



**DISCOVERING OPUS – EXPLORING CREATIVITY  
IN MIDWIFERY AND NURSING**

Heather Hancock

Thesis submitted in total fulfilment for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the

Graduate School of Education

University of Adelaide

June 2002

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b> .....	<b>i</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b> .....	<b>ix</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b> .....	<b>xi</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	<b>xii</b>
<b>DECLARATION</b> .....	<b>xv</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	<b>xvi</b>
<b>FOREWORD</b> .....	<b>xviii</b>
<b>1 INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1 Preamble: Whither Nursing And Midwifery?.....	1
1.2 What Of South Australia?.....	3
1.3 The Genesis Of The Research For This Thesis.....	4
1.4 Why Creativity?.....	5
1.5 Research Questions And Hypotheses.....	10
1.6 The Nature Of This Research And Its Theoretical Frameworks.....	12
1.7 The Contexts Of Nursing And Midwifery.....	20
1.8 The Contexts Of Experience And Reflection.....	21
1.9 Arrangement Of This Thesis.....	24
<b>2 CONSTRUCTING THE CANVAS: THE BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY</b> .....	<b>27</b>
2.1 Introduction.....	27
2.2 A Languid Journey? Revealing The History.....	28
2.3 From Tradition And Obedience.....	28
2.4 The Mid Seventies – Good Obliging Nurses.....	29
2.5 The Late Seventies – New Education, Old Practice.....	31
2.6 The Early Eighties – Serving Not Deserving.....	34
2.7 The Mid Eighties – New Change For Old, Where’s The Difference?.....	35
2.8 The Late Eighties – Pain But No Gain.....	38
2.9 The Early Nineties – All For One Or One For All?.....	42
2.10 The Mid Nineties – The Illusion Of Change.....	48
2.11 Visions Of The Future For The Past.....	50
2.12 From Now To The Future: Perpetual Reality, Pastiche Or Power?.....	51
2.13 Midwives, Women, Mastery And Wisdom.....	57
2.14 From The Background To The Base.....	58

<b>3</b>	<b>SIZING THE CANVAS FOR CREATIVITY.....</b>	<b>60</b>
3.1	Introduction.....	60
3.2	Process Of The Literature Review.....	61
3.3	The Creative Environment.....	62
3.3.1	Social And Family Contexts Of The Environment.....	64
3.3.2	The Individual And The Environment.....	68
3.3.3	The Environment As A Motivator.....	71
3.3.4	The Environment As Inspiration.....	73
3.4	The Creative Process.....	74
3.4.1	Creative Energy.....	75
3.4.2	Creative Process In Women?.....	77
3.4.3	Creativity As A Life Process.....	79
3.4.4	Creativity As A Psychological Process.....	80
3.4.5	Creativity As Synectics.....	82
3.4.6	Creativity As Convergence Or Divergence?.....	84
3.4.7	Metacreativity.....	85
3.4.8	Creativity And Cognitive Processing.....	86
3.5	The Creative Product.....	88
3.5.1	Diagnosis Of Creativity.....	89
3.5.2	The Quality Of The Creative Product.....	90
3.5.3	Influences On Creative Production.....	90
3.5.4	Creativity As Invention.....	94
3.6	The Creative Person.....	95
3.6.1	Creativity As An Attitude.....	96
3.6.2	General Characteristics For Creativity.....	97
3.6.3	The Creativity Motive.....	99
3.6.4	Creativity As Originality.....	100
3.6.5	Creativity And Non-Conformity.....	101
3.6.6	Creative Thinking.....	102
3.6.7	Creativity And Personality.....	104
3.6.8	Creativity And Individuality.....	105
3.6.9	Creativity And Expertise.....	106
3.6.10	Creativity And Motivation.....	109
3.6.11	Everyday Creativity.....	110
3.7	Creativity And Psychological Theories.....	111
3.8	Alternative Approaches To Creativity.....	113
3.8.1	Creativity As Natural.....	114

3.8.2	Creativity As Special.....	115
3.8.3	Creativity Across The Lifespan.....	115
3.8.4	Creativity From Potential.....	116
3.8.5	Creativity And Gender Differences.....	117
3.8.6	Educating For Creativity.....	118
3.8.7	A Matrix For Creativity Research.....	118
3.8.8	Creativity As Challenge.....	119
3.8.9	Creativity And Intelligence.....	120
3.8.10	Creativity As Universal.....	121
3.8.11	Creativity As Illumination.....	121
3.8.12	An Interactionist Model Of Creativity.....	122
3.8.13	Creativity As Paradox.....	123
3.8.14	Creativity And Empathy.....	124
3.8.15	The Reality Of Creativity.....	126
3.8.16	Creativity As A Causal Chain.....	126
3.8.17	Investment Theory Of Creativity.....	127
3.8.18	Creativity As The Mystery Of Human Consciousness.....	129
3.8.19	Creativity And Lateral Thinking.....	129
3.9	Creativity And Women.....	131
3.9.1	Creativity As Power For Women.....	132
3.9.2	Personality Differences And Creativity In Women.....	133
3.9.3	Women's Creativity As Expressed By Doolittle.....	135
3.9.4	Creativity Through Women's Worlds.....	136
3.9.5	Women, Creativity And Love.....	138
3.10	Summary: Diversity And Difference.....	140

<b>4</b>	<b>SETTING THE EASEL: CREATIVITY AND RELATED THEMES FROM THE NURSING AND MIDWIFERY LITERATURE.....</b>	<b>144</b>
4.1	Introduction.....	144
4.2	Process Of The Literature Review.....	145
4.3	Visionary Beginnings.....	145
4.4	Creative Thinking Research.....	146
4.4.1	Curriculum Differences In Creative Thinking.....	147
4.5	Creativity To Overcome Tradition.....	148
4.5.1	Conformity Versus Creativity.....	149
4.5.2	Overcoming Ritual And Myth In Nursing.....	150
4.5.3	Evidence-Based Practice In Midwifery.....	150
4.6	Creative Problem Solving In Nursing.....	151

4.6.1	Using Synectics In Creative Problem Solving.....	151
4.7	Enhancing Creative Expression.....	153
4.7.1	Teaching Creative Expression.....	154
4.7.2	Creative Expression In Pediatric Nursing.....	156
4.8	Creativity For Change.....	156
4.8.1	Creativity As The Answer For The Future.....	158
4.8.2	Creativity 'Power Tools' For Change.....	160
4.8.3	Creativity For New Perspectives.....	161
4.9	Nurses' Perceptions Of Creativity.....	162
4.9.1	Nurses' Self-Perceived Creativity.....	163
4.10	Creativity For Scholarship.....	165
4.10.1	Creativity As Emancipation.....	166
4.10.2	Scientific Creativity.....	168
4.10.3	The Creative Nursing Scholar.....	169
4.10.4	Scholarship In Midwifery.....	170
4.11	Educating For Creativity.....	171
4.11.1	The Paradox Of Tertiary Nursing And Midwifery Education.....	171
4.11.2	Creativity In Clinical Teaching And Learning.....	173
4.11.3	Curriculum Development And Creativity.....	173
4.11.4	Creative Projects In Nursing Education.....	175
4.11.5	Educators As Creative Role Models.....	176
4.12	Creativity As Novel Insight.....	177
4.13	Nurturing Creativity In Nursing.....	178
4.13.1	Creativity As An Investment In The Future.....	179
4.13.2	Using Creative Management Support.....	180
4.14	The Art Of Nursing.....	181
4.14.1	Nursing And Midwifery Practice As Creative.....	183
4.14.2	Creative Practice By Nursing Faculty.....	185
4.15	Creativity To Strengthen Nursing Research.....	186
4.16	Overcoming Obstacles To Creativity.....	187
4.16.1	Nursing Education And Nursing Process As Hindrances.....	187
4.16.2	Compliance And Self-Doubt.....	188
4.16.3	Permission To Be Creative.....	189
4.16.4	Motivation To Ease The Barriers.....	189
4.17	Creativity And Critical Thinking.....	190
4.18	The Value Of Creative Reflection.....	190
4.18.1	Reflection To Release Powerlessness.....	191
4.18.2	Reflection To Be With Women?.....	192

4.19	Therapeutic Creativity.....	193
4.20	Nursing, Ideology And Creativity.....	194
4.21	Midwifery, Ideology And Creativity.....	196
4.22	Summary.....	199

<b>5</b>	<b>SELECTING THE MEDIUM AND TOOLS: APPROACH AND METHODOLOGIES OF THE STUDY.....</b>	<b>202</b>
5.1	Introduction.....	202
5.2	The Approach To The Study.....	203
5.2.1	Unblurring The Research Genres.....	204
5.2.2	The Aesthetics Of Qualitative Research.....	205
5.2.3	Reconsidering Research Approaches.....	207
5.2.4	Triangulation And Methodological Pluralism.....	207
5.2.5	Mutually Informative Approaches.....	211
5.3	The Approach Decision – An Eclectic Inquiry.....	212
5.3.1	The Researcher’s Context In An Eclectic Inquiry.....	213
5.4	Stage One – The Structured Self-Report Process.....	215
5.5	The Phenomenology Component.....	216
5.5.1	Colaizzi’s ‘Being-In-The-World-With-Others’.....	216
5.5.2	Phenomenology Through The Eyes Of Others.....	219
5.5.3	Achieving A Basis for Dialogue.....	222
5.6	The Quantitative Component.....	224
5.6.1	The Khatena Torrance Creative Perception Inventory.....	225
5.6.2	The Self-Description Form.....	228
5.6.3	The Creativity Characteristics Inventory.....	230
5.7	The Pilot Studies.....	231
5.8	Stage Two – The Interview Process.....	232
5.8.1	Grounded Theory Research.....	233
5.9	Thoughts On Samples And Subjects.....	236
5.10	Interpretations Of Rigour.....	239
5.11	Issues Of Ethics.....	243
5.12	The Individuals Involved In The Research For This Thesis.....	246
5.13	Seeking The Luminescence Of Creativity.....	248
<b>6</b>	<b>FROM BRUSH TO IMAGE: FINDINGS FROM THE QUANTITATIVE COMPONENT.....</b>	<b>250</b>
6.1	Introduction.....	250
6.1.1	Data Analysis Method.....	252

6.2	Socio-Demographic Details Of The Participants.....	252
6.2.1	Area Of Practice.....	253
6.2.2	Level Of Practice.....	254
6.2.3	Practising Position.....	256
6.2.4	Age.....	257
6.2.5	Work Status And Workplace.....	257
6.2.6	Skill Acquisition Level.....	259
6.2.7	Years Of Professional Experience.....	260
6.2.8	Length Of Time At Current Workplace.....	261
6.2.9	Tertiary Qualifications.....	262
6.3	Initiating Thinking About Creativity: Is Nursing/Midwifery An Art Or Science Or Both?.....	264
6.4	Determining Creativity Characteristics For Midwives And Nurses Using The Creativity Characteristics Inventory.....	264
6.4.1	Assessing Validity And Reliability Of The Creativity Characteristics Inventory Ratings.....	265
6.4.2	The Creativity Characteristics Inventory Data.....	266
6.5	How Do Midwives And Nurses Perceive Themselves In Terms Of Their Creativity?.....	271
6.5.1	The What Kind Of Person Are You Data.....	272
6.5.1.1	Gender.....	282
6.5.1.2	Role.....	283
6.5.1.3	Workplace And Work Status.....	284
6.5.1.4	Area Of Practice.....	284
6.5.1.5	Practising Position.....	286
6.5.1.6	Skill Acquisition Level.....	287
6.5.2	The Something About Myself Data.....	291
6.5.2.1	Gender.....	300
6.5.2.2	Role.....	302
6.5.2.3	Workplace And Work Status.....	303
6.5.2.4	Area Of Practice.....	305
6.5.2.5	Practising Position.....	307
6.5.2.6	Skill Acquisition Level.....	308
6.6	The Self-Description Form.....	310
6.6.1	Role.....	317
6.6.2	Gender.....	318
6.6.3	Workplace And Work Status.....	319
6.6.4	Level.....	320

6.6.5	Skill Acquisition Level.....	323
6.7	Bringing It All Together.....	325
<b>7</b>	<b>FROM IMAGE TO ILLUSTRATION: PHENOMENOLOGY THROUGH GROUNDED THEORY.....</b>	<b>328</b>
7.1	Introduction.....	328
7.2	Analysis And Interpretation – Closure Or Exposure?.....	330
7.3	Phenomenological Analysis And Interpretation – Some Thoughts And Issues.....	331
7.4	Setting The Scene.....	334
7.5	Gaining A Sense Of The Whole.....	335
7.6	Identification Of Significant Statements And Phrases.....	335
7.7	Formulating Meanings.....	339
7.7.1	Formulated Meanings – Structure.....	340
7.7.2	Formulated Meanings – Culture.....	343
7.7.3	Formulated Meanings – Medical Profession.....	346
7.7.4	Formulated Meanings – Time And Workload.....	348
7.7.5	Formulated Meanings – Job Satisfaction.....	351
7.7.6	Formulated Meanings – Nursing.....	353
7.7.7	Formulated Meanings – Midwifery.....	357
7.7.8	Formulated Meanings – Self-Expression.....	362
7.7.9	Formulated Meanings – Change.....	365
7.7.10	Formulated Meanings – Creative Thinking.....	367
7.8	Theme Clusters.....	369
7.9	From Theme Clusters To A Description Of Creativity.....	372
7.9.1	Creativity And The System.....	372
7.9.2	Creativity And Practice.....	374
7.9.3	Creativity And The Thinking Self.....	376
7.10	Creativity In Midwifery And Nursing – More Insight But More Questions.....	378
7.11	The Grounded Theory Journey.....	379
7.11.1	Grounded Theory Analysis And Interpretation – Some Thoughts And Issues.....	380
7.11.2	Into The Picture – Coding.....	381
7.11.3	The Core Variable – Creative Thinking.....	382
7.11.4	Level 3 Theoretical Codes – The Creative Individual Midwife/The Creative Individual Nurse.....	386
7.11.5	Level 3 Theoretical Codes – Creative Nursing Practice/Creative Midwifery Practice.....	388



7.11.6	Level 3 Theoretical Codes – Environmental Expectancy.....	391
7.11.7	Level 2 Categories – Changing Thinking, Flair And Innovation.....	393
7.11.8	Level 2 Categories – Artistry, Image, Rethinking And Changing Practice.....	396
7.11.9	Level 2 Categories – Time, Tradition And Support.....	401
7.11.10	Level 1 Substantive Codes – Freedom Of Thinking And Extending Thinking, Self-Expression And Risk-Taking, Ideas And Vision.....	404
7.11.11	Level 1 Substantive Codes – Interactive Self, Quality Care, Satisfaction, Intuition/Perception, Changing Roles, Autonomy, Job Satisfaction, Future Viability.....	406
7.11.12	Level 1 Substantive Codes – Economics, Value Of Practice, Flexibility, Change, Education, Celebration.....	407
7.12	A Theory For Creativity In Practice – Out Of Reflection Into The Light.....	408
7.12.1	Historical Homage: Promise And Potential.....	409
7.12.2	Reflection As A Relic.....	415
7.13	Opus: A Way Forward To Creativity.....	417
7.13.1	The Chronology Of The Dimensions.....	423
7.14	Regarding The Illustration.....	425
<b>8</b>	<b>CONCLUSION – FRAMING THE COMPOSITION.....</b>	<b>427</b>
8.1	From Research To Reality.....	427
8.2	The Opus Of Creativity In Midwifery And Nursing.....	428
8.3	Rethinking Education Towards Opus.....	430
8.4	Rethinking Practice With Opus.....	435
8.5	Rethinking Management With Opus.....	437
8.6	Research Possibilities With Opus.....	440
8.7	From Opus To Originality.....	442
<b>APPENDICES</b>		
APPENDIX 1	Research Set.....	445
APPENDIX 2	Interview Schedule.....	461
APPENDIX 3	Significant Statements.....	462
APPENDIX 4	Formulated Meanings.....	467
<b>REFERENCES/BIBLIOGRAPHY.....</b>		<b>478</b>

## ABSTRACT

The very notion of creativity in midwifery and nursing is an absurdity for most people. Stereotypical images of nurses and midwives as efficient, routinised and conscientiously attendant, performing work that is mundane, unexciting and often distasteful, persist. These images endure because of the historical effects of tradition, regimentation and subservience.

Despite the considerable research that has been conducted in nursing and midwifery, little is known about nurses and midwives as discrete individuals nor about their feelings about themselves and what they do within the reality of nursing's and midwifery's history, context and development; even less is known about nurses, midwives and creativity. The aim of the research for this thesis has therefore been to enable midwives and nurses to express and explore their feelings, thoughts and perceptions about their roles, work and most importantly themselves as professionals and as individuals, through a focus on creativity.

Creativity has long been viewed as the domain of artists, although historically it has also been the source of considerable debate regarding 'ownership' between scientists, philosophers, sociologists, psychologists, and educators among others. Ownership of creativity has not however been an issue for either nursing or midwifery. Although creativity has featured in the nursing and midwifery literature for many years, it has been the subject of only a small amount of research in either. An edified understanding of creativity and its dynamics and place in nursing and midwifery has therefore never been attained.

The use of creativity as the essence for exploration in this research enabled the 227 nurses and midwives involved to consider diverse perspectives of their professional practice and personal lives, in a different and very potent manner. Creativity touched a particular chord with them and they shared their perceptions and interpretations of it in rich and meaningful expressions.

The design for this research involved both triangulation of approaches and methodological pluralism. It has been termed an eclectic inquiry (after Hicks and Hennessey 1997) to indicate the reciprocity of the varied ways of inquiring that have

been brought together to achieve an inclusive and informed study. The research commenced with a critical history of nursing and midwifery over the last twenty-five years in Australia to identify a context for the actual inquiry into creativity. Subsequent to this a phenomenological study into nurses' and midwives' lived experiences of creativity was conducted simultaneously with a quantitative investigation assessing their self-perceived creativity. This was followed by a grounded theory inquiry pertaining to creativity in practice and related personal perspectives.

The critical history divulged a *culture of mistrust, cynicism and perpetual reality* that is perennially sabotaging the essence of both nursing and midwifery and their individual members. In particular there is an endemic mistrust of tertiary graduates in nursing and midwifery that has ensured them of a disdainful socialisation steeped in ritual and tradition, despite over twenty years of cessation of hospital based 'training' in nursing. This mistrust combined with cynicism has also enabled a form of *professional ageism* to develop working against newer and/or less experienced nurses and midwives often with dismal consequences. A *retrograde hegemony within* nursing and midwifery, more destructive than any threat from the medical profession, persists to suppress innovation and originality in order to resist change and protect the status quo with a proliferation of subjugation.

The assessment of self-perceived creativity showed the nurses and midwives involved in this research to be in the mid to high range of creativity overall across a number of measures. Particular variables exerted effects to varying degrees on nurses' and midwives' creativity, most notably their level of practice, their skill acquisition level and their workplace. New graduates showed high scores for self-perceived creativity that diminish markedly over skill acquisition advancement. Concurrently however new graduates have shown a much lower sense of personal and professional identity than those above them have. The professional transition experiences of new graduates require urgent review because of these alarming findings.

An unexpected finding of this research exposed a critical need to reconsider the use and place of reflection as a focal pinnacle in midwifery and nursing theory and practice. Reflection has been shown to be perpetuating retrogressive thinking and a

reversionary orientation in nurses and midwives and has not been able to take them out of the relics of tradition and regimentation. A change in thinking has been specifically identified as critically essential in nursing and midwifery for both of them to move forward with vision and determination.

The phenomenological study refuted the stereotype of the routinised nurse and midwife dependent on others for role and function. Instead a vibrant group of open-minded, inquiring, determined, confident, imaginative and self-assured individuals expressed their propensity for creativity personally and professionally.

This research also showed unexpectedly, clearly expressed differences between nurses and midwives in terms of how they interpret and actualise their roles and practice, and their relationships with patients and women. The distinctions indicated should be used as a basis for esteeming both professions with mutual respect and acknowledgment to resolve the disputation that midwifery belongs to nursing.

The grounded theory inquiry enabled the generation of a theory for practice - *Opus Theory* - that actually culminates in creativity. Opus Theory presents a vital, new vision for the education of nursing and midwifery students. As well it provides an exciting and very necessary opportunity for nurses and midwives to re-view their roles and extend themselves beyond the regressive status quo currently perceived by them to new, determined and stimulating destinies of strength and invigoration.

An additional challenge from this research is to project a much-needed new and exciting image of midwives and nurses as dynamic and innovative individuals engaged in distinctive professions that offer significant potential for creativity and originality.