agreed that it would be nice to have a "guy instructor" to whom some of the men in the class could relate. But, he also perceived that the lack of male faculty members had not bothered him in the sense that it had interfered with his learning. He said, "I knew what I was getting into...that it's a predominantly female area and there were gonna be some things I'd have to overcome. So I just work with it." But, he also perceived that the presence of a male instructor could offer the opportunity of having a "buddy." Protectively, however, he said he worried that this male nursing faculty person

may be looked at with prejudice by the female students and that the female students might claim that this male faculty person was showing favoritism to the male students. He perceived this favoritism would be displayed by the conversation being directed to what the men wanted to talk about.

Charles had on his radar a male mentor in the mental health clinical setting that was scheduled for the following semester and discussed what he was looking forward to. “I’ve heard he does a little more progressive things...like getting you out into the environment and seeing how homeless people live. (So, I’m) looking forward to that rotation.” he said excitedly.

George perceived the faculty as eliciting behaviors that made him feel as a student, he was not “below them.” He said, “If you just try to get along with them, they are not going to push you away.” Two other men perceived this differently. Yoshi said he recognized that the stereotype of female nurse is still there and that faculty may unintentionally be bringing gender bias across sometimes in class. Perhaps a lack of gender blindness was evident when Charles and Yoshi reported faculty behaving with an air of superiority or aloofness and felt they were sometimes being seen as a lowly or stupid student. Charles added, “You ask questions, and they’ll be...a little harsh with you.” Although “it’s not a usual thing” and the behaviors seemed to be a lot better than in previous semesters, according to Yoshi:

(There is) a terseness. Sometimes in voice tone. Sometimes in body language. It’s usually not in the words that they speak. It’s the way they say it. You just don’t know what you’re talking about and your feelings on a specific subject don’t matter.

Yoshi described one teacher who seemed to “be the worst at this:”

(She) tends to be a little bit condescending and not so much caring what the student thinks. And if you have something that disagrees with her, she...can't...discuss it. She'll have to argue with you. I've had a little bit of experience with (this condescending behavior) because every once in a while, I'll speak up (saying) I don't agree with that.

Yoshi felt he could not approach these professors about their behavior because they were above him and not a peer. I can not say that I noticed any harsh tones, condescending, or arguing behaviors by the six professors that I observed. I did note on one occasion that a man provided a different answer during an interactive session that was not recognized by the professor. However, I am not sure because of the size of the classroom whether the professor heard the man's response. On other occasions, both male and female students raised hands and were not recognized by being called on by the faculty. I did notice a professor say to two male students, "You guys aren't writing at all?" which may send a message that they were not engaged in learning.

Charles added, "Sometimes it's nice to have a faculty member who will say, 'I don't know.' He said he recognized that it is human nature to not want to admit what one does not know which he perceives can be a humiliating and humbling experience. However, he believes that "hemming and hawing and throwing out an answer" is avoiding the obvious, that the professor does not know the answer and will not admit it. I did notice on at least one occasion that a professor said, "I really don't know" in the classroom.

Charles stated that he would like to see faculty exhibit patience with students as they ask questions. He said it is particularly bothersome to him when faculty interrupt students who are asking questions. Charles shared the following:

I've noticed sometimes...when a student asks a question...they'll hear half the question and think they know where the student's going and then just butt in and give an answer. Whereas the student was going (in) a totally different direction. He states this is a struggle for him personally because he tends to make long, drawn out questions. He added that although he has a specific question he wants to get to, he wants to provide the background information first. He said as he is providing the background information, the faculty thinks that is his question and he is interrupted with an answer. I did observe a couple of professors interrupt a male student before questions were completed. One continued to talk over the "buts" and interruption attempts made by the male student. I am not able to say whether this student was Charles, however, because this occurred before the interviews when I did not know the students by name and my notes stated that these interruptions occurred with "a male student."

When it came to discriminatory behaviors, there were differences in perceptions. Yoshi said he sometimes got the feeling that some of the men who are trying to be nurses do not seem to get as much leeway. He stated that he saw this discrimination in a discrepancy in grading papers. He declared, "You know you did as well as another person or you've read a paper of another person and it's very similar to yours and they got better grades because (they were) female."

Yoshi also felt the professor was sometimes spending more time with women in the clinical setting. He noticed that he spent most of his time with the staff nurse doing things instead of getting any attention from the professor. He described an additional male student's lack of attention and provided some reasoning for why this was occurring:

I have one other (man in my clinical group) and he does all the stuff on his own.

By himself. He doesn't get any help from the professor (almost) ever. He is pretty

knowledgeable. Maybe she just trusts us more or maybe it's just that she doesn't wanta give us the time of day.

He said that this gives him the feeling that the faculty do not approve of men in nursing and sends a message that makes him feel like the faculty really do not want men to become nurses. This message he described as coming from more of the older professors. He attributes this happening because the older professors come from a time when there were fewer male nurses.

Some of the men described incidents with their male friends that they perceived as discriminatory because they happened only with male students. Yoshi described a friend who was in nursing who had a longitudinal elder initiative (LEI) assignment but was not able to complete it by the end of the semester and was not allowed to pass. Yoshi felt it was strange that he never heard of the program doing this with another person except for a man. He described the occurrence:

He wasn't able to get in touch with his person and he found out later...that the elder didn't want to do it. By the time he got another person and could meet with him, the due date was up. He couldn't get it in on time because of that person. Because of that, he couldn't go on to the next semester. (So), he's no longer gonna be a nurse. He quit. He's like, 'This is stupid. I'm not gonna be a nurse (if) that's the way nurses are.'

While Bill did not perceive any faculty discriminatory behaviors, he described faculty behavior towards him as one of tolerance. He said:

They deal with me being a male student. More and more males are becoming more prevalent in the nursing program so I think they're...learning to adapt and...treat everybody the same way. (They're) not (going to) step on some toes or

some bad things might happen. I haven't had any problems with (being treated differently) and I think that's because they know that.

But, George and Charles both felt they were pretty fairly treated and had not felt any biased behavior against them. George added, "If instructors were biased against me, it would bother me." Although George had heard other people like his male friends who are ahead of him in the program refer to discriminatory behavior, he had not noticed it and did not think it was true. He declared, "They've said...this professor hates guys. (But), I don't think so. I don't think any professors do. I think people just ...have to complain."

Although Charles had heard of other students who had experienced discriminatory behavior years ago, he felt the environment was now more accepting of male students in the program. He would even say that the environment was encouraging to male students. He offers, "I've had faculty see me in the hall and say, 'Oh, what are you going for? Nursing? Oh, good job. We need male nurses. It's good to see you in there.' It was not clear, however, if these were nursing faculty who displayed the encouraging behavior. Because the faculty said, it was good to see you "in there," perhaps these were faculty from outside of nursing.

Additional descriptions from observations and interviews. Prejudice was supported in an interview that I had with one of the professors where she described herself as having "a tiny bit of prejudice" she felt applied to about 30% of the men in this program. She described her feelings:

It seems to me...it's always the males who are whispering or condescending. I think a lot of the males that I experience that go into nursing, they're going into it for the wrong reasons. Whatever they wanted to do didn't work out. And they

have more of a chip on their shoulder, a confrontational attitude. Like we have to prove ourselves or something.

When this faculty member was asked if she would like to bring more gender diversity into the program, she stated:

No. I'd like to get rid of the men. They all wanta be...anesthesiologists. The majority of males that I have taught clinically are not in nursing for the reasons I think they should be in nursing. They wanta be PAs or they want to be nurse anesthetists.

Interestingly, none of the male students I interviewed declared wanting to become nurse anesthetists and one of them had left a PA program to come into nursing. This same professor used a generalization based on gender when she said, "Say you're angry at your husband..." during a lecture that I observed.

Another professor said, "We have faculty who don't know what to do with male nursing students." Some of them have said, "Oh, men are lazy," and she disagrees with that. She described a situation where she had recently given a senior male nursing student a female patient to care for and discovered it was the first time he had been assigned to a female patient. She felt he had been previously cheated by not being provided with learning experiences equal to the female students.

Another professor described a situation a few semesters prior where a male student had been placed in her clinical group to keep an eye on him because of threatening behaviors. She said he had previously exhibited some anger because he felt he had been treated unfairly when he was not permitted in the room of some of the women's exams at a women's clinic. However, she found the student behaved nothing like he had been described. She felt she got along with male students fine and had not

noticed any issues.

I also noted in class that a professor on one occasion made a disparaging comment towards men. This comment could have sent the message that men are troublesome. She said, "Aging men go through their own menopause. Believe me!"

Summary. In this theme, there were some neutral and supportive faculty behaviors and characteristics that contributed to warming the classroom climate for the male students. A neutral faculty behavior was the perception that the faculty taught differently. The warming faculty behaviors and characteristics were the faculty: (a) being easy going, down-to-earth, organized, and interested in student success; (b) being professional, nice, and congenial; (c) eliciting behaviors that did not make one of the men feel as a student he was below them; and (d) always being there to help. Although all of the men described at least one of these warming behaviors or characteristics, George described more warming faculty characteristics and behaviors than the other men, as reflected in (a) and (c).

There were also unsupportive faculty behaviors and characteristics that contributed to cooling the classroom climate. These cooling faculty behaviors and characteristics included being perceived that: (a) they assigned a heavy workload with some of the work being perceived as busy work; (b) some were not good educators; (c) they had varying teaching styles and personalities that needed to be adjusted to as a student with some being more likeable or interesting than others; (d) some were less approachable, made learning difficult, and expected a lot from the students; (e) some had an air of superiority, condescendence, aloofness, and sometimes sent a message to the men that they were perceived as a lowly or stupid student; (f) some had a harshness, terseness in voice tone and body language; and (g) they would not admit what they did

not know.

Although two men, George and Charles, declared they were pretty fairly treated and had not perceived any biased behavior against them, two other men described discriminatory behaviors that also contributed to cooling the classroom climate. Interestingly, George also did not believe discriminatory faculty behaviors described by other men were true. These discriminatory faculty behaviors described by the other men included: (a) not providing as much leeway in the grading of papers, (b) not providing as much help to men in the clinical setting, (c) eliciting unsupportive behaviors that contributed to negative occurrences happening only with men, (d) tolerating the men, and (e) not being supportive of men in becoming nurses. The latter was said to occur especially with older faculty. Additional cooling factors included the absence of male faculty and how the men looked forward to or desired to have more men with whom to interact, relate, and from whose experiences they could learn. Although all of the men described the presence of a male entity with whom they had not formally met, each student had a different perception of this unknown man's role at the university. This potential support person whose identity was confusing and unclear also contributed to cooling the classroom environment because the confusion made him not easily accessible as a mentor or support person to the men.

There were also faculty behaviors that were observed by me and reported by other faculty that contributed to cooling the classroom climate. These cooling faculty behaviors and characteristics included observing: (a) a faculty member making a negative statement about men in general, (b) a professor talking to the class like there were no men present, and (c) an attitude of prejudice by one of the faculty members. Additional cooling faculty behaviors included the reporting of faculty members who: (a) did not know what to do

with male students, (b) described male students as lazy, (c) cheated men from an equal learning experience by not assigning them to female patients, and (d) singled out a male student to be watched closely by another faculty member when he objected to unfair treatment.

Students' Learning Experiences

In this theme, I describe the male students' learning experiences. These male students' experiences are described entirely from their perceptions. These descriptions include experiences in the classroom and clinical setting.

Yoshi declared that he tends not to like "blood and guts" or some of the invasive tasks. So he felt that observing things he knows he is not going to be doing, like the operating room, is not interesting or helpful to him. He said he knows he would not be able to practice in these areas because his body would not let him. He felt he would pass out. He did however enjoy learning about cardiac topics. He said regardless of how confusing it was, he found it interesting. Because he is interested in pediatric nursing, he said he enjoyed learning childcare and about children as opposed to adult care. What Yoshi stated he did not enjoy was his obstetric experience (OB) that had occurred the previous semester. He stated, "They don't really hire male nurses very much anyway...(and) the nurses that worked there were very unfriendly to students, mostly male students. And...our experience was limited because a lot of the mothers didn't want a ...male present." Yoshi said that he understands the personal nature of the situation with the mother. However, he felt because of the lack of support by the OB nurses and reluctance of the mothers to have male students care for them that he didn't "learn a whole lot" and didn't "get a whole lot from the experience." He admits he does not know how the faculty could facilitate the OB learning experience better. "Maybe they

could be more sensitive to it,” he offers.

Bill said that medical-surgical nursing is his kind of nursing and he loves the cardiac patients. He feels he really excels in this area and is comfortable in this environment. He stated that one of the reasons that he felt comfortable was that there were lots of male nurses on the “cardiac and lung floors.” Unlike Yoshi, he described “blood and guts” as “his thing” and the operating room rotation as “sweet” where he was impressed by all those power tools they were using. Because he also likes children, he was eagerly anticipating his pediatric rotation that was to take place for him the following semester. He said, “It’s gonna be harder (for me than females). They might have a...better understanding than me in this area. But...I’m interested in (it) so I’ll put more time into it.” He also described loving his current mental health rotation. He felt comfortable dealing with mental health patients because of the male nurses that were present who exhibited authority that he perceived as easier for a man to portray. He described these men as needing to take the upper hand and having to be forceful with the adolescent patients who did not listen and were there because they were not able to control their anger.

Bill had heard from other men ahead of him that obstetrics (OB) was a tough area. Although he thought he would be different and things would be fine, he described the experience that occurred last semester as tough:

I always had to have another female with me. I didn’t really like it, but I knew there was legal issues involved and I didn’t wanta get in trouble. Somebody could say I was in there doing something I shouldn’t have been doing, and I’m just taking an assessment on this lady. (So) I’d have to have another nursing student or my nursing instructor...watching me do this assessment. When they’re just letting

the other female student(s) go on their way and do what they gotta do. I had to be on my toes and know what I was doing exactly (which) added a little more stress. I probably couldn't work in that area anyway because there was never any male nurses. The only males on the floor were the fathers of the babies...and the physicians...and of course, they don't need anybody to go in there with them. I didn't wanta be there. (I was) just surrounded by women and I'm the only guy...and...I just felt so out of place. They were helpful to me...but it's...kinda like, get me outta here! This is not for me!

Although Bill shared that he got through this experience by studying hard and moving on, he stated that putting more men on the floor would have made it more comfortable. He would have liked somebody to talk to other than the physicians, physician's assistants, and medical students who were the only other men, in addition to the fathers.

Unlike Yoshi and Bill, George said he loved his OB learning experience that took place the previous semester. He did not perceive he was treated differently by the nurses or faculty. He said it was a little uncomfortable at first. But then, he told himself that the patient would become uncomfortable because she would be able to sense that he was uncomfortable. Thus, although he proclaims he was nervous, he tried not to let the fact he was uncomfortable show and tried to "be a professional." He then declared that he found it to be a very worthwhile experience. He shared his reasons for why being uncomfortable was a good thing:

I think there needs to be a certain level of...discomfort when students are in the clinical setting because it keeps them at their best. And as a nurse, even with male patients, I'm gonna have to do things that are uncomfortable. I think that's what

nursing is all about...making people feel comfortable in an uncomfortable situation, even if you yourself are uncomfortable.

George stated that he also enjoys hands on learning. Because of this, he said he enjoys the clinical experience. "I enjoy working with the patients and seeing first hand the things we talk about," he stated.

Like George, Charles stated that he also loved his OB experience but it is an experience that happened for him more by chance. He actually stepped into this positive experience unknowingly. He describes how this happened:

We had to go in for a three hour shadowing thing and I signed up and I didn't know what I was...signing up for. They didn't have her position (posted) and I found out she was in the OB section. And when I was there, I got to watch a c-section and then also a natural delivery within a three hour span. So that was pretty incredible. So that, I really loved. The actual clinical I didn't get to see any of that stuff.

He said he experienced no discomfort and he did not feel he had been treated differently by the nurses or faculty.

All of the men described learning experiences that were meaningful as occurring outside the classroom, away from faculty and other students, and between them and their patients. Yoshi said that he was proud he had been able to help one or two patients get better care. He shared that he took the initiative to step in and explain things to patients and families when he perceived the nurses were "doing things without explaining what they were doing." George stated that he found the birthing experience meaningful. He declared, "Even though I'm not ever gonna be pregnant, some day I may have a wife that is." Bill said that being on the floor means a lot to him because he is applying knowledge.

He warmly stated, “I love seeing...the look in a patient’s eyes when they know that...you do care for them. They mean a lot to you and you mean a lot to them...and it’s rewarding.” Charles described a particularly meaningful patient encounter:

I was taking care of an older lady and she had multiple cancer, everywhere...throughout her body. And she was older. And I just sat in her room and I could tell she was lonely and I just asked her...how are you doing? I...just stood there and listened to her talk and she told me about...the troubles in her life. Just to listen to that was a powerful moment...for me...that’s the kind of nursing I like.

Summary. There were factors related to the male students’ learning experiences that contributed to warming the classroom climate. The male students liked learning about cardiac topics and patients. They enjoyed hands-on learning and mentioned liking clinical experiences in nursing related to pediatrics, the medical-surgical area, the operating room, and mental health. For one man, having more male nurses in the clinical areas helped him to feel more comfortable. Two of the men reported loving their OB rotations and did not feel faculty or staff treated them differently. Unfortunately, one of the experiences happened by chance and did not occur in the scheduled OB clinical rotation. Only one man, George, had a planned, worthwhile OB clinical rotation where he was able to effectively work through feeling uncomfortable.

There were also factors related to the male students’ learning experiences that contributed to cooling the classroom climate. For one man, observing things he knows he is not going to be doing is not interesting or helpful to him. Two of the men still wanted to talk about their OB clinical experiences that were described as stressful and uncomfortable. Factors described as contributing to these stressful and uncomfortable

experiences were: (a) a lack of support by the OB nurses, (b) reluctance of the mothers to have male students care for them, (c) differential treatment, and (d) an absence of male nurses. Because of these factors, some of the men felt out of place and did not learn or gain a whole lot from this experience. An additional cooling factor to the classroom was the fact that all of the men described learning experiences that were meaningful as occurring outside the classroom, away from faculty and other students, and between them and their patients.

Other Students' Characteristics and Behaviors

In this theme, I describe the characteristics and behaviors of other students. These characteristics and behaviors are again supported entirely from the male students' descriptions. Their descriptions are related only to the students in this class.

Yoshi perceived that the students in this classroom seem to be pretty studious and work hard. George described the students as "nice" and "good people," but he also perceived them as "a little whiny." He said, "They always have to have something to complain about." Bill also described the students as "good students" and perceived that some of the students were studying all the time. Bill also noticed the age differences. "You can tell (who) the college students and the second degree students (are)...split right in half. There's a lot of older women and men in the class that are...focused." Although he described the twenty-something students as also focused, he liked it that they still "goofed off" a little bit with him. Charles perceives that it is good to have older students in the class because they are usually the ones who are more aggressive and will speak to the professors concerning unfairness. "Sometimes you get unnecessary assignments that just seem a bit ridiculous to the students...or...there's apparently unfair grading." Because the older students will speak up, he feels it keeps faculty from taking advantage

of students.

Bill compared himself to the other students and noted there were some with health care experience that he did not have. He described a comparison:

There's a lot of others that are...nurse techs...and they have all that experience and they just know, boom, boom, boom. They already work at the hospital so they know exactly...what to do, who to call, where to find...(for example) a telemonitor machine.

He said he felt good when he did just as well as the other students without this previous experience. He perceived that some of the other students had a better hold on college than he did and knew what to expect. He also made comparisons between himself and the higher achieving students in the class. "I know there are "A" students in the class and it makes me feel good if I do a little better than them on the test," he added. He said he was aware that some of the women were having a tough time with the tests and were not achieving a passing grade. He attributed this failure to the women not liking the material. He attributed his current success to his loving the material.

George and Yoshi both agreed that questions about motives concerning selecting nursing as a profession never came from other students. Also, none of the male students described behaviors from other students that were discriminatory. When asked if there were any discriminatory behaviors, Charles answered emphatically, "Never." The behaviors that were described that bothered them had to do with interruptions in their learning. For example, George referred to an experience in clinical with another student whom he described as a "know it all." This person would interrupt the professor when she was trying to help him with something. In another example, Yoshi described one student in class who asked a lot of questions. This student then tended to hold up the class

where the professor then was not able to present all of the content. This disturbed Yoshi because he struggled with the tests and felt the need to get as much information as possible. He recognized the challenge of this situation. He stated, "I don't know how to change that...to facilitate questions that students have. Maybe there should be time after class where the students can ask questions and if it's not relevant (to a student) (they) can leave. But, I don't know if the professor would be able to set aside...(an additional) ten minutes out of their time." Bill discussed how he occasionally struggled with students' talking, "It's not like...I don't talk during class, but sometimes the chattering..gets me."

Summary. All of the male students' descriptions related to other students' characteristics and behaviors were warming factors for the classroom climate. Although the students were described as having some whiny and complaining behaviors, the men generally described the other students in this class as nice, good people who studied and worked hard. There were some differences in student characteristics noted with traditional-age, second degree, and older students comprising the make-up of the students in the class. One man described the older students as more aggressive and willing to address unfairness. He perceived that this advocacy behavior kept faculty from taking advantage of the students in this class.

As may happen with any college student who is struggling with his or her self-image, one man compared himself with the other students in relation to health care experience, maturity level, and achievement. Because he identified himself as a student who has struggled in school, I can speculate that he might have been unconsciously attempting to increase his self-efficacy perception (Bandura, 1997) through some self-reflection. Because this was an internal process that was occurring with him, I believe this finding is not related to gender and the classroom climate.

All of the men perceived the students in class as supportive towards them. They never felt there were questions about their motive for selecting nursing as a profession nor were there any discriminatory behaviors described. Instead, the men reported mild bothersome student behaviors related to interruptions in their learning that may occur in any classroom. These behaviors included interrupting the instructor who was engaging in one-on-one conversation with one of them, asking a lot of questions, and talking during class.

Additional Inside Classroom Factors

In this theme, I describe additional factors inside the classroom. These descriptions, supported by male students, my observations, and faculty interviews, are in addition to the descriptions of the faculty and the other students that have been previously described. Additional inside classroom factors that are described include the size of the classroom, the socialization of the men with other students in the classroom, the textbooks used in this course, and the dominance of female students.

Size of classroom. Charles said he prefers smaller classrooms where he feels more comfortable asking questions. He declared that he does not want to waste other people's time with his questions, which he described as detailed, "nit-picky" questions he needs to ask in order for him to learn. Because this classroom was not small, he said he tended to figure out things independently and did not ask very many questions. He added that he did manage to get his questions answered and he felt he had been able to learn. But he revealed that he answered a lot of the questions himself or asked other students around him who had more experience in the medical field. One faculty member whom I interviewed also complained about the size of the classroom. She said:

I preferred it when we had smaller classes because I knew every single student.

When we had less students...I knew every single student. Now, I couldn't even tell you the name of maybe five students in the class because I just have not learned them.

I can verify as an observer in the class that students were only occasionally called by name. When calling students by name did occur, however, it happened just as frequently with the male students as the female students.

Bill said that he liked the size of the classroom because it was not as big as most lecture halls. He declared that he found the learning environment better because he could ask questions during the breaks. He also felt the smaller classroom allowed the professors to focus on some of the students who were not as intelligent or who have problems learning, like himself.

Socialization. Yoshi declared that the male students do not hang out together and support each other. Bill agreed that although he had male friends in this class, they were not his best friends. Yoshi said the reason for this is that the male students all have outside lives. He also attributed this to the small number. He said, "There aren't ...very many (men) and our personalities just aren't similar so we don't have similar interest enough (to hang out together)." Yoshi said he tried to get to know the men and the other students at least by their first names. He revealed that most of them he did not know previous to nursing but he got to know them over the last couple of semesters. He admitted that he socialized with mainly one of the women in the class and I noticed that he always sat by her in a separate row. He defended his reason for this: "I don't really like the whole clique thing where men separate and women separate. I don't really believe in it and that's why I don't sit by any of the guys." When Yoshi was asked if he had any problem finding things to talk about with this female student, he said, "No, no

problems at all. I can talk about anything. If we can't talk about class, in-class experience, or information being presented or something, I'll just talk about movies because I work for Blockbuster." He added that because he has a wife, he tries to be mindful of not being too close to the women and does not spend time with them outside of class.

Although George said he also did not notice cliques like he had seen in high school and feels that he gets along with pretty much everyone, he also said he gets along with some people better than he gets along with others. He felt that certain people have become better friends. But, he denied there was any real segregation. He supported his perception:

I think a lot of it has to do with the fact that we have some people in our class that are at different points in they're lives. There's people who have kids and spouses, house payments...(and) that puts you at...different interests. I think some people are just more social than others and naturally, some people are just going to get along better with certain people.

He said he had a couple of really good friends in the class. He declared that the friendships were based on similar interests and because he perceives that they share a common bond as the same "performing type of student." He admitted that they should not be sitting together because it was hard to concentrate. He and the female students want to talk about something else. He saw himself as having more in common and it being easier to be friends with the female students. Although he stated that in high school most of his friends were men, he found that now most of his friends were women. He stated, "I don't know if it's because I'm in nursing school but even before I changed my major to nursing, most of my friends were girls then too. I guess I get along with them

just as good (as men).” He said he enjoyed talking with women and appreciated the friends that he had made in the nursing program. He explained that he could easily talk about things that would probably be perceived as “guy talk” because he and his female friends have developed such good friendships which make it very comfortable for him.

Bill said he talks to everybody and tries to get along with everybody. Although he said a couple of other men in the class “seem really nice,” he declared that he really did not socialize that much with the other men. Similar to Yoshi, Bill attributed this to the men being at different places in life, living about a half hour away from where he lives, and not having a lot in common with them. He admitted that he could extend to them and ask them to do something, like go to a football game, but that he does not make the effort. Interestingly, although there were at least four men in this class who were at or close to his age, Bill perceived only one other man his age with most of them being married and having children. He stated that he liked to talk to them during breaks about football and he admitted that this social time provided him with a “testosterone fix.” He talked about a buddy who was in class with him the previous semester, but ended up not passing the class because he failed the “injection test.” Bill perceived this was actually good for him. If his buddy was still in the program, he thinks he might not be currently passing because his buddy had such an influence on him to “goof off and mess around.” He admitted it was easier to mess around with another male student because there is more to talk about and men do a “different kind of talk.” He now described his best friends as women in the nursing program with whom he socializes with mainly in class and a little bit outside of school. At first he declared that it was hard for him because he had to figure out what the women wanted to talk about. “You gotta watch what you say around girl students. You never know when it’s gonna bite you in the butt,” he quipped. He also recognized that

they would probably not want to talk about what he likes to talk about, like sports or deer hunting. He said he bridged this communication barrier by being open to new things and starting to listen to what the women liked to talk about. Although he declared that sometimes they would ask him what to do with their boyfriends, mostly they socialized about school.

Charles described himself as kind of a loner. He admitted to not having a lot to do with the other students or faculty and was a person who “sticks to himself.” He added, “Not to say...I don’t make friends. I...say hi to them but I just...don’t do anything with them on the weekends. I don’t talk to them as a friend. I don’t share personal information.”

Textbooks. Yoshi perceived that gender was not equally represented in the textbooks all of the time because “They still talk about...a nurse as a her, not nurse as a him or her.” He thinks it is an area that is being working on due to the fact that there are more male nurses coming into the profession. It did not bother him that the textbooks were perceived as gender-biased, because he said he was comfortable with being both a man and a nurse.

George did not think the textbooks were necessarily directed towards women or men. He thought most of the pictures in the books were women giving care and made him realize his role as a minority male that he found kind of alarming. But, it did not bother him to the point where he thought he needed to do something about it. He felt that the depiction of nurses as women should not be bothersome to men.

Bill liked that they include men in pictures in the textbooks and perceived that there were enough in number to “keep him stable.” He found it heart-warming when the caption says, “Bill, the male nurse, goes into a patient’s room,” instead of saying another

female name.

When I looked at the textbooks in this course for gender equity on the assigned pages to be read for class, I found some textbooks more gender neutral than others. The medical-surgical nursing textbooks were gender neutral by referring to the nurse as a he or she and displaying both men and women as nurses in the pictures. However, the other two textbooks for pediatric and mental health nursing were more gender-biased.

Although the pediatric textbook referred to “you, the nurse” in critical thinking exercises, all of the pictures of nurses were female. Four nurses mentioned in a case study of an adolescent with bone cancer were Tiffany, Carrie, Diane, and Julie. All of the stories about nurses caring for children with different maladies were female. In the mental health textbook, in clinical vignettes, the nurse was referred again to as “you, the nurse.” In the text, nurses were referred to as “the nurse” or “nurses.” But, examples of therapeutic dialogue were always between female nurses and patients.

Female gender dominance. George said that he looks around and sees all women but the female students do not make him feel like a minority. Yoshi told me, “If you notice in our class, we don’t have very many male students anymore. And there were more, a lot more...the previous semesters. They’re gone.” Charles noted that it was hard to miss the number of women in the class and that there were not a lot of men in the classroom. He saw the female students as a possible distraction:

I’m fine with it but I can see how it...could be a possible distraction for some men. They wear tight shirts or low cut shirts. It would be nice to have a nice dress code that they can’t wear that kind a stuff. I’m a Christian...(but) I’m a man too...and that’s a temptation for me. I don’t wanta be tempted by that. It can be (a distraction) for me.

Summary. There were warming and cooling additional classroom factors related to the size of the classroom, the socialization of the men with other students in the classroom, the textbooks used in this course, the dominance of the female students in the classroom, and the students' participation in class. There were warming factors and a cooling factor related to the size of the classroom. One of the warming factors included a student liking the smaller than lecture hall size because it allowed professors an opportunity to focus on students with learning needs. Although one professor reported that the size of the classroom was a barrier for learning students' names, another warming factor was when faculty did recall names, they were observed to call on male and female students equally. A cooling factor related to the size of the classroom was the description by one of the men who did not like the large classroom because he felt uncomfortable asking questions.

Concerning socialization with other students in class, there were neutral and warming factors. One of the warming factors was the men reporting no real segregation in the class although there were some minor separations due to people being at different points in their lives with different interests, some people being more social, and some being more amicable and easier with which to get along. One of the neutral factors was the lack of socialization with other men. Although the other men seemed nice and friendly, the men did not report them as their best friends. The male students in general did not make an effort to hang out together nor support each other. Some of the reasons for this separation were that they perceived: (a) the other men as being different from them in age and places in life, (b) the other men as having outside and dissimilar interests, (c) all of the men as being small in number, (d) they and the other men living at a distance from one another, (f) not having much in common with the other men, and (g)

not wanting to support a male clique. Only one man had a male friend who was no longer part of the class. His friend's absence was probably to his benefit, because he described goofing off with men as easier for him and was a self-described struggler in school.

One of the warming factors was the men's socialization with the female students. Although one student was a self-described loner, for the majority of the men, there were no problems finding things to talk about with the female students. Friendships with female students were based on: (a) similar interests, (b) perceived as being the same type of student, (c) having common interests, and (d) the perception that it was easier to be friends with the female students. For one man, he initially found it was difficult to talk to the female students because he had to learn what women wanted to talk about. He bridged this communication barrier by being open to new things and listening to the women. Only one man, George, found he could easily talk about things that would probably be perceived as "guy talk" and otherwise would have been uncomfortable for him because he and his female friends had developed such good friendships.

There were neutral and cooling factors related to the textbooks. Only one textbook, the medical-surgical text, was more gender neutral. A cooling factor was gender not being equally represented in the textbooks that were used for this course. The pediatric and mental health textbooks were found to be biased towards women.

Female gender dominance bothered a couple of the male students. A cooling factor was one man noticing the number of male students diminishing in number in the classroom. A neutral factor related to the classroom climate was another man declaring that the female students could be a distraction.

Outside Classroom Factors

In this final theme, I describe factors outside the classroom that contributed to the male students' experiences. These descriptions were supplied entirely by the male students in interviews. These outside classroom factors include stereotypes, social support, and role models.

Stereotypes. Although Yoshi felt that the stereotype of female as nurse was not as prevalent as it used to be, he felt it was still there. He shares his frustration:

That...stereotype sometimes is a stigma, even in my own family. I always hear, well, you're gonna be a doctor, right? You're gonna go on to get your doctorate. It's outside (my immediate) family. My parents...don't have a problem with (it) at all.

Although he perceived some gender barriers to becoming a nurse, "It hasn't stopped me yet," he declared.

George agreed that it bothers him when people tell him he should not be going into nursing and that it is a woman's job. He said he hears this from "ignorant people" he works with at the gym or chiropractic clinic. He perceived that the people are "part-way teasing," but he said it still bothered him a lot.

Bill said that he likes to see what people think when he says he is going to be a nurse. Although he finds usually older people as supportive, younger people will question him and say, "Oh really? You're gonna be a nurse? What's up with that kinda thing?" Bill also added that there is still the stereotype that men in nursing are homosexuals. Yoshi agreed:

Sometimes outside of class, if you say, hey, I'm gonna be a nurse, I get the whole idea of...are you gay or something? It's just a stereotype out there that nurses are

women and doctors are men and that's the way it is.

Bill said that this perception used to be more prevalent and is now improving with more men getting into the nursing field.

Role models and social support. Both of George's parents are in health care and he said they are very supportive of him. Having previously been in physician assistant school, George said his friends in that program tell him he should not have switched to nursing. But he said he is glad he switched and their comments do not bother him. George also said he is not bothered by a lack of male role models. During his last clinical rotation, there was one male nurse with whom he spent one day. But, he said that he did not consider this experience better or worse than the days he spent with other nurses that were female. He provided his rationale:

I just (look) at the nurse as (a) nurse. I (don't) think...this isn't a male, they can't teach me because I think that each gender can do just as good of a job. And if a female is teaching me, then I'll learn from her. I didn't feel like I...(had) wished there was a male nurse teaching me. Just as long as the nurse knew what she was doing.

Bill said that he looks to his buddy's dad, who is a nurse, for support. He added, "I like that support (of a role model). It's just nice to have...(someone) I can talk to." He said that he worries that he may forget what he has learned when he becomes a nurse and is "thrown" into the clinical setting. He reveals that his buddy's dad offers him reassurance. Bill shares that the experienced nurse tells him not to worry about it, it is all hands-on, and that he will be supported in the clinical setting by another nurse for three to six months before being expected to practice independently.

Unlike Bill, Yoshi said he does not know any male nurses and has no role models.

Outside of nursing, he revealed that his religion is a support to him and said Jesus Christ is his role model. Interested in pediatric nursing, he notices there are not very many pediatric nurses who are male.

Bill talked about having lots of “guy friends” outside the nursing program. He said that he has a buddy who is just starting the nursing program who tells him there are a lot more nursing students who are male in the pipeline. He shared that he socialized outside of class with other men by going to University of Michigan football games and to his brother’s high school football games. He stated that he also lifted weights with his brother. He shared why this socialization and balance of academic with non-academic activities is important to him. He said, “I have to (have a good balance) cuz I get stressed out. I’m a very anxious person. I get real stressed out about school and...I need to let off some steam sometimes and exercise.”

Bill said he found it stressful when he saw how some nurses and patients reacted to him as a student on the floor. Although he understands that nurses are busy and that students can be a distraction with asking questions, he perceived that some nurses just want him to get out of their way. Patients, as well, may be less receptive to students. He said, “You’ve got family members (saying), ‘oh great, we’ve got a student nurse taking care of my mom’. He rationalizes that “once you get the degree...people...look up to you a little bit more...once they know you’re...a professional.”

Charles shared that he relies on his family and loved ones for support. In the clinical setting, he notices that some nurses are “kind of pushy” and do not listen to patients. His perception is that the patients must do things the nurse’s way. He shared his observation:

It just might be that they’re older nurses and they’re sick of dealing with people.

Maybe it's just that they're calloused and they see all this death and suffering...and pain...and in order to survive emotionally, they have to build a callous around themselves.

He shared his concern about the future when they become his co-workers. "It's just nicer to have soft, gentle people who aren't gonna bite your head off if you disagree with them. I'm gonna have to work with them and deal with them all day." He also is worried this callousness might happen to him when he becomes a nurse.

Summary. There were cooling and warming factors outside of the classroom that probably were indirect variables to the male students' experiences. The warming factors outside the classroom included: (a) parents, family, and loved ones being supportive; (b) the availability of role models and support outside of nursing education; and (c) the socialization with men outside of the classroom. The cooling factors outside the classroom included: (a) the stereotypes of nurse as female and men in nursing as homosexual were still present; (b) some of the men were frustrated that family members outside of the immediate family and friends were teasing them and questioning their motives for becoming nurses; (c) there was a report of some nurses and patients reacting negatively to a male student as a nurse; and (d) practicing nurses were described as calloused. In the latter description, a man worried that he will have to deal with these nurses as peers when he becomes a nurse or he feared he might emulate their behavior. For one man, George, the negative comments by others did not bother him and he found being mentored by a male nurse or female nurse equally rewarding.

Summary

This chapter provided a description of the classroom, the 8 students, and the 6 professors. Perceptions of the 4 male students were reported as they related to the five

themes: faculty characteristics and behaviors, the student's learning experience, other students' characteristics and behaviors, inside classroom factors, and outside classroom factors. I included my observations as a researcher, excerpts from faculty interviews, and a review of the textbooks for sense-making purposes to provide a broader view of the classroom.

There were factors that warmed the classroom climate. Some of these warming factors included: (a) faculty behaviors and characteristics where the faculty was described as easy going, down-to-earth, organized, and interested in student success; professional, nice, and congenial; eliciting behaviors that did not make one of the men feel as a student he was below them; and always being there to help; (b) positive learning experiences for the male students; (c) the presence of male nurses in the clinical areas; (d) perceptions by all of the men that the students in class were supportive towards them; and (e) a student's report of liking the smaller size of the classroom because it allowed professors an opportunity to focus on students with learning needs. There were additional warming factors that included: (a) an observation of faculty equally calling on students by name; (b) the male students' reports of no real segregation in the class; (h) the men's socialization with the female students; (c) a comparative equal percentage of student-initiated participation by both male and female students; (d) support by parents, family, and loved ones; (e) a man's ability to find role models and support outside of nursing education; and (f) the socialization with other men outside of the classroom.

There were neutral factors that were reported by the male students. These neutral factors included: (a) a report that the faculty taught differently, (b) a lack of socialization with other men, (c) the observation that the medical-surgical text was more gender neutral, and (d) a man declaring that the female students could be a distraction. These

factors neither warmed nor cooled the classroom climate.

Finally, there were several factors that contributed to cooling the classroom climate. These factors included: (a) unsupportive faculty behaviors and characteristics that were especially noted to occur with the older faculty; (b) discriminatory faculty characteristics and behaviors and an attitude of prejudice by a faculty member; (b) the absence of male faculty, with a potential support person whose identity was confusing and unclear; (c) participation in stressful and uncomfortable learning experiences in the OB clinical rotation and learning experiences that were meaningful only occurring outside the classroom, away from faculty and other students, and between them and their patients; (d) the large classroom; (e) gender not being equally represented in the textbooks; and (f) the diminishing number of men in the classroom. In addition, there were factors outside the classroom that contributed to the male students' uncomfortable experiences. These outside cooling factors included: (a) the stereotypes of nurse as female and men in nursing as homosexual still being present; (b) a lack of support by friends and family members outside of the immediate family; (c) a report of some nurses and patients reacting negatively to a male student as a nurse; and (d) practicing nurses being described as calloused.

There was a particularly interesting finding related to one male student. For one man, George, there was an overall experience that was more positive than the other men. Factors that reflect his positive experience include: (a) negative comments by other students that did not bother him; (b) his reflection that being mentored by a male nurse or female nurse was equally rewarding; (c) his description of more warming faculty characteristics and behaviors than the other men; (d) his feeling that he was fairly treated, had not perceived any biased behavior against him, and did not believe the discriminatory

faculty behaviors described by other men; (e) his description that he had a worthwhile OB clinical experience where he was able to effectively work through feeling uncomfortable; and (f) his report of close female friendships, calling some of these women his best friends.

In conclusion, the male students reported cooling classroom factors in three of the themes: faculty characteristics and behaviors, learning experiences, and additional classroom factors. Outside classroom cooling factors also contributed to the male students' experiences. In the next chapter, I discuss the female students' perceptions and compare and contrast them to the male students' perceptions. At the end of the next chapter, I provide an overall summary of the findings from both chapters and distinguish the factors that contributed to a cooler climate for the male students.

CHAPTER FIVE

Results-Part II

In this chapter, I describe the female students' perceptions related to all of the five themes. These themes include: faculty characteristics and behaviors, (b) the students' learning experiences, (c) other students' characteristics and behaviors, (d) additional inside classroom factors, and (e) outside classroom factors. As I discuss the female students' perceptions, I compare and contrast them with the perceptions of the male students. I also include supplements from my observations as researcher and pertinent additional data from faculty interviews. At the end of the chapter, I provide an overall summary of the findings from both chapters with a focus on the findings related to the male students.

Female Students' Descriptions of Experiences According to Themes

With a Comparison to the Male Students' Descriptions

Faculty Characteristics and Behaviors

In this theme, I describe faculty characteristics and behaviors. I describe these characteristics and behaviors as perceived by the female students in comparison and contrast to the male students' perceptions. I also describe additional faculty characteristics and behaviors observed by myself as researcher and reported to me in interviews by other faculty members.

Universally, and similar to the men, the female students felt this class was more organized and an improvement over the previous semester. Jan said she also perceived that the professors seemed to be more supportive than in previous semesters. Marie agreed and said she felt like she was "in" more personally with the professors in nursing school and perceived the faculty as "out there to help you" and supportive. She

personally described supportive behavior from Patty with improving her test-taking skills. She described why this is important to her:

It just means a lot because you can see how much they care and they want you to do well and kind of calm you down. (They would say to her), “You’re doing fine. Don’t worry about it. You’ll get through this.”

Jan agreed with Marie that the professors “provide that comfort zone” and make it known that they are always there for the student. Her perception was that if students had any questions, they should not hesitate to ask them either during or after class. She warmly said, “I definitely feel comfortable just going to talk to them about anything...not even nursing. Just going to see how their weekend was or anything like that.”

Joy also agreed with Jan and Marie, “I think the faculty is really helpful to students. I think they want you to succeed. They’re always there if you need them. They’re readily available outside of class.”

These female students’ perceptions were much different from those reported by the men. George agreed with the female students that the faculty were interested in the students’ success and also perceived them as easy going and not making him feel like a lowly student. However, his perception that faculty were not going to push students away was more one-sided than reciprocal. He also perceived the faculty as making learning difficult and expecting a lot from the students and did not report the caring, connecting, or supporting behaviors by the faculty as the female students had.

Although Bill agreed with the women that the faculty were always there to help, he also reported faculty behavior towards him as tolerant. He did not report any caring, connecting, or supporting behaviors. He also did not report the professors urging him on to success as the female students did.

Charles reported the faculty as professionals, with the majority of them being nice and congenial to the students. He found them accepting of male students and described encouraging behaviors of faculty as he passed them in the hallway. However, this faculty behavior appears to be more cordial and distant than the faculty behavior described by the female students. This distant cordiality occurs in passing, rather than in face-to-face conversations. Dissimilar to the female students' descriptions, Yoshi and Charles also reported the faculty displaying a sense of superiority, aloofness, harshness, aggressiveness, and a lack of patience.

Joy supports the male students' perspectives of unsupportive behaviors by the faculty:

I think the teachers sorta pick on (men) more and think they're really not doing the work which I think is unfair to them (men). If they talk in class, they're more likely to be zeroed in on...by the professors.

Jan described the teachers as motivated. She perceived them as excited about what they were doing. She was able to recognize their love of teaching and nursing. Nicole agreed, but also recognized that it is hard for nursing instructors to spend the time they would like on the things they love because they have to cover so much material. None of the men reported these affective faculty characteristics.

Marie agreed with Charles and Bill that there was a lot of hard work but she did not refer to any additional work as busy work. She recognized that there was a lot to learn in a short period of time. She said the workload was not unexpected and that it will be "worth it in the end."

Nicole perceived the professors as good teachers. She thought they were knowledgeable in their specialty but probably would agree with Yoshi that some were not

good educators. “When it comes to things that are not their specialty, they just kind of quote from the book. I could have gone home and read this instead of (coming to class and listening),” she retorted. She also said she had not had any outstanding teachers, whom she would describe as someone who is so excited about their field that they cannot contain themselves. Joy would also probably agree with Yoshi that some professors could improve their skills as educators and did not like it when they would “go off on tangents.” Although she recognized that the faculty were sharing their experiences, she said it made it more difficult for her in the last few minutes of class when the professor was trying to cram the remaining material into the short time-frame left.

Like Bill, Marie said she found it difficult to have so many different professors in a semester with different teaching techniques. Similar to Yoshi, she also felt that the professors’ teaching styles were different. However, she felt the faculty was different from the nursing faculty in the previous semester, rather than faculty teaching prior to the nursing program. She described this difference between faculty as the content this semester being easier to comprehend than in the previous semester.

Where Yoshi did not like Patty’s teaching style and perceived that some of the information could not be applied, Joy particularly liked how Patty taught. She described why she liked it. She said, “You pay attention better because a lot of the important stuff is right there. You’re filling in the blanks so you can still listen to her...and you’re not focused on writing every single word...she has said.” She also stated that she liked the class where Patty had the students physically interact and participate in the scenario of plaque building up in a blood vessel. Jan and Nicole both agreed and remembered this class learning activity vividly. Jan said she prefers interactive learning rather than “somebody sitting up there and talking.” Interestingly, although three of the female

students described this interactive experience, none of the male students mentioned it.

Case studies and application were more important learning activities for the men.

Where Yoshi did not feel he was on the same level as the professors to be able to approach them, Joy agreed with George that some of the faculty can be more difficult to approach than others. She described the unapproachable faculty as “looking at you funny when you asked a question” and reacting with frowns instead of smiles when a student talks to them. She described one interaction, “If I ask her a question, she looks really confused at first and then I feel like I’m asking a stupid question. And then she doesn’t really answer my question.” In an interview, one of the professors readily admitted that some students perceived her as difficult to approach. She said she knew this because of her evaluations by students. She said, “I’m reserved and...I put a bit of a wall between me and them. My caring runs deep but they can’t always see that because I’m reserved and an introvert.” She admitted, “There’s always a few that will say that kinda thing to me, despite my trying.” As an observer in the class, I heard teachers encourage students to approach them. Hershey told students it was their responsibility to come forward with concerns. Patty also told the students at the first day of class, “Don’t be afraid to talk to me. Approach me. I want to hear from you. Don’t be afraid.” She also encouraged students who were not comfortable in approaching her in class to communicate with her in another way (setting). I also noticed in the syllabus and Patty reinforcing the first day of class, “Students are encouraged to have a professional relationship with faculty...as defined by courtesy and consideration.” However, this statement in the syllabus was followed by a description of only student behaviors to support this relationship, such as coming to class prepared, turning off cell phones, closing doors quietly, and so on.

Like Charles, Jan also described unsupportive behavior related to asking

questions. She stated, "Sometimes when you ask questions in class, it seems like they don't have time to really answer you or they kinda get...annoyed." Different from Charles, she attributed this behavior to having so much material to cover that the faculty did not want to use valuable time to answer questions. In an interview I had with one of the faculty members, she described faculty behavior by others that supported this male and female students' perceptions related to unsupportive behavior. She said, "I think there are faculty members here who don't listen to students. A student will express an opinion and they'll...discount it." One of the professors whom I interviewed revealed that in a previous class she had been perceived as belittling a student when that student asked a question. She said, "I felt awful. I didn't remember that I sounded belittling and I'm sorry they felt that way. I don't wanta treat anyone that way." The female students' descriptions of non-supportive professor behaviors are somewhat similar to Charles and Yoshi's descriptions of superiority, aloofness, and sometimes being seen as a stupid student. The difference when comparing these descriptions was the harshness, terseness, condescending and arguing behaviors that were not described by the female students. This comparative difference supports the perception of a cooler classroom climate by the men than perceived by the women.

The female students did not report any discriminatory behaviors against them like some of the male students, with Jan perceiving that the nursing program "provides for both male and female students." However, one female student did describe preferential treatment. Joy described one clinical faculty member whom she perceived as favoring one of the female students. She described this student as this professor's "pet." She said the professor did not yell at her or was not "nit picky" with her like she could be with the other students.

Faculty praised men and women equally for asking excellent questions and generally neither the male or female students received more challenging or encouraging from the professors to continue participation. However, some of my classroom observations supported female gender dominance. Although most of the professors were gender-neutral in their language, I did notice one professor who had the habit of referring to the nurse as a “she” and the patient as a “he.”

Similar to the men, there was one report by a female student of condescending behavior by faculty. Marie described an occurrence where a female student walked into class a few minutes late and was singled out by the professor. She reported that the professor stopped the class and challenged her in front of the other students about being late. Marie felt this was more of a distraction than the student coming into class. “I didn’t even notice her,” she said. This incident occurred with a student who usually sat in front of me and we sometimes would chat on break. The embarrassed student shared this incident with me after this occurrence happened on a day that I was not permitted to observe in the classroom. The student reported that the reason she had been late was because she had been pumping her breasts because she was breastfeeding. She claimed that she was mortified for being singled out in front of the class and did not return to the classroom after break. Although other female students in class also mentioned this to me, it is interesting that none of the male students mentioned this occurrence.

There was also one report of sexual harassment by a female student. She reported this incident as happening with other female students and a female faculty member who was not teaching in the class, but rather teaching in the clinical setting. Due to the somewhat graphic nature of her description, I choose not to report the details in this study. She said the students intended to approach the lead professor of the course and

report these behaviors.

Interestingly, neither the men nor women received advantages consistent with gender privilege by getting more attention from the teachers or being provided with more time to talk in the classroom. I observed that neither gender demanded more attention and faculty usually asked for a general class response to questions where students' voices were mixed as several students responded together. However, because I was sitting in the back of the classroom, I could not always determine if the men's voices were in the mixture of students' voices.

The equity of classroom examples was difficult to measure. There are some medical manifestations that are gender specific that drove some of the examples to be appropriately related to one gender. Generally, I can say that I observed a variety of both genders in the classroom examples that were presented.

Summary. Generally, the female students, other faculty, and I, as researcher, described faculty behaviors and characteristics that were more warming and less cooling to the classroom climate for the female students. For the female students, there were different faculty behaviors and characteristics that warmed the classroom climate. These different behaviors and characteristics included: (a) faculty perceived by the female students as good teachers, who were motivated, excited, and loved what they were doing; (b) faculty perceived by the female students as helpful, encouraging, and supportive; (c) faculty perceived by the female students as more personal, communicating how much they cared, providing a comfort zone, and being accessible in or outside of class; (d) faculty perceived by a female student as providing a workload that was not unexpected and "worth it in the end;" (e) faculty providing a likeable, interactive learning experience that was only described by the female students; (f) faculty providing preferential

treatment to a female student; (g) faculty observed using gender-biased language, referring to the nurse as a “she” and the patient as a “he;” and (h) faculty picking more on the male students and perceiving they were not doing the work. The female students also did not report some of the unsupportive cooling faculty behaviors that the men had reported, such as displaying: (a) a sense of superiority, aloofness, harshness, aggressiveness, and a lack of patience; (b) terseness or arguing behaviors; or (b) any discriminatory behaviors against them. There was one report of a cooling faculty behavior that was unique to the women. This faculty behavior was sexual harassment of some of the female students.

Like the male students, the female students perceived the class as more organized and an improvement over the previous semester. The female students also perceived, similar to the male students, some cooling faculty characteristics and behaviors, such as: (a) the difficulty of having so many different professors in a semester with different teaching techniques; (b) the challenge of having faculty who were not good educators or outstanding teachers; (c) a report by one female student of condescending behavior by a faculty member; and (d) the perception of some faculty as being more difficult to approach than others. This latter faculty behavior was supported when one of the professors readily admitted that some students perceived her as difficult to approach. Although faculty were heard encouraging students to approach them and there was an additional statement of this encouragement in the syllabus, there was also a description of only student behaviors to support this relationship in the syllabus.

Similar to the male students, female students described unsupportive behavior related to asking questions. These male and female descriptions were supported by: (a) a faculty member who reported other faculty members who do not listen to or discount

opinions by students; and (b) a report by one of the professors who revealed that in a previous class she had been perceived as belittling a student when that student asked a question. What was different from the men, however, was that the women attributed this unsupportive behavior to having so much material to cover that the faculty did not want to use valuable time to answer questions.

There were also some neutral and warming faculty characteristics and behaviors for both male and female students. These neutral and warming faculty characteristics and behaviors included: (a) men and women being equally praised for asking excellent questions; (b) neither the male or female students received more challenging or encouraging behaviors from the professors to continue participation; (c) neither the men nor women receiving advantages consistent with gender privilege by getting more attention from the teachers or being provided with more time to talk in the classroom; (d) neither gender demanding more attention; (e) faculty usually asking for a general class response to questions; and (f) a variety of both genders presented in the classroom examples.

Students' Learning Experiences

In this theme, I describe learning experiences related to the female students. Similar to the men, I describe these women's experiences entirely from their perceptions. These descriptions, like the male students' descriptions, include experiences in both the classroom and clinical setting.

Although some of the male students reported uncomfortable and stressful learning experiences in the OB setting, none of the female students reported an uncomfortable learning experience related to their gender. An interesting distinction between the perceptions of male and female students related to their learning experiences is that it

appears that the men want to focus their learning experiences on areas where they want to practice. Although they like hands-on learning and the clinical rotations, if they perceive that physiologically they will not be able to handle the practice environment, because of “passing out,” or that the area would not hire them as a male nurse, they did not find these experiences interesting or helpful.

Marie described writing a paper as a good experience. She also said that clinical experiences gave her pleasure and, similar to Yoshi, was currently enjoying her pediatric rotation. She thought her medical-surgical nursing experience was tough because she did not have a lot of previous experience in that area. She recognized that students with hospital experience would understand this area better. This is different from Bill who felt comfortable even without previous hospital experience because there were lots of male nurses on the floors.

Nicole declared that she would like the teaching approach to be a little more “right-brained.” She also would like to see the professors provide more generalizations. She stated that she would also find it helpful if the professors would share their thinking processes as a nurse. Jan also referred to the classroom and like Bill and Yoshi, described how she enjoyed and is interested in learning about cardiac and mental health topics.

Nicole declares that understanding a concept and being able to apply it gives her pleasure. This importance of application is similar to what was described by the men. She described having patients in the clinical setting with disorders that had been discussed previously in class. “I was able to draw those ties together and (get) the complete picture,” she reported excitedly.

When describing a meaningful experience, where the men described experiences between them and their patients that happened away from the classroom, faculty, and

other students, three of the four women described experiences between them and faculty. Marie referred to being personally assisted with her test-taking skills and supported by faculty. For Jan, clinical evaluations from faculty were described as being meaningful to her because they motivated her to continue working hard. Joy referred to her current mental health clinical setting:

Instead of doing one of our verbatim assignments, she (faculty) had us partner up and one had to be...the patient and one had to be the nurse and we'd counsel each other in front of her. And I was really nervous about it but she made me feel comfortable. My partner and I spent probably an hour with her and we got really close and emotional.

Only one female student, Nicole, described a patient-student interaction in clinical that was away from faculty and meaningful to her:

We were able to choose our patients. I (got) to spend time with a little 7 year old. She was a little mentally retarded and the nurse has labeled her as a problem child (because)...she didn't want (her) temperature taken...didn't want (her) blood pressure taken. So I just went in and ...sat with her and we played all day. We played games and I got her to talk because the nurses said they she hadn't...talked to the nurse at all. I had her talking and communicating.

Summary. The female students reported more learning experiences that were warming than cooling. Unlike the male students, none of the female students reported uncomfortable learning experiences related to their gender that contributed to cooling the classroom climate. Instead, the women described good experiences like writing a paper and shared preferences for different teaching techniques. A striking difference was when three of the four women described warm, meaningful learning experiences that occurred

between them and the faculty.

The women also described warm learning experiences that were similar to the men, such as: (a) clinical learning experiences that were pleasurable; (b) classroom learning experiences that were likeable; and (c) learning experiences with application. Only one female student described a patient-student interaction that was meaningful to her similar to the male students that was away from faculty and in the clinical setting.

Other Students' Characteristics and Behaviors

In this theme, I describe the characteristics and behaviors of other students. Unlike the male students' descriptions that were supported entirely from the male students' interviews, these characteristics and behaviors are supported by female students' perceptions, faculty interviews, and classroom observations. Again, these descriptions are related only to students in this class.

Marie perceived some students in class as not being mature because she felt they made stupid comments. Where Bill liked it when students would "goof off" a little bit, she perceived these comments as a disruption to the class. The differences in these perceptions may be related to the fact that Bill admits there are students who are more mature in the class and have a "better hold on college" than he does.

Marie said she liked it when other students asked questions because they often ask questions she is thinking about and it assists in her understanding. Yoshi, however, was disturbed by one student in class who asked a lot of questions and tended to "hold up the class." This difference is probably related to the learning style of the student.

Like Bill and Charles, Nicole declared that she recognized that a lot of the students are second-degree students, are older, and have children. She perceived that other degree and work experiences provide them with a substantial knowledge base.

Similar to Bill, she also recognized students who have experience in the hospital can make connections between the content and what they have seen at work. However, she did not make direct comparisons between herself and the other students as did Bill. Nicole also did not share the same perception as Charles who felt the older students advocated against unfairness.

Joy would probably agree with Yoshi and Bill that the students are good students, are studious, and work hard. She perceived that the students are all pretty motivated to succeed and acknowledged that all of them must be good students to be in the nursing program. Although Joy had the same GPA as Bill, she did not compare herself to these high achievers as he did. Joy related to other students who were planning weddings and found it distracted their learning.

Marie perceived all of the men as hard workers who want a nursing career just as badly as the women do. She gave them credit for going into a profession that is predominantly female. However, Marie wondered about the attitude of one male student. She wondered how some of his patients might perceive him. She acknowledged that his attitude can be a characteristic of female students as well and described him as kind of immature and intensely overwhelming. Nicole also described one thirty-something man in this class as someone whom you would probably avoid “in the real world.” She perceived this man who persisted to be around her as having behavior that was “a little odd”. Although she said she did not mind and laughed off the behavior, she perceived the questions he was asking as a “little junior highish.” Jan also discussed this male student’s behavior. She reported that some of the people in the class were intimidated because of some of his behaviors in the previous semesters. This male student’s behavior was also described by one faculty member who had heard that an older male student had made

inappropriate comments to some of the younger women in class and another professor sharing with me that the women had complained about a man in the class who had “come on to most of them.” It was reported that his behavior had caused him to be isolated from the rest of the students. I noted during my classroom observations that there was an older man who always sat by himself in the front row and rarely interacted with the other students. It is important to note that this was not a man who was part of the group of men that I interviewed for this study.

George described an incident where his clinical learning was interrupted. He declared that this interruption occurred because of a “know-it-all” student. Marie and Bill also described their learning experiences being interrupted when other students were talking and could be heard whispering or chattering in the background. Both Marie and Bill are aware that they also talk in class, but Marie says she is asking for clarification, such as “Is this what she said?” or “Is this what she means?” She described this behavior:

I sit next to people who talk all the time and they’re good friends of mine. It kills me because they always seem to do so well on the exams and (they) don’t even pay attention in class. They’ll play hangman and stuff. (I think), “What are you doing? Why do you come?”

During the first day of class, I observed Patty encouraging students not to talk to each other when the professors were talking. There were also guidelines for classroom behavior in the syllabus that said, “Talking will not occur except when invited during class discussion and there will be no extraneous distractions for students who come prepared to learn.” However, as an observer in the classroom, I can verify that there was frequent chattering among the students who sat mostly towards the back of the room. Interestingly, one of the professors said she understood why students socialized so much

in class. She felt the program was providing students with too tight of a schedule which did not have many breaks or offer a lot of socialization time. “We do it to them. I don’t think it’s their fault,” she explained.

Although the men did not report cheating behavior, Joy reported that she was bothered by the cheating of other students, including some students she “hangs out with.” She said she was afraid to confront them because they are her friends. She described her frustration:

It’s probably a small percentage but ...a lot of people look for the easy way out of our work. (This happens) usually (with) one instructor and they just look on other people’s papers when the instructor isn’t looking. And a lot of people are...partnered up to cheat.

None of the men described a protective attitude towards the teachers. Nicole, however, said she did not like it when the students tried to challenge the teachers. She described this behavior:

They may have read in the book and they say it as if they have...authority over it. It bothers me...because (they’re) an inexperienced student nurse who has read something.(Although) it’s good to bring it up in class (for clarification purposes), (it is) not good to come down on the teacher...who has experience and who’s seen the real life thing and isn’t just learning from textbook knowledge.

Similar to George’s descriptions of some students being whiny, Nicole also reported that she did not like it when the students complained. She perceived this complaining as unnecessary. If the student has an issue, she said she would rather see the student talk to the teacher who can make a change, rather than to another student.

Summary. Generally, the classroom climate relating to other students’

characteristics and behaviors could be described as cooler to the female students than the male students, but generally neutral. This description is supported by a combination of warm, supportive, and cooling student behaviors. Only one cooling student behavior was related to the female gender.

One of the female students perceived all of the men as hard workers who want nursing just as badly as the women do and gives them credit for going into a profession that is predominantly female. Similar to the men, the women described the other students as good students, who are studious, and who work hard. The women also recognized different student characteristics like some students being older, obtaining a second degree, having children, and having work experiences that provided them with a substantial knowledge base. One of the other students' behaviors reported by the women, and not reported by the men, were students challenging the teachers. The women also did not report one of the students' behaviors that the men reported that was warming to the classroom. This warming behavior was the perception that the older students advocated against unfairness. Although one female student had the same GPA as one of the male students, she did not make direct comparisons between herself and the other students like the male student had. Again, I believe the difference here is related to different student characteristics that are not related to gender.

One of the student behaviors that was cooling to the classroom climate for female students and not reported by the male students was uncomfortable encounters with a student of the opposite gender. This difference could be reflective of potential problems that may occur in mixed classrooms. Another cooling student behavior reported only by a female student was a report of other students who were cheating. Unfortunately, cheating is a student behavior that may happen in any classroom.

There were also similar student behaviors that were reported by both male and female students that were cooling to the classroom climate, such as learning experiences being interrupted by other students who talked in class and complained unnecessarily. This talking was verified by classroom observations. One professor offered reasoning for why students socialized so much in class. She felt the program was providing students with too tight of a schedule which did not have many breaks or offer a lot of socialization time. Again, the talking and complaining behaviors might happen in any classroom.

Additional Inside Classroom Factors

In this theme, I describe additional factors related to inside the classroom. These descriptions were entirely supported by the female students' perceptions. Additional inside classroom factors that are described include the size of the classroom, the socialization of the men with other students in the classroom, the textbooks used in this course, the dominance of female students, and participation in class.

Size. Unlike the men, none of the women discussed the size of the classroom as a concern.

Socialization. The male students had a more in-depth discussion about socialization with other students. They discussed the male students not "hanging out together," supporting one another, and having more superficial relationships with each other. It is an interesting finding that Yoshi, Bill, and George all reported good friendships with the female students, with George reporting the closest and most comfortable friendships where there was "guy talk," as well as discussions about what the women wanted to talk about. It is important to note that the female students who were interviewed were not the women that I observed sitting and socializing with either Yoshi, Bill, or George or any of the other male students in class. The following narrative is how

they described their socialization with the other students that occurred predominantly with other female students.

Marie felt she knew the female students better than she knows some of the male students. Although she admitted to also having male students in her labs, she said she felt closer to the women because she was in lab with them. She perceived that it just happens to be women that she studies with and that this was more coincidental than personal choice. Although she did not think it was easier or more comfortable to socialize with the female students, she said she probably did not know the male students as well as the female students. Joy said she was friends with the men, interacted with them fine, and found no difference between them and the female students.

Nicole said she had met a lot of good friends in the class. She agreed with Marie that a lot of the students she socialized with were ones who were in her first nursing lab. But, she also said she socialized with students in her clinical setting. She came to know these students by talking with them and spending a lot of time together.

Textbooks. There were no comments related to an unequal depiction of gender in the textbooks. Only one female student, Nicole, reflected on them. She said that the textbooks seemed to repeat things over and over in an unnecessary way.

Female gender dominance. Marie said that she was aware of mostly everyone in class being female and felt like she pretty much blended in. Jan agreed and stated that she did not feel intimidated when she walked into the classroom. "It's a very comfortable environment," she reported. This is different from the men who reported a diminishing male population and being distracted by another gender.

Participation in class. Over the course of the semester, I recorded male and female students' responses in the classroom. These responses were student initiated and

did not include mixed responses by the students. There were a total of 770 student responses that I was able to record in the classes I observed with 637 (83%) responses by female students and 133 (17%) responses by male students. To avoid exaggeration by a gender that was dominant in number, male and female responses by percentages were correlated with the percentages of students by gender. These correlations were very close. Eighty-five percent of the students were female and responded 83% of the time and 15% of the students were male and responded 17% of the time. Although there was a dominance of female participation over the men, students participated in what would be expected for the number of students who were present in that gender.

Summary. Additional classroom factors were generally warmer to the female students. Unlike the men, none of the women discussed the size of the classroom as a concern. There were also no comments related to an unequal depiction of gender in the textbooks. There was only one comment related to the textbooks by a female student who perceived them as repeating things over and over in an unnecessary way. Like the male students, the female students were aware of the number of women in the classroom. However, their awareness of being in a majority instead of a minority contributed to their feelings of blending in, not feeling intimidated, and the perception of a very comfortable environment.

Similar to the men, the women described close relationships with the female students and did not describe close relationships with the male students in class. One female student perceived this lack of close friendships with the male students as more coincidental rather than personal choice. Another woman found no difference between the male and the female students.

A warming factor for both students related to this classroom was a comparative

equal percentage of student-initiated participation by both male and female students.

Although there was a dominance of female participation over the male students in the classroom, students had participation rates that were closely equivalent to the number of students who were present in that gender. Therefore, neither the female nor male students dominated the classroom participation beyond what would be expected by the percentage of each gender that was present.

Outside Classroom Factors

In this final theme, I describe factors outside of the classroom that contributed to the female students' experiences. Uniquely different for the women, there were no descriptions related to stereotypes or social support that occurred outside the classroom for female students.

Stereotypes. There were no comments related to stereotyping with the female students.

Role models and social support. None of the female students discussed role models or the lack of or need for social support outside of the classroom.

Summary

Although there were some similarities between the male and female descriptions, the focus of this study is male students' experiences in nursing education classrooms. Therefore, I will focus on a summary of the findings that were different for the male students.

The male students when compared to the female students describe a classroom climate that was different for them. Female students described a warm classroom that had personal, helpful, supportive faculty who provided a comfortable learning environment. In contrast, the male students described a cooler classroom climate. I do not describe the

classroom as chilly because there were some factors that counteracted some of the chilliness that included: (a) positive faculty behaviors and characteristics where the faculty were described as easy going, down-to-earth, organized, and interested in student success; professional, nice, and congenial; eliciting behaviors that did not make one of the men feel as a student he was below them; and always being there to help; (b) some positive learning experiences for the male students; (c) the presence of male nurses in the clinical areas; (d) perceptions by all of the men that the students in class were supportive towards them; and (e) a student's report of liking the smaller classroom because it allowed professors an opportunity to focus on students like him who had learning needs.

There were additional warming factors that included: (a) an observation of faculty equally praising and calling on students by name; (b) reports of no real segregation in the class; (h) the men's socialization with the female students; (c) a comparative equal percentage of student-initiated participation by both male and female students; (d) support by parents, family, and loved ones; (e) a man's ability to find role models and support outside of nursing education; (f) the socialization with other men outside of the classroom; (g) faculty using a variety of examples related to both genders; (h) encouraging faculty behavior, although it was unclear as to whether these were nursing faculty or faculty outside of nursing; and (i) faculty asking for a general class response where students voices were mixed as they responded as a group. There was also what could be described as a neutral factor. This neutral factor occurred when neither men nor women received challenging or encouraging behaviors by faculty to continue with their participation.

It is an interesting finding that none of the men reported unsupportive, discriminatory, or biased behaviors by the other students. Their motives for becoming

nurses were never questioned by their classmates. Interestingly, one of the men described the older students as advocating against unfair treatment that he perceived kept the students from being taken unfair advantage of by the faculty.

The remaining coolness in this classroom to male students was caused by unsupportive faculty behaviors and characteristics, unsupportive male learning experiences, and additional inside classroom factors that were unsupportive. There were also unsupportive factors described outside the classroom. These outside classroom factors may have contributed indirectly to an overall uncomfortable experience for the male students.

Unsupportive Faculty Characteristics and Behaviors

In contrast to the warm classroom climate for women that is supported by the female students' descriptions of mostly supportive faculty behaviors of connectedness, caring about them, and urging them on to success, some of male students described unsupportive faculty behaviors and characteristics that were especially noted to occur with the older faculty. These unsupportive faculty characteristics included being superior and aloof. The unsupportive faculty behaviors included interruptions, argumentativeness, a harshness or terseness in voice tone and body language, aggressiveness, and a lack of patience. The message the men sometimes received was that they were stupid or lowly students and men were troublesome. They perceived they did not know what they were talking about and their feelings did not matter. There was a sense by the men that the faculty did not approve of them nor want them to become nurses. These male students' perceptions were supported by a faculty member who reported other faculty members saying male students were lazy and they did not know what to do with them and one of the female students who perceived the men as being singled out by the professors in an

unfair way. The most supportive behavior was described as tolerance.

There were also discriminatory faculty behaviors that were described, such as men not getting as much leeway in the grading of papers or the completion of assignments, unfavorable incidents only happening with men, singling men out in a negative way, and faculty not spending as much time or helping as much as they do with the female students in the clinical setting. One of the professors admitted being prejudiced against male nursing students and complained that men were in nursing for the wrong reasons and expected less of them in the future. She declared she wanted to get rid of the men, and said unsupportive statements that included, "It is always the males who are whispering or condescending and have a chip on their shoulder." Other faculty members made comments that disparaged men in general by declaring that men go through their own menopause, used gender-biased language by referring to the nurse as a "she" and the patient as a "he," and addressed the class as if there were no men present. Another faculty member reported men having unequal learning experiences by not being assigned to female patients until close to graduation. There was also a report by a professor of a male student who had been singled out as having threatening behaviors by faculty when he became angry because of a limited clinical learning experience. In addition, there was a report by a female student of a female faculty member giving preferential treatment to a student who was female and described her as her pet.

The majority of men missed interacting, learning, and relating to a professor who was of the same gender. Although the lack of male faculty had not interfered with learning, as a male student stated, "It would be nice to be able to see a male professor somewhere." Clearly, more male nurses working in the clinical setting would make the male students' clinical experiences more comfortable. There was also a missed

opportunity for support by a man whose identity was confusing and unclear.

Unsupportive Male Students' Learning Experiences

Only the men reported uncomfortable learning experiences related to their gender. One of the learning experiences that contributed to cooling the classroom climate for men was the participation in stressful and uncomfortable learning experiences during the OB clinical rotation. Although their OB experience happened the previous semester, some of the men still needed to talk about these uncomfortable experiences. They felt the nurses were unfriendly and their experiences were limited or different than the female students' experiences.

There were differences in learning preferences between the male and female students. Where the women liked interactive learning, the men more often reported liking case studies and application. The men did not want to focus learning on areas where they would not practice. They did not find these experiences interesting or helpful. Although three of the women reported meaningful learning experiences between them and faculty, all of the men described meaningful experiences for them that occurred outside the classroom, away from faculty and other students, and between them and their patients.

Additional Inside Classroom Factors That Were Unsupportive

Additional inside classroom factors that contributed to the male students' perceptions of a cooler classroom climate included: (a) the large classroom; (b) the male gender not being equally represented in the textbooks; and (c) the diminishing number of men in the classroom. In addition, there was also a difference in course expectations between the men and women. Although all of the female students had high course expectations, two of the male students had medium or low course expectations.

Only the men discussed the size of the classroom. Although it was smaller than

some of the bigger lecture halls, it was still perceived as too big to ask questions for a couple of the men. Therefore, questions were not asked, asked to other students, or asked on break.

Some of the textbooks did not represent both male and female nurses equally. Two men noticed this unequal representation with one man perceiving the textbooks as not directed toward either gender. One of the men noticed and liked it when there were male nurses represented in the pictures.

The women were comfortable in the classroom where they blended in. They did not feel intimidated, but rather comfortable in this environment where men did not demand more attention. This was different from the men who reported a diminishing male population.

Outside Classroom Factors That Were Unsupportive

In addition, there were factors outside the classroom that contributed to the male students' uncomfortable experiences that were reflected by the male students. There was a lack of social support for men outside of their immediate family where they were often teased or questioned about why they wanted to become nurses. Additional outside cooling factors included: (a) the stereotypes of nurse as female and a male nurse as homosexual still being present; (b) a report of some nurses and patients reacting negatively to a male student as a nurse; and (c) practicing nurses being described as calloused who would become peers in the future.

An Overall Positive Experience For One Man

There was an overall experience for one male student that was more positive than for the other men. Negative comments by other men did not bother him. He also perceived being mentored by a male or female nurse as equally rewarding and described

more warming faculty characteristics than the other men. He perceived that he had been treated fairly and was able to work through an uncomfortable OB experience. He had particularly close female friendships, with some of the women being reported as his best friends.

Separate From Study

Although not a focus of this study that is focusing on male students' perceptions and experiences, it is important to note in this summary that there was sexual harassment behavior reported by one of the female students. Separate from this study, it is an interesting finding. Although twenty to thirty percent of women report sexual harassment by male faculty (Hall & Sandler, 1982), I did not see in the literature that it had been reported to happen to female students with female faculty.

In conclusion, the findings from Chapter Four and Chapter Five support that this nursing classroom climate was different and cooler towards male students. Three themes supported this cooler environment for male students: unsupportive faculty characteristics and behaviors, unsupportive male students' learning experiences, and additional inside classroom factors that were unsupportive. Outside classroom factors, that included stereotypes, a lack of role models, and social support also impacted the male students' experiences. The significance of these findings is addressed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to describe the nursing classroom climate and the perceptions and experiences of traditional-age student nurses who are male as they relate to the nursing education classroom. A discussion of the results occurs in this chapter.

Background

The participants in this study were a purposeful sample of 8 nursing students, 4 who were male and 4 who were female. Interviews from the 8 students and 6 faculty, observations of the classroom, and a review of the textbooks were the methods that were used for data collection. Three main research questions and three research sub-questions generated in Chapter One of this study are the framework for examining and providing meaning to the results of this study.

First Research Question

The first research question asked: What is the classroom climate for traditional-age students who are male? Findings from this study provide support for a nursing classroom climate that is cool to men and warm to women. In the sub-questions and additional research questions below I describe the evidence supporting this description.

Research Sub-questions

The research sub-questions asked: How do traditional-age students describe their personal experiences in the nursing classroom? How do these classroom experiences of traditional-age students who are male compare with the classroom experiences of traditional-age students who are female? What are the underlying themes that account for these experiences?

Underlying themes. Five themes emerged from analysis of the data from the male and female student interviews where they described their experiences: faculty characteristics and behaviors, the students' learning experiences, other students' characteristics and behaviors, additional inside classroom factors, and outside classroom factors. Additional findings from interviews with faculty, classroom observations, and a review of the textbooks were sometimes added to provide more breadth and depth to the descriptions. The descriptions of the themes by the men were then compared and contrasted with the descriptions of the themes by the women.

Findings related to classroom climate for women. Although there was evidence of factors that could cool the classroom environment for women, there was more evidence to support a classroom climate that was warm for female students. The cooling factors that were described by the female students are listed in Table 4.

Table 4

Cooling Factors For Female Students in Nursing Classroom

- Faculty sexual harassment
- Condescending and unsupportive faculty behavior
- Faculty who were not good educators or outstanding teachers
- Faculty who were less approachable
- The challenge of having different faculty with different teaching techniques
- Uncomfortable male-female student interactions with one of the male students

In addition to these cooling factors, there were more factors that contributed to warming the nursing classroom for women. These factors, different from the male

students' perceptions and experiences, were supported by the female students' descriptions, classroom observations, and interviews from faculty. These warming factors are listed in Table 5.

Table 5

Warming Factors For Female Students in Nursing Classroom

- Caring, encouraging, personal, helpful, and supportive faculty who were readily accessible and provided reasonable workloads
 - Faculty who were described as good, motivated, excited teachers who loved what they were doing and provided a comfortable, likeable learning environment
 - Faculty who provided preferential treatment to a female student
 - Faculty using sex-biased language towards women
 - Warm, meaningful learning experiences that occurred between the female students and faculty
 - Some textbooks that were biased towards women
 - Awareness of being part of the class majority of women that contributed to feelings of blending in, not feeling intimidated, and the perception of a comfortable environment
-

Findings related to classroom climate for men. The previous description for women is different from the classroom environment that is described for men. Although there were some warming factors, the overall classroom climate was cooler to men than to women. Again, I do not describe the classroom as chilly for men because there were

some factors that had a warming effect on this classroom for them. These warming factors that counteracted some of the chilliness for men are listed in Table 6.

Table 6

Warming Factors For Male Students in Nursing Classroom

- Perceptions by all of the men that the students in class were supportive towards them
- An unclear male presence who seemed to care about the male students from a distance
- Some positive learning experiences for some of the male students
- Reports of no real segregation in class
- The men's socialization with the female students
- A comparative equal percentage of student-initiated participation by both male and female students
- Neither men nor women demanding more attention
- Advocating behaviors by the older students
- Faculty described as professional, nice, congenial, easy-going, down-to-earth, helpful, and organized
- Faculty eliciting behaviors that did not make one of the men feel as a student he was below them
- Faculty who equally praised and called on both male and female students by name
- Some faculty who were accepting to men
- Faculty who appeared interested in student success

Table 6 (continued)

Warming Factors For Male Students in Nursing Classroom

- Faculty who asked for a general class response where students' voices were mixed as they responded as a group
 - Faculty who used a variety of examples related to both sexes
 - Encouraging faculty behavior, although it was unclear as to whether these were nursing faculty or faculty outside of nursing.
 - The presence of some male mentors and nurses in the clinical setting
 - The male student's ability to find role models for support outside of nursing education
 - Social support of family, friends, and loved ones
-

The main cooling factor in the classroom for men was caused by unsupportive faculty behaviors and characteristics. In addition to faculty behaviors and characteristics, there were also unsupportive male learning experiences and additional inside classroom factors. There were also unsupportive factors described outside the classroom that may have contributed indirectly to an uncomfortable experience for the male students. These cooling factors are described under the second research question.

Second Research Question

A second research question asked: If an inequitable or sex-biased classroom environment is found to exist for traditional-age student nurses who are male, what are the nursing faculty behaviors that contributed to this environment?

Unsupportive Faculty Characteristics and Behaviors

Some of the men described unsupportive faculty behaviors and characteristics that were especially noted to occur with the older faculty. The unsupportive faculty characteristics included being superior and aloof. The unsupportive faculty behaviors included tolerance, interruptions, a harshness or terseness in voice tone and body language, argumentativeness, aggressiveness, and a lack of patience. The message the men sometimes received was that they were stupid and lowly students and that men were troublesome. They perceived that faculty felt they did not know what they were talking about and their feelings did not matter. There was a sense by the men that the faculty did not approve of them nor want them to become nurses. Findings from interviews with faculty and female students supported this perception.

The majority of men missed interacting, learning, and relating to a professor who was of the same sex. Although the lack of male faculty had not interfered with learning, as a male student stated, "It would be nice to be able to see a male professor somewhere." There was also a missed opportunity for support to the male students. Although the male students had located another man in the nursing education environment, they were confused and unclear about his role.

Discriminatory Faculty Behaviors

There were also discriminatory faculty behaviors that were described only by the male students. These discriminatory behaviors included: (a) men not getting as much leeway in the grading of papers or the completion of assignments; (b) unfavorable incidents only happening with men; (c) singling men out in a negative way; and (c) faculty not spending as much time or helping men as much as they do women in the clinical setting. One faculty member admitted being prejudiced against male nursing

students. She complained, "I'd like to get rid of the men. It's always the males who are whispering or condescending. They are going into it (nursing) for the wrong reasons. They have a chip on their shoulder, a confrontational attitude." Other faculty members made comments that disparaged men in general, used gender-biased language, and addressed the class as if only women were present. Another faculty member reported men having unequal learning experiences by not being assigned female patients until close to graduation. There was also a report by a professor of a male student who had been singled out as having threatening behaviors by faculty when he became angry because of a limited clinical learning experience. In addition, there was a report by a female student of a female faculty member giving preferential treatment to a student who was female. This female faculty member described this female student as her pet.

Third Research Question

A third research question asked: If an inequitable or sex-biased environment is found to exist for traditional-age students who are male, what are the student behaviors that contributed to this environment? Findings from this study support there were no student behaviors that contributed to an inequitable or sex-biased environment for men. There were reports of complaining, interrupting, challenging, and cheating behaviors by other students, but none of these behaviors were inequitable or biased against the male students.

There were additional findings beyond the original research questions. These findings included additional factors that contributed to a cooler nursing classroom climate for men. These additional factors included unsupportive male students' learning experiences, additional inside classroom factors, and outside classroom factors. There also was an interesting finding related to one male student, who had an overall experience

more positive than the other men.

Additional Findings Beyond Original Research Questions

Unsupportive Male Students' Learning Experiences

Only the men reported uncomfortable learning experiences related to their sex. One of the learning experiences that contributed to cooling the classroom climate for men was the participation in stressful and uncomfortable learning experiences during the OB clinical rotation. Although their OB experiences happened the previous semester, some of the men still needed to talk about these uncomfortable experiences where the nurses were perceived as unfriendly and their experiences were limited or different from the women's experiences.

There were differences in learning preferences between the male and female students. The women liked interactive learning, where the men more often reported liking case studies and application. The men did not want to focus learning on areas where they would not practice. These men did not find these experiences interesting or helpful. All of the men described meaningful experiences for them that occurred outside the classroom, away from faculty and other students, and between them and their patients.

Unsupportive Additional Inside Classroom Factors

Additional inside classroom factors that contributed to the male students' perceptions of a cooler classroom climate included: (a) a large classroom that was perceived as too big to ask questions and therefore questions were not asked, asked to other students, or asked on break; (b) men not being equally represented in the textbooks; and (c) the diminishing number of men in the classroom. In addition, there was also a difference in course expectations between the men and women. Although all of the women had high course expectations, two of the men had medium or low course

expectations.

Unsupportive Outside Classroom Factors

In addition, there were factors outside the classroom that may have contributed to the male students' uncomfortable experiences. There was a lack of social support outside their immediate family where they were often teased or questioned about why they wanted to become nurses. Additional cooling factors included: (a) the persistent stereotype of nurse as woman and a man in nursing as homosexual; (b) a lack of support by friends; (c) a report of some nurses and patients reacting negatively to a male student as a nurse; and (d) calloused, practicing nurses who will become peers in the future.

Overall Positive Experience For One of the Male Students

For one man, George, there was an overall experience that was more positive than those of the other men. Factors that reflect his positive experience include: (a) not being bothered by negative comments by other students; (b) reflecting that being mentored by a male or female nurse was equally rewarding; (c) describing more warming faculty characteristics and behaviors than the other men; (d) feeling that he was fairly treated, not perceiving any biased behavior against him, and not believing the discriminatory faculty behaviors described by other men; (e) reflecting that he had a worthwhile OB clinical experience where he was able to effectively work through feeling uncomfortable; and (f) discussing and being observed to have strong friendships with the women, with some of them being referred to as his best friends.

Conclusion Related to Findings

The most important cooling factor in this study is the faculty characteristics and behaviors described by the male students. In addition to the faculty findings, there were cooling factors related to the male students' learning experiences, the size of the

classroom, gender-biased textbooks, and a diminishing number of men in the classroom. Outside classroom factors may also have indirectly contributed to cooling the classroom climate. Although these “micro-inequities, small differential behaviors that often occur in the course of everyday interchanges” (Hall & Sandler, 1982, p. 5), may in and of themselves seem trivial and go unnoticed, they collectively throughout an individual’s experience may create a subtle negative ambiance. This negative environment maintains an unequal opportunity for men because these students cannot change their personal characteristic of being a man that leads to this inequity (Hall & Sandler, 1982). I now discuss how these findings are related to the literature.

Findings Related to Literature

Previous to this study, researchers studied the social climate of nursing education classrooms by assessing nursing students’ and faculty’s perceptions of the actual versus real and preferred versus ideal classroom environments (Fisher & Parkinson, 1998; Harrell, 1989; Letizia, 1989). Only one research study (Serex, 1997) specifically studied sex and classroom climate and was not a study that was unique to nursing. This study has unique findings related to a cool classroom climate for nursing students who are male. I will discuss these findings related to male students that include: (a) a cool classroom climate, (b) unsupportive faculty characteristics and behaviors, (c) discriminatory faculty behaviors, (d) unsupportive male students’ learning experiences, (e) unsupportive additional inside classroom factors, (f) unsupportive outside classroom factors, and (g) an overall positive experience for one of the male students.

Cool Classroom Climate For Male Students

The male students perceived a cooler nursing classroom climate. The male students’ perceptions were different from the female students’ perceptions of a warmer

classroom climate. This differential finding is consistent with Sadker and Sadker's (1986) finding that students in the same classroom, with the same teacher, studying the same material may experience very different environments. Follet et al. (1982) also supported this idea of a difference in the perceptions of male and female students about their educational environment. When the majority of students within a professional school are homogenous in relation to a characteristic, such as one's sex, it is likely that the majority or minority status that is created by their sex will influence the students' perceptions. Most importantly, differential findings by students who are in the same course with the same teacher suggest some variable or variables affected either their experiences or the reporting of those experiences (Cranston, 1989). What this means for this study is that the differential finding of a cooler classroom climate for male students in this classroom suggests that some variable or variables were affecting these men's experiences.

Interestingly, this study's differential findings related to classroom climate are not consistent with findings from Serex's (1997) study. Serex found no difference between female and male students' perceptions of the classroom climate and that accounting and engineering students perceived a cooler climate than education or nursing students, with none of these majors perceiving the classroom to be chilly. Perhaps one explanation for the difference in findings between this study and Serex's study is the difference in data collection procedures. Serex used a survey and I used interviews and observations as methods for data collection. Studies that use questionnaires to gather information about conscious perceptions of the classroom routinely find little evidence for any effect (Heller et al., 1985) where observational studies in natural settings are more likely to find differences (Constantinople et al., 1988). Therefore, the qualitative procedures in this study were probably able to delve deeper and reveal richer and thicker descriptions than

the survey.

Consistent with Letizia's (1989) findings, the male students would not perceive this classroom as ideal. This less than ideal perception is supported by the male students' descriptions of unsupportive teacher behaviors. Teacher support was described by students in Letizia's study as one of the most important factors in their perceptions of an ideal classroom climate.

Unsupportive Faculty Characteristics and Behaviors

The finding of students who have different sex characteristics perceiving faculty differently is consistent with other research findings. Feldman (1993) and Crombie et al. (2003) found that students tend to rate the teachers of the same sex higher than teachers of the opposite sex. Centra's (2000) finding that female students tend to give female professors higher evaluations is also congruent with this study's finding that the women perceived the female professors more favorably.

Some of the findings in this study can be correlated with Hall and Sandler's (1982) descriptions of unsupportive faculty behavior related to women. These correlations between the findings in this study related to men and findings in their study related to women are presented in Table 7.

Table 7

Unsupportive Faculty Behavior: Correlation of Findings For Men To Previous Findings For Women

Women	Men
Women receiving comments from faculty that disparaged women's intellectual abilities.	The men's descriptions of aloofness, tolerance, superiority, and a lack of patience sent a message to the men that they did not know what they were talking about and their feelings did not matter. The men perceived they were stupid or lowly students.
Faculty modulating tone when communicating with women.	The men's reports of harshness or terseness in voice tone.
Faculty provoking and reinforcing expected behaviors that are of negative value in the academic setting.	The reports of male students' arguing behavior by a professor.*
Nonverbal behavior reported as the silent language that signals exclusion to female students.	One male student's description of faculty eliciting an air of aloofness or superiority in body language rather than in words.

*Note: When one expects a particular behavior such as an argument, one may unconsciously encourage it (Hall & Sandler, 1982).

As noted in Table 7, men in this study reported nonverbal behavior that was uncomfortable for them. This finding does not support that women may be more sensitive to nonverbal cues than men (Henley, 1977). Perhaps men are more sensitive to nonverbal cues in an environment that is uncomfortable for them.

A unique finding in this study that I am unable to correlate with the previous literature is that the men found faculty who were older in age sending a message of non-approval towards men in nursing. Although the men attributed these professors' behaviors related to coming from an era when there were fewer men in nursing, it could also be attributed to Canada and Pringle's (1995) reasoning from their mixed classroom study. Canada and Pringle reasoned that female faculty who favored a more egalitarian and noncompetitive pedagogy felt disconcerted and challenged for leadership within their classrooms with the addition of male students. Consistent with Bartfay and Davis's (2001) perspective, some older nurses may also regard nursing as a symbol of the monumental struggle faced by women to find a profession that was respected and valued and believe it should remain a woman's profession. Perhaps some of these women are still guarding the gates and may be afraid and reluctant to let go of a profession in which women outnumber men.

An interesting finding from this study is that the female students' GPA average was 3.4 compared to a 3.1 GPA average for the male students. This finding correlates with previous reports of men receiving lower course grades (American Association of University Women Educational Foundation, 1998) than female students. Although this study's finding may be coincidental and related to the small sample size, it brings forth questions about fairness in grading, especially when a male student described a discrepancy in the grading of papers and allowance for the completion of assignments.

This study had students reporting a lack of male role models; the majority of male students missing interacting, learning, and relating to a male professor; and men on the floor making the clinical experience more comfortable for men. This finding is consistent with O'Lynn (2004) who reported an absence of male faculty being perceived as an important barrier to male nurses and Kelly et al.'s (1996) finding of male nursing students feeling isolated and lonely because there were few male role models. Role models who have had similar experiences are important because students can interact with them and they send a message that students can be successful. A lack of male faculty role models is not reinforcement for men to continue in nursing. Just as Sandler et al. (1996) reported that it is still possible for a female student to graduate without having studied with a female professor, it is similarly unfortunate and likely that these male students will graduate without having studied with a male nursing professor because the men reported no male nursing faculty members anywhere in the program.

Discriminatory Faculty Behaviors

This study's finding of differential treatment to male nursing students is consistent with Kelly et al. (1996) who reported male nursing students perceiving differential treatment that was frustrating and contributed to their feelings of isolation. This study's observations of faculty using sex-biased language and making anti-male remarks in the classroom correlate with findings in O'Lynn's (2004) study where these two factors were rated by male nurses to be among the top barriers for male students in nursing education. The findings related to discrimination against male nursing students are also consistent with *The Wall Street Journal's* (1999) report of sexual discrimination by a university administrator who was charged with creating a hostile and intimidating environment for male students in a practical nursing program.

However, this study has unique reports of prejudice and discrimination related to the nursing classroom that have not been previously reported by nursing students who are male. These discriminatory findings, however, can be correlated with findings of discriminatory treatment towards women related to non-nursing classrooms. Some of this treatment related to women being less respected in the higher education environment. Other literature described discriminatory treatment that was related to women who were on a male-dominated career path, such as veterinary medicine and technology (e.g., Follet et al., 1982; Frenkel, 1990; Klawe & Leveson, 1995).

Some of the discriminatory findings related to male students in this study are supported by Sandler et al.'s (1996) landmark report of several quantitative and qualitative studies supporting differential and discriminatory treatment towards female students in the classroom. Some of the faculty behaviors in this study correlating with Sandler et al.'s report of women being treated differently are reflected in Table 8.

Table 8

Discriminatory Faculty Behavior: Correlation of Findings For Men To Previous Findings For Women

Women	Men
Faculty expecting less of women students in the future.	A prejudiced faculty member complained that men were in nursing for the wrong reasons and expected less of male students who will go on to become PAs or anesthetists.

Table 8 (continued)

Discriminatory Faculty Behavior: Correlation of Findings For Men To Previous Findings For Women

Women	Men
Using classroom examples that reflect stereotypes about men and women.	A faculty member referring to the nurse as she and patient as he.
Addressing the class as if there were no women present.	A faculty member who said, "Say you're angry at your husband..."
Interrupting female students.	Male students reporting being interrupted by faculty.
Faculty made comments that disparaged women in general.	A member of the faculty said in class that men go through their own menopause. She communicated with an exasperating tone that perhaps she had personally dealt with this in an unpleasant way.
Coaching men and not women.	Men not getting as much help from faculty who spent more time with the female students and having unequal clinical experiences.*

*The last effect is compounded when the classroom is predominantly of one sex (Klawe & Leveson, 1995), such as in this study.

This study's findings of a faculty member who perceived men as going into nursing for the wrong reasons can perhaps be explained by Boughn's (2001) finding of

disparate attitudes between men and women for choosing nursing as a profession. In her study, women did not identify as men did with practical reasons for choosing nursing as a profession (e.g., salary, benefits, job security, and working conditions). The female faculty member in this study may be resentful to male students whom she may perceive as not choosing nursing for more altruistic reasons. This perception may be contributing to her feelings of prejudice against the male students. What this female faculty member may not be taking into account is additional findings from Boughn that men also choose nursing for altruistic reasons and are similar to women in their desire to care for others.

In Kelly et al.'s (1996) study, male students reported being assigned only to male clients and wanting an equal opportunity to learn. The findings in this study are consistent with this report. In this study, a professor reported a male student who had not been assigned to a female patient until late in his clinical experience and another faculty member reported a male student who had been singled out as having threatening behaviors by faculty when he became angry because of a limited clinical experience. In the latter description, perhaps the faculty perceived this male student's behavior as extraordinary because there may be a difference between sexes in response to anger, frustration, and disappointment (Taylor, 1997). Some women may naturally respond by tears, where some men may be more likely to swear and gesture because tears may be seen as a sign of weakness and not the culturally correct response of a man (Taylor, 1997). This aggressive behavior may be seen as threatening to faculty who are more comfortable with more passive affective responses.

All of the professors in this study were women and were described as having some discriminatory and sexist behaviors. This does not support Rosenfeld and Jarrard's (1985) finding that female professors tended to be perceived as less sexist. Their finding

that male and female students will perceive professors as less sexist if they like the class is also not supported by the findings in this study. All of the students reported that they liked the class and all reported that they generally liked the professors. Another explanation is that perhaps these male students would not report some of the female faculty members as sexist because they perceived their behaviors as happening only occasionally and unintentionally.

There are specific discriminatory behaviors that are unique to this study. These findings related to faculty behavior include singling men out in a negative way and giving preferential treatment to a student who is female. These overt discriminatory behaviors have not been previously reported in the literature.

Students' Learning Experiences

Several of the men had uncomfortable, stressful, and limited experiences in OB where they felt the nurses were unfriendly and treated them differently. This finding is consistent with O'Lynn's (2004) finding of men not feeling welcome in the clinical setting and different requirements and limitations for male students in OB and gynecological clinical rotations. Fister's (1999) report of discrimination to men in the clinical setting also supports this finding. Also consistent with this finding, is Kelly et al. (1996) reporting men not doing much in their OB clinical experiences and feeling separated from everyone.

Some of this study's findings are also relatively consistent with Callister et al.'s (2000) findings of male students reporting higher levels of role stress in the maternal and newborn clinical setting. The men in their study reported similar feelings to men in this study where they felt awkward and uncomfortable and felt the nurses did not want them to participate in care. One of the differences between this study's and Callister et al.'s

findings was Callister et al. reporting there was support by some of the staff nurses that made the male students' experiences more positive. Another difference reported by Callister et al. was the male students' reports of positive interactions with and caring for the fathers. Similar to Patterson and Morin's (2002) finding, males in this study reported no male nurses in the maternity unit.

There are contradictions in the literature related to differences in learning styles between male and female students (Belenky et al., 1986; Ferguson, 1992; Gilligan, 1982; Kolb, 1984; Maher & Tetreault, 2002). Therefore, it is an interesting finding that the women in this class preferred interactive learning that was more connected and men preferred case studies and application which was a more analytical, separate, and rational approach to learning. The finding of men wanting to focus learning on where they want to practice also supports the importance of application for men. If they perceive they will not be able to handle (e.g., would pass out) or would not be hired into this environment, they did not find these experiences interesting or helpful. This difference in learning suggests that the findings related to differences in male and female learning styles may be genuine.

All of the men described learning experiences that were meaningful occurring outside the classroom, away from faculty and other students, and between them and their patients. This finding correlates with Kelly et al.'s (1996) finding that the clinical experience was the driving force behind male student's perseverance in nursing education. Male nursing students in Kelly et al.'s study reported being frustrated, but once they got to the clinical setting, they became attached to nursing.

Additional Inside Classroom Factors

I found some of the textbooks in this study to be biased toward women by not

having fair and balanced examples of male and female nurses. The under-representation of nurses who are men was reflected in pictures, stories, and examples of therapeutic dialogue. This study's finding that some of the textbooks were biased towards women is congruent with O'Lynn's (2004) and Kelly et al.'s (1996) findings of male students reporting the nurse being referred to as "she" in texts and journal articles. This finding is also consistent with a number of studies that were reported by Sandler et al. (1996) that documented bias related to sex occurring in textbooks.

Findings by Constantinople et al. (1988), Hall and Sandler (1982), and Sadker and Sadker (1986) indicate that male students get more of the teacher's attention by talking more often in class and that men are more active in the classroom than women. This study did not support that finding. Interestingly, the participation by men was proportional to the participation by women and the men did not demand more attention. This finding of proportional participation by both male and female students with a female teacher supports Constantinople et al.'s (1988) finding that the gender of the teacher does not have an effect on student participation. A possible explanation for men not receiving more attention could be that the class was not segregated. As reported by Sadker and Sadker, teachers tend to gravitate to the male sections in classrooms that are segregated by whether students are male or female.

In this study, the size of the classroom was not an inhibiting factor for the female students who participated equally with the men. The classroom size was reported however as an inhibiting factor for one male student and contributed to his lack of participation. This correlates with the finding that students often report that their own participation in discussion is inhibited when the class is large (Constantinople et al., 1988). It is an interesting finding that only a man reported the classroom size as an

inhibiting factor. Perhaps the reason he was reluctant to participate was because of his increased visibility as one of only a few men and a fear that he might be subject to greater scrutiny (Sandler et al., 1996). It probably makes sense that the size of the classroom appears even bigger when you are part of a minority and diminishing population.

The finding of reported medium and low course expectations by two men in this course when compared to all high course expectations reported by the women is interesting. Carpenter et al. (1993) suggest that the impact of low performance expectations may discourage students from pursuing a course of action or plan of study. I did not ask the students to clarify their expectations for this course. Therefore, it is unclear whether the reported lower course expectations were related to the male students' performance expectations. If these expectations were performance related, such as expecting a lower grade, Yoshi and Bill could be at risk for attrition.

Unsupportive Outside Classroom Factors

Findings from this study support the existence of persistent stereotypes of nurse as woman and men who want to become nurses as homosexual. This finding correlates with Kelly et al. (1996) who found that many of male students' perceptions and feelings were related to society's perception of nursing as a feminine and unmanly profession. Sadker and Sadker's gender bias update in 1999 also reported men still encountering social pressures when they expressed an interest in careers typically thought of as feminine. The combination of a predominantly feminine profession with homosexuality may position men who choose this profession to be classified as subordinate within hegemonic masculinities (Gough & Peace, 2000). In other words, a man in nursing could be perceived as less than a man by men who subscribe to the concept that men are dominant and heterosexuality is preferred. According to Sadker and Sadker (1994), "Boys are

stereotyped into gender roles earlier and more rigidly than females” (p. 24). This longevity and rigidity make it increasingly difficult for men to break out of stereotypical roles.

One of this study’s findings was that men received support from immediate family. This correlates with Kelly et al.’s (1996) finding that family members were the most influential in providing moral support during the years of schooling for nursing students who are male. This finding is inconsistent with O’Lynn’s (2004) finding that the decision to pursue nursing as a career was not supported by important people in the students’ lives. This current study also had reports of a lack of social support from family and friends that was occurring from outside the immediate family for some male students. These men were teased or questioned about why they wanted to become nurses. This finding supports Baker’s (2001) speculation on causes of role strain for male nursing students. Baker speculated that explaining a career choice to family and friends and preparing to face and take on the occupational label of nurse in the real world can be a source of strain for male students.

One male student in this study verbalized a lack of support from patients and the patient’s family. There was the perception that they did not accept him as a student nurse. This finding correlates with Kelly et al.’s (1996) finding of men who reported being anxious about their clients’ acceptance of them as a nurse. This finding also correlates with Morin, Patterson, and Brzowski (1999), who reported maternity patients wanting the option to refuse care by a male student.

This study had findings that practicing nurses were not supportive of male students and exhibited behavior that could make them difficult to work with as peers. This finding is congruent with previous discussion in the literature. There appears to be

an underlying tension between women in nursing and men trying to find a place within that group (Williams, 2002).

Overall Positive Experience For One of the Male Students

An interesting and unique finding in this study is that one male student in particular, George, had many positive comments to say about his experiences and was the only male student who did not report unsupportive faculty behaviors. Although this finding is consistent with Okrainec's (1994) finding that Canadian male nursing students reported being satisfied with their relationships with nursing instructors, it is not a consistent finding with all of the men in this study.

The one thing different about George's experience from the other men that I can target that might have contributed to his overall positive perception was his socialization with the female students. Although one man was a self-described loner, and three men actively socialized with the female students in the class, George was the only man who described the female students as his best friends. This description is in stark contrast to previous studies' findings related to male socialization. There have been previous reports of men being less likely to have close friends and more likely to endure alienation and loneliness (Sadker & Sadker, 1999). There have also been reports of isolation for students in programs with inequitable representation (Frenkel, 1990; Henes et al., 1995). Although one Canadian study (Okrainec, 1994) found that men reported their relationships with their peers as satisfactory, it has also been previously reported by Kelly et al. (1996) that male students were not included in conversations with female student nurses unless they made the first move. Because of these conflicting findings, one has to wonder if George's strong affiliation and socialization with the female students were able to help him through uncomfortable learning situations and contributed to his perception of an overall positive

learning experience in nursing education for which he had little to complain. His overall experience appeared to be even less stressful than men, like Yoshi, with previous health care experience

Limitations

A limitation of purposive sampling is the inability to assess how participants represent the population (Gillis & Jackson, 2002). I may assume that errors of judgment in over-representing or under-representing elements of the population in this sample tend to balance out, but there is no way for me to test this assumption. Therefore, the purposeful procedure limited my findings to a description of what was observed in this nursing classroom, artifacts that were related to it, and information obtained from these nursing educators and students.

According to Angrosino and Mays de Perez (2000), ethnographic truth has come to be seen as a thing of many parts and no one perspective can claim exclusive privilege to its representation. Therefore, what I observed and interpreted is conditioned by who I am. Different classroom observers, equally well-trained and well-versed in theory and method, but different in demographical composition and experiences might well stimulate very different sets of interactions and hence a different set of data leading to a different set of conclusions. I can never claim to observe an event that would have taken place in my absence (Behar, 1996).

Qualitative data are fundamentally interpretative. The researcher filters the data through a personal lens that is situated in a specific sociopolitical and historical moment (Cresswell, 2003). In spite of a step-by-step process for analyzing the data, I cannot escape the role that personal interpretation played in affecting my findings. There are also countless ways that differences related to sex characteristics could arise in mixed

classrooms. My observational techniques, along with student interviews, permitted me to examine only a small subset of the possibilities.

It is also important to note that there may have been pre-classroom factors, such as previous experiences, which may have influenced this classroom climate which are not accounted for or measured in this study. According to Deux & Major (1987), gender-linked social behaviors can be multiply determined, highly flexible, and dependent on context. Gender is a component of ongoing interactions that are linked to expectancies, identities, and the context in which the interaction occurs. These components can shape the resultant behavior.

Interviews are not neutral tools for data gathering but rather active interactions leading to jointly-constructed and contextually-based results (Schwandt, 1997). The researcher never hears an account identical to one the same informant would give to another person (Behar, 1996). Therefore, this study's findings would be difficult to replicate because it involves a unique combination of researcher, faculty, and students who are interacting with one another at one particular point in time.

Although faculty reported that they did not change anything in the classroom because a researcher was present, it is a natural phenomenon that the presence of me as observer may have changed the classroom environment. The students and teachers who were observed may have behaved in atypical ways that may have distorted this study's findings (Gillis & Jackson, 2002). To keep the data as genuine as possible, I did not answer specific questions about the research, before, or during data collection to the faculty or students.

This study's findings reflect that there is a possibility of differential treatment of men in nursing. However, the findings do not make a claim to conclusively define the

extent of discriminatory treatment of men in nursing education. As a researcher, I do believe that the findings raise several important issues and considerations for nursing research, nursing faculty, and nursing programs.

Recommendations for Future Research

There is a paucity of research related to nursing classrooms. There is also a scant amount of research related to male students' perceptions and experiences and how they compare to female students' perceptions and experiences. Therefore additional studies need to be conducted to support or refute the findings in this study. Future research should probe students' perceptions of classroom climate in courses taught by male nursing faculty. Studies should include several types of higher education institutions. Research that assessed students who are different in age, ethnicity, and have similar GPAs would provide a broader view of the nursing classroom climate.

Results from Heller et al. (1985) suggest student perceptions change over time. In order to address changes in male student perceptions, a longitudinal study should be conducted. Also needed is a comparison of male and female student attrition rates with perceptions of students leaving nursing with those who continue to graduation.

There are contradictions between this study and other studies as to whether practicing nurses and families are supportive to student nurses who are male. Therefore, there needs to be more research in this area. If men are supported in nursing education and then are not supported in their practice environments by other nurses, patients, or significant others, it will be a challenge for them to persevere in the nursing profession. Practicing nurses who role model that OB or other female patient care environments are appropriate for male students sends a message to patients and significant others that they should not object to being cared for by men. An obvious research question to be

answered is whether the addition of male nurses in the OB and gynecological setting decreases the awkward and uncomfortable feelings men experience in these settings because they now find these experiences interesting and helpful and perceive this environment as a potential practice arena.

The women in this class preferred interactive learning that was more connected and the men preferred case studies and application that was a more analytical, separate, and rational approach to learning. Because it has been previously been reported that female students had to adapt their learning style to the method favored by male teachers (Ferguson, 1992), it may be important to determine if men are also adapting their learning style to methods favored by female teachers. More research is needed in this area. Some questions that need to be answered are: (a) Is the utilization of a feminist pedagogical approach providing limitations to nursing students who are male? (b) Although it may be empowering students who are women, is it disempowering students who are men? (c) Is the utilization of feminist pedagogy in the nursing education classroom contributing to a learning environment that is biased towards women?

Results from this study and other studies outside of nursing education suggest factors that cause inequity in education related to whether one is a man or woman. Therefore, more research needs to be done to determine if professors in nursing are knowledgeable about these factors and take measures to make their learning environments equitable to all students. Additional research should be conducted to determine if nursing professors are receiving training in this area. Another research question is whether men will report meaningful learning experiences with nursing faculty when classrooms are reported as more equitable to male students.

Researchers should assess nursing programs that have increased male mentors and

faculty into the nursing environment. This male presence could be increased by either hiring more men or by bringing men into the classroom and clinical setting as guest faculty. It is important to answer the question as to whether the perception and experiences of men changed when more men were available in the nursing education environment.

It is important to determine whether men's lower course expectations in nursing are related to their performance expectations. If men are entering a classroom perceiving they will get lower grades, they are at risk for attrition. Equally important, if men perceive they will not be graded equitably with women, they may not even enter nursing as a plan of study.

A unique finding related to this study is a man who reported an overall, positive experience in nursing education that appears to be related to his socialization with the female students. This finding suggests that peer socialization may create a more comfortable learning environment than previous healthcare experience. Additional research is needed in this area to support this finding. This finding is important to validate because it could be an important supportive factor for attracting and retaining men in nursing. Men who perceive a positive and supportive experience in nursing education may not only pursue through to graduation, but may also tell other men that nursing is a great major.

Implications of Study for Nursing Education

As previously described in Chapter 4, Yoshi stated, "If you notice in our class, we don't have very many male students anymore. And there were more, a lot more...the previous semesters. They're gone." This is an important message for nursing education. Nursing classrooms are losing precious male students and it is important for faculty to

evaluate whether the climate of the classroom is contributing to this attrition.

Faculty are not automatically immune from the limiting perceptions held by the larger society in which different perceptions of men and women are reinforced and expressed (Hall & Sandler, 1982). Even faculty who are most concerned about sex discrimination may inadvertently communicate to student's limited preconceptions about appropriate and expected behaviors, abilities, career directions, and personal goals which are based on a student's sex rather than on individual interest and ability (Hall & Sandler, 1982). I, like the professors in this study, am probably just as unaware of the biased behaviors that are inadvertently present in my classrooms. These inadvertent and subtle incidents may sometimes do the most damage because they often occur without the full awareness of the professor or the student (Hall & Sandler, 1982).

Therefore, nursing faculty need to open up their classrooms to others to increase their awareness. One way is to encourage students verbally in the classroom and through open discourse in the syllabi to tell nursing faculty if they inadvertently behave in a manner that is sexist or offensive. Another way is to have our classrooms allowed to be videotaped, audio taped, or observed by a colleague. This strategy is congruent with Shellenbarger's (1993) suggestion to nurse educators to develop an awareness and sensitivity to sexism in the classroom by allowing someone to observe the class. The auditory and visual replications and feedback from others may provide eye-opening perspectives of behaviors of which faculty would otherwise be unaware.

It is important to look for verbal and nonverbal behaviors that unintentionally contribute to an inhospitable environment for men. Examples of this discriminatory language were reflected in a professor's use of "she" when referring to the nurse and another professor's generalization of "your husband" when referring to the students. This

last assumption of the heterosexual man as partner is sexist and egocentric. Using discriminatory language indicates a lack of sensitivity to men and openness to various lifestyles. A suggestion for establishing classrooms free of sexism is to follow Shellenbarger's (1993) checklist. Some of the recommendations include examining written materials and verbal and nonverbal communication for differential treatment. This checklist can be used to evaluate faculty members for promotion and tenure. Nursing faculty can also create an equity handbook with specific ideas for change to enhance the learning environment for men.

Nursing faculty seem unprepared to see the subtle, unintentional bias that may characterize classrooms. Therefore, staff development programs should focus on educating faculty to increase their awareness. It must also be ensured that adjunct and other non-tenured faculty receive information about classroom climate issues. I believe nurse educators want to be effective teachers. Increasing equity in the classroom increases the effectiveness of the teacher (Sadker & Sadker, 1986) who then is able to reach all students. In fact, increasing equity may not be enough. Because male students are a minority, they may well have a special need for a college climate that specifically acknowledges them as individuals and recognizes their abilities, contributions, and accomplishments (Hall & Sandler, 1982).

Because of the current nursing faculty shortage, nursing programs are actively seeking and interviewing prospective faculty members. In interviewing them, they should be asked questions that explore their awareness of climate issues (Sandler et al., 1996). It is also important to develop a rubric for assessing an equitable learning climate (Sandler et al., 1996) to be used not only in evaluating prospective faculty, but also current faculty who may be unaware of subtle, biased behaviors.

Although not related to gender equity, one of the messages faculty can take away from this study is that it is important to be good educators. This message was delivered in the voice of the students in this study. Just because one is a good practitioner does not automatically mean one is a good educator. According to Tanner (2005), nurse educators have little, if any, preparation as teachers. Thus, nurse educators often teach as they were taught, with emphasis on content coverage. They need to create and sustain a culture of inquiry. A culture of inquiry is not created when students are interrupted because faculty are concerned with the amount of information they “have to cover.” It should be more imperative for faculty to ask, “What did the student learn?” and to create active learning built on students’ prior understanding. This type of learning cannot happen with interruptions or assumptions that faculty already know the students’ questions.

Because there is a nursing faculty shortage and men comprise only 5.4% of the nursing population, it is a challenge to bring more male faculty into nursing programs. One suggestion to balance the lack of male faculty and role models is to bring outside men into the classroom to guest lecture. To reach male students who may become discouraged and ready to give up, another suggestion is to bring former male students into the classroom or as part of an extracurricular activity who can tell the class about their frustrations and how they surmounted them (Sandler et al., 1996). It has also been suggested to provide a complimentary membership to the American Assembly for Men in Nursing to help them establish connections with clinical mentors (Brady & Sherrod, 2003).

Bias towards the female sex was discovered in some of the textbooks that were used in this course. The discovery of bias supports Shellenbarger’s (1993) recommendations to nursing faculty to determine whether textbooks are biased and to

choose them wisely. Just as faculty select textbooks based on currency and content, they should also be choosing them according to lack of bias.

It is important for nurse educators to remember to incorporate different teaching styles according to different learning styles. Because female students may prefer classrooms that are collaborative and have connected, relational approaches to learning (Belenky et al., 1986; Gilligan, 1982; Maher & Tetreault, 2002) and men may thrive in classrooms that are competitive and concerned with separate, analytical, and rational approaches to learning (Maher & Tetreault, 2002), class activities should vary to accommodate students' preferences and ways of knowing and learning. Because the majority of nursing students and nursing faculty are women, there may be a tendency to utilize feminist pedagogy as a universal approach in the nursing classroom. Feminist pedagogy entered the nursing classroom to challenge traditional patriarchal practices and to provide value to women's voices and ways of knowing. This feminist approach provides classroom atmospheres that are intended to be congruent with the female students' learning style. A potential problem with feminist pedagogy is that it might not be a good fit for male students. This lack of fit could cause male students to feel silenced and to perceive that their learning needs are not being addressed.

Sandler et al. (1996) state the importance of recognizing that change is an ongoing process. Dealing with climate issues only once or even several times will not solve the problem once and for all. Therefore, faculty must work actively to create an atmosphere where differential treatment to men in the classroom and anywhere else will be discussed, problems identified, and strategies implemented and evaluated.

To promote better clinical experiences, this and a previous study's findings (Kelley et al., 1996) advocate for men to be put with other men in clinical groups. This

pairing of men would be especially helpful in potentially uncomfortable settings, like OB. Male students should also be encouraged by faculty to recognize perhaps a different type of care that is given by men. This difference in care may provide a way for men to carve a different niche within the profession that allows them to maintain their identity within a feminine domain (Williams, 1989).

It is essential that nursing faculty are aware of behaviors that might be construed as preferential treatment towards a student. It is imperative to recognize students in the class who have different characteristics as well as those who are similar. Faculty must be cognizant that students who are in a minority, due to sex, race, or other characteristics, are provided with an equal amount of attention, energy, and time.

Male nursing students want an equal opportunity to learn. Faculty must begin to shift their paradigm and allow these students the same learning opportunities that are provided to female students. Male students should be assigned to care for female clients early in their program of study so they begin to feel comfortable in the early stages of learning. These men should not have to fight to observe and participate in care that will provide them with a strong knowledge base on which to practice.

The unique finding of this study related to an overall positive experience for one of the male students is an important consideration. If socialization with the female students is a factor that may override a difficult and sometimes stressful experience for men in nursing education, faculty need to consider ways to support these friendships. One way is to provide opportunities for mingling and socialization between male and female students in the program. Another way is to provide opportunities in the classroom for male and female students to work together.

Conclusion

This study is not intended to place blame but rather to increase awareness of the problem of differential treatment to student nurses who are male. Nurse educators may feel that discussions related to bias in the classroom do not apply to them because most of the teachers and students are women. However, the results of this study suggest that nursing classrooms may be biased and have a cooler climate for male students. This cooler climate is supported by differential treatment to men or by treating men and women the same when men want or need something different. This treatment may result in a feeling of uneasiness, reduced student motivation and participation, and perhaps a change of major or withdrawal from the program (Serex, 1997) by male students. Thus, nurse educators need to take measures to identify and eliminate bias from their classrooms. This is increasingly important as more men enter the nursing profession. If nurse educators do not reduce bias from their classrooms, it might lead men to feel their academic and career ambitions are not as important as those of female students.

Men have an important heritage in nursing that has been forgotten and lost. It is vital to remember that men are not entering into nursing, but men who are returning to nursing. It is imperative that women, whether they are faculty, students, patients, or practicing nurses, help men rediscover the rewards of nursing. This welcoming back to men must go beyond acceptance and tolerance. It is imperative for men to feel recognized for their special gifts and acknowledged that they will make outstanding caregivers. This is important for maintaining the integrity of our profession. This addition of men is also critical for society whose demand for nurses continues to grow (HRSA, 2002). Because it is projected that the nursing shortage will continue to deepen, there is a need to attract and retain students into nursing who are considered nontraditional in this century.

Researchers are finding that what students think about the classroom is as important as what they do in the classroom (Powdrill, Just, Garcia, & Amador, 1997). Contributing to these perceptions is how teachers create the climate of the course and its contextual reality (Bevis, 1989). It is often the teachers who may determine whether a student feels welcome or unwelcome. Nursing faculty cannot rely on the clinical setting to be the only factor that “hooks” men in nursing. As nurse educators, it is essential that men also get “hooked” in classrooms by feeling that they are an important part of the nursing profession. As creators of the classroom environment, faculty must learn strategies and tactics to warm the classroom climate for male students to make them feel not only they are accepted, but more importantly that they are pursued because of the unique talents and traits they bring to the profession that expand nurses’ capabilities and skills. Finally, I end with the voice of Yoshi who replied to the question, “If you had one message to send to nurse educators, what would it be?” He replied:

I would like to (have them) be a little bit more sensitive to the gender issues because even though they say that they don’t have problems with that anymore...the stereotype is still out there and they may be unintentionally bringing that across sometimes in class.

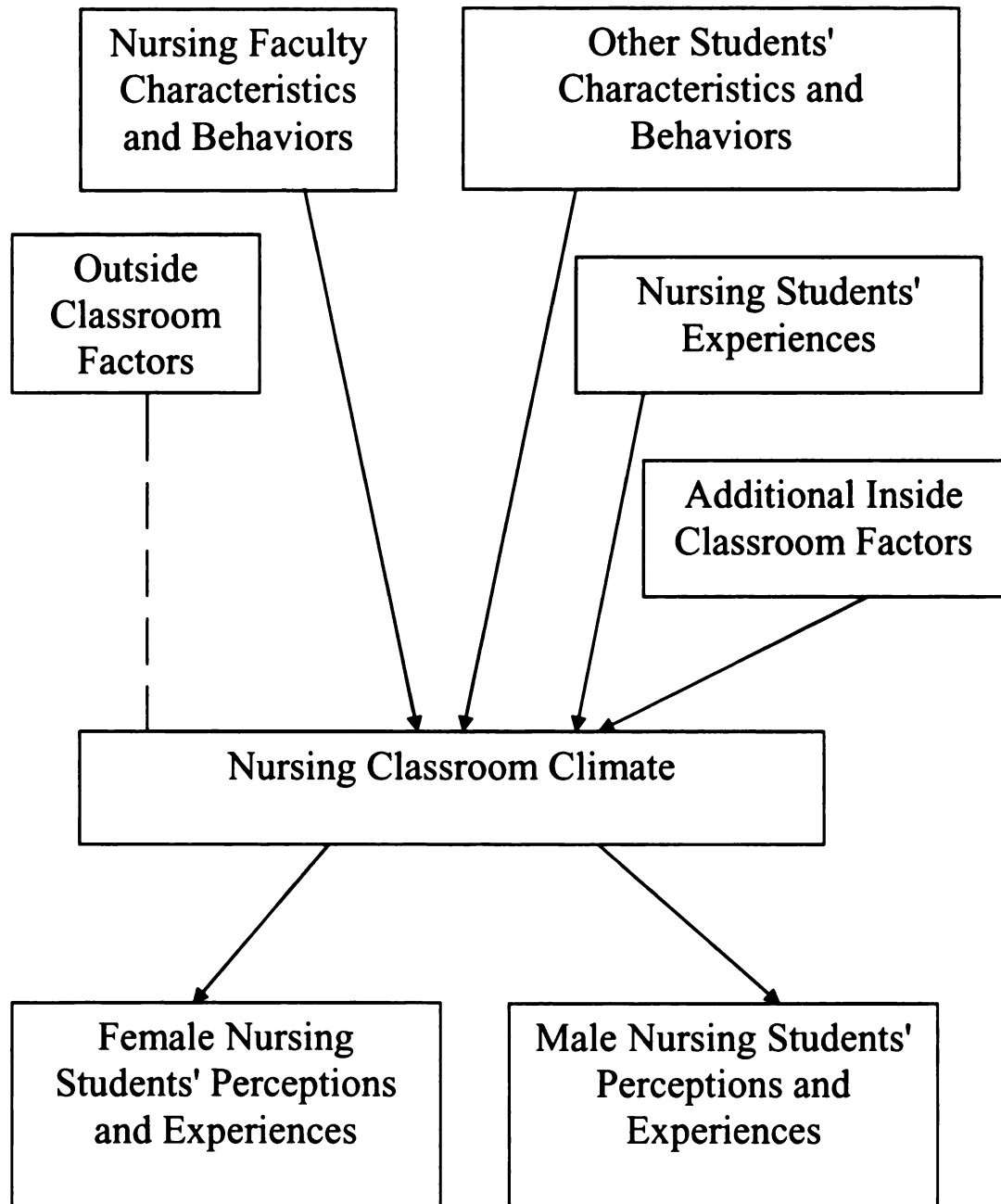
If men think this is the one message they would like to send to nurse educators then faculty better pay attention. Or one day nurse educators will remorsefully say “they’re gone” as they look around and see the absence of men in the classroom. The nursing profession cannot afford to lose these precious male students.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Figure 1. Conceptual Model of Study

Figure 1. Conceptual Model of Study



APPENDIX B

Informed Consent

Consent Form-The Nursing Classroom Climate

You are being asked to participate in a study intending to look at and describe the nursing classroom environment. The knowledge gained is expected to provide nurse educators with a knowledge base from which to maximize their classroom environments to be responsive to the needs of students, with the purpose of enhancing student success and retention. The setting required for this study is a 16-week medical-surgical course in the fall 2004 semester. I, as one of the researchers, am performing this study as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for my Ph.D. in Higher, Adult, and Lifelong Education at Michigan State University. GVSU was selected as the setting for this research because the student population is most appropriate for my study. There are no foreseeable risks to you with participation in this research. Your participation in the study will not affect your right to a fair evaluation as a student or faculty member in this course. Your participation is voluntary and at any time during the semester, you may cease to participate without penalty, loss of privileges, or any adverse consequences. A faculty member's decision to not participate will not have any personal or professional ramifications. If during the study, you decide to withdraw, all data directly pertaining to you will be destroyed and not included in the study. Your privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. Your name and identity will be kept confidential during the data collection process and in the final project report. All research data, including tape recordings, will be destroyed within five years after completion of the study. All data will be kept in a locked file cabinet with the researcher until it is destroyed. You will be compensated for transportation costs and babysitting fees that would otherwise prohibit you from participation in interviews outside of the classroom. These fees will be compensated in cash at the end of the interview at a rate of \$20.00 per 60-90 minute interview session and will be limited at \$100 per participant.

I, as researcher, am asking your consent:

1. to be present in several classes over the course of the semester, taking notes and observing classroom interactions and behaviors.
2. to record interviews. With your consent, interviews will be recorded by a tape recorder. If you agree, you may request at anytime that what you are telling the researcher and what is being recorded by the tape recorder is "off the record". Information you direct as "off the record" will not be used in any form for research purposes. These taped recordings will be transcribed to enhance interpretation by me, the researcher.
3. to tape record the class to capture a "reality" that transcends my limited capacity to record. As above, these taped recordings will be transcribed and reviewed by me, the researcher, to enhance data interpretation.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact the study's investigators (Marietta Bell-Scriber, (616) 866-2746, bell-scm@ferris.edu or Kristen Renn, (517) 353-597, renn@msu.edu). If you have questions or concerns regarding your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact-anonymously if you wish-Peter Vasilenko, Ph.D, Chair, University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (UCRIHS) by phone: (517) 355-2180, fax: (517)

432-4503, email: ucrihs@msu.edu, or regular mail: 202 Olds Hall, East Lansing, MI 48823 or Professor Paul Huizenga, Chair, Human Research Review Committee of GVSU by phone (616) 331-2472 or email: huizengp@gvsu.edu.

I voluntarily agree to participate in this study:

☐ I do not agree to have the class tape-recorded
☐ I do not agree to be tape recorded, if interviewed

Signed _____ Date _____
(Participant)

Signed _____ Date _____
(Researcher)

APPENDIX C

Student Information

STUDENT INFORMATION

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this important study. Based on the information provided below, I will contact you if you are selected for interview.

Name (please print)	
Age	
Current GPA (2.0, 3.2, etc.)	
How would you describe your expectations for this course?	LOW HIGH
Gender (circle)	Male Female Transgender
Ethnicity/Racial Information (for example, Caucasian, Hispanic, etc.)	
Number of semesters at GVSU including this semester (1,2, etc.)	
Email address, cell phone, home phone or dorm phone and any other contact information	

THANK YOU!!!!

APPENDIX D

Relationship of Research Questions to Data Collection Tools

Relationship of Research Questions to Data Collection Tools

<p>What is the classroom climate for traditional-age students who are male? How do traditional-age students who are male describe their personal experiences in the nursing classroom? How do these traditional-age male experiences in the nursing classroom compare with the classroom experiences of traditional-age student nurses who are female? What are the underlying themes that account for these experiences?</p>	<p>Interview Schedule for Students, Interview Schedule for Teachers, Classroom Observation, Textbook Review</p>
<p>If an inequitable or gender-biased classroom environment is found to exist, what are the nursing faculty behaviors that contributed to this environment?</p>	<p>Interview Schedule for Students; Interview Schedule for Teachers, Classroom Observation</p>
<p>If an inequitable or gender-biased classroom environment is found to exist, what are the student behaviors that contributed to this environment?</p>	<p>Interview Schedule for Students; Classroom Observation</p>

APPENDIX E

Interview Schedule For Students

Interview Schedule For Students

- 1. What would you like to tell me about being a student in this classroom?**
- 2. Tell me about your personal experiences as a student in this nursing classroom.**
How would you describe these experiences? Describe how you felt during these experiences.
- 3. Describe an experience in this nursing classroom that was personally meaningful to you as a student.**
- 4. How would you describe the teachers in this class? How well do you like the teachers? Can you describe any faculty behaviors that bother you as a student?**
- 5. How would you describe yourself as a student?**
- 6. How would you describe the students in this class? Can you describe any student behaviors that bother you as a student?**
- 7. What do you feel have been your important successes in this class as a student?**
Frustrations?
- 8. What sort of things give you pleasure in this class as a student? Frighten you?**
- 9. Can you describe moments in this class that you remember more vividly than others?**
- 10. Can you describe anything said in the classroom that was disturbing to you?**
- 11. Are there activities in this class that are uncomfortable for you? Describe these activities and your feelings related to them.**
- 12. Are you aware of an incident where you felt you were treated more harshly or unfairly than the other students? Describe this incident. What do you feel this treatment was related to?**
- 13. Can you describe anything in the textbooks that is disturbing to you?**

14. In the context of being a male or female students, are there moments in this class that are uncomfortable for you? If yes, describe these moments.

APPENDIX F

Interview Schedule for Teachers

Interview Schedule for Teachers

1. How would you describe the environment of this class? What kind of environment were you trying to establish or create as a teacher?
2. Can you describe for me how you have designed or arranged the classroom? For what reasons?
3. Describe a student experience in this classroom that was personally meaningful to you.
4. How would you describe yourself as a teacher in this class? Are there any faculty behaviors (yours or others) that bother you? If yes, describe them.
5. How would you describe the students in this class? Are there any student behaviors that bother you?
6. What do you feel have been the important student successes in this class? Frustrations?
7. What sort of things give students pleasure in this class? Frighten students?
8. Are there student moments in this class that you remember more vividly than others? Which ones?
9. Can you describe anything said in the classroom that was disturbing to you?
10. Are there activities in this class that are uncomfortable for students? If yes, describe them.
11. Are you aware of an incident where you treated a student more harshly or unfairly than the other students? If yes, describe this incident. What do you feel this treatment was related to?
12. Can you describe anything in the textbooks that is disturbing to you?
13. Was there a time in this class when you were aware of gender dynamics

between students (between students and faculty)? Describe this awareness.

14. Was there a time in this class when you were aware of cultural or ethnicity dynamics between students (between students and faculty)? Describe this awareness.
15. Does your upbringing and socialization affect your expectations of students?
16. Did you change anything in the classroom because you were aware that there was a researcher present? If yes, describe the changes.

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