

# Caring Relationships and the Good — An Analysis in Free Verse Poetry

by Ross Meacham

University of Manitoba

Winnipeg

## ABSTRACT

While the story of teaching makes plenty of room for academic and social learning, the telling often leaves out some of the most important details. We have much to learn from teachers' stories — how they practice and make sense of the caring relationship in the school and how such relationships lead to moral good in people, schools, communities, and the world. Here, the moral is centered in the ongoing dialogue about what is best in schools and the world — the good, and the relationships in which the stories are set. The method for this project is narrative analysis and the format is a series of free verse poems. The characters tell stories of knowing and being known, meaningful dialogue, modeling, authentic care, struggle and tension, individualized attention, hope, and transformation. The conclusion is a deep imagining of possibilities, implications, and outcomes.

## Introduction

The story of education is a public story and hosts of narrators claim their chapters — standardized report cards, inclusion, bullying, taxation, speed zones, math education, and the like. While these stories play out in the media and schools, offices, and homes across our country, it seems that most people have opinions about them. It becomes difficult to engage in a conversation about some of the basic, central questions of education. What should schools do? How do we know if they're doing it? What's a good kid like? Who gets to decide? Who cares?

## Aims Talk

What are students supposed to learn and what should they care about? Should teaching and learning produce a better world? How should such a transformation be accomplished? The discussion of care is rooted in a discussion of the basic purposes of education, schooling, and teaching and learning.

This project began as I considered two tough relationships with students as I began my time teaching Grade 4/5 at a new school, fresh out of a year as a full time grad student. While the public conversation about the previous topics was boiling, I was having a hard time meeting the needs of Aaron — a boy who had become used to failing academically and truly believed that nobody cared for him, and Claire — a girl who I had last seen in a crisis unit at the hospital and who had suddenly called me a year later to talk. Both of these students needed an educational story that had radically different aims than the current story was offering.

The aims of education cannot be taken for granted. Nel Noddings (2003) insists that any discussion of education must begin with aims talk, “Aims-talk is to education what freedom is to democracy.... without continual, reflective discussion of aims, education may become a poor substitute for its best vision” (p. 76).

School aims have generally remained unaltered from the 1949 model of Ralph Tyler, centered in intellectual development and changes to social behaviour. Larry Cuban outlines the lasting effect of Tyler’s influence on schools, “controlling student behavior while organizing for instruction pressed teachers toward a heavy and sustained emphasis on the managerial role” (Cuban, 1988, p. 22).

A number of theorists have suggested that schooling should have other educational aims, for example — experience (Dewey, 1938/1997); praxis (Freire, 1970/1993) ecological cognition (Barab and Roth 2006); trust; (Meier, 2002); happiness (Noddings, 2003); aesthetic, intellectual, and moral purposes (Hansen, 2004); indigenous cognition (Barnhardt and Kawagley 2008); honouring community (Kozol, 2007); moral education (Brell, 2000); the good life (Wiens and Coulter, 2008); and participation in society (Postman, 1995).

My students, Aaron and Claire, present educational decision-makers with a unique concern. What does education offer these kids? How does the school system respond to the living needs of students who don’t fully benefit from the current purposes of education and structures of schooling? In truth, is it only challenging students like Aaron and Claire that would benefit from an education system with markedly different aims?

Three questions emerged from my consideration of Aaron and Claire’s stories alongside the stories of standardized report cards, inclusion, bullying, taxation, speed zones, math education, and the like. 1. What does it mean to care for students? 2. How

does a teacher make sense of the caring relationship in the classroom? 3. How is a caring relationship between teacher and students transformed into moral good — good people, good schools, good communities, good world?

Jürgen Habermas distinguishes the “systems-world” from the “life-world”; the systems-world is “oriented to ‘success,’ to the efficient achievement of ends” (Bernstein, 1985, p. 18). The life-world is characterized by dialogue, praxis, self-reflection, and intersubjectivity. It is “oriented to mutual action” (p. 18).

David Coulter (2001) applies the thinking of Jürgen Habermas to the field of education, “goodness involves claims to truth, rightness, and truthfulness that are debated publicly by all who are affected under conditions that come as close as possible to approximating the ideal speech conditions of symmetry and reciprocity” (p. 95).

Goodness involves continuing negotiation and dialogue on the part of human agents — teachers and students, parents and teachers, politicians and parents. Such dialogue necessarily requires some form of honest relationship between educational actors. Nel Noddings provides a model from which to begin reconsidering the purposes of education from a relational perspective.

### The Ethic of Care

Nel Noddings (1984, 2001, 2002) suggests that schools ought to be concerned with the development of moral people above all. She has argued that reason — disciplined, intellectual, analytical, has been the lens through which we, as learners, theorists, policy-makers, educators, and citizens, judge moral decision-making and our versions of the good life. We should, instead, be concerned with the nature and

knowledge of relationships as a model for moral education and we should transform curriculum and policy to reflect this educational goal, “an alternative to present views, one that begins with the moral attitude or longing for goodness and not with moral reasoning” (Noddings, 1984, p. 2).

The ethic of care is based in the relationship between *one-caring* and *one-cared-for*. Caring requires a number of actions on the part of the one-caring; engrossment, commitment, displacement of motivation, and act of will. Engrossment is the full reception of the cared-for in the one-caring — the force that turns the one-caring towards the cared-for. Commitment secures the whole of the cared-for inside of the one-caring. It causes the one-caring to turn her attention to the cared-for. The goal of the one-caring is to see the ideal self of the cared-for and to respond to that person. This goal requires attending to the cared-for and a displacement of motivation towards the cared-for.

An action of will follows. “Apprehending the other’s reality, feeling what he feels as nearly as possible, is the essential part of caring from the view of one-caring.... I am impelled to act as though in my own behalf, but in behalf of the other” (Noddings, 1984, p. 16). Noddings maintains that caring must be completed in the cared-for. Though the notion of reciprocity is much debated, the completion of caring occurs with the expressed delight of the cared-for when he responds or grows.

Caring is described in a number of ways — it does not conform to a fixed rule; it comes to us as either a natural feeling or it is invoked by the memories of caring and being cared for; it elicits a strong obligation to be moral. Caring does not make judgment of right and wrong, but seeks to heighten “moral perception and sensitivity” (Noddings, 1984, p. 90). Caring seeks joy, “It is the relation, or our recognition of the relation, that induces the affect we call joy” (p. 132).

Noddings (2001) describes the caring teacher, “A caring teacher is someone who has demonstrated that she can establish, more or less regularly, relations of care in a wide variety of situations” (p. 100). She notes that the study of caring is useful for both research and practice in education and it encourages philosophical exploration (p. 99).

I had been seeking to understand how teachers care for students, how they perceive that care, and how such care is transformed into goodness. The ethic of care depends on relationships — knowing and appreciating others. An appropriate research method would have to capture such unique relationships and provide a compelling and meaningful retelling. Narrative analysis is an appropriate methodology.

### Narrative

I am compelled to offer you the full development of the analysis. Donald Polkinghorne (1988) insists, “narrative studies do not have formal proofs of reliability, relying instead on the details of their procedures to evoke an acceptance of the trustworthiness of the data” (p. 177). I want you to trust that the narratives you will read have been carefully constructed. They are meaningful. They are based in data — descriptive accounts given by four teacher-participants over the course of four focus group meetings.

Teachers tell lots of stories. The telling of stories provides rich context for meaning to emerge. I can relate to Maxine Greene’s (1996) “growing interest in narrative as a way of endowing experience with meaning” (p. 36). She has also captured my sense of story as expressing the constant act of creation that occurs in teaching and learning relationships, “To speak of consciousness, too, is to hold in

mind the likelihood that the conscious being (unlike the finished objects of the world) is always becoming, projecting, or striving toward what is not yet” (Greene, 2001, p. 86). Narrative is an essential method of researching, analyzing, and presenting important educational knowledge.

A story is “a text that elicits, guides, and rewards ‘narrativity’” (Scholes, as cited in Carter, 1993, p. 6). It involves a conflict and a purposeful protagonist. It requires a plot, “a sequence with implied causality” (p. 6). Meaning is constructed when “readers seek coherence and causal connections among those incidents and conventions as they construct for themselves, often retrospectively, the meaning or theme of the story” (p. 6). Maxine Greene (1996) notes that a story is meaningful in its sharing when we participate in “the production of meanings, rather than the unearthing of hidden meanings in texts” (p. 37).

Donald Polkinghorne (1995/2003) suggests that narrative research challenges some of our research beliefs. He identifies an historically entrenched “notion that there is a distinct type of rational discourse appropriate for producing knowledge [that] was the foundation for the advocacy of a single, unified science for all scholarly disciplines” (p. 9). Paradigmatic cognition is the logical-scientific way of knowing. It is characterized by prosaic discourse and paradigmatic inquiry. Narrative cognition is the storied way of knowing. It is characterized by poetic discourse and narrative inquiry.

Narrative cognition yields situated knowledge. It provides a context, it is dialogical, it is relational, it is grounded in shared concepts and language, and it is transformative. Stories invite us to understand the human experience.

Narrative inquiry has unique demands for research trustworthiness, chiefly the acknowledgement of the researcher’s bias. In this project, as researcher and participant, my bias has been made clear. Dialogue, the primary vehicle of data

collection, afforded a window to expose my personal ideas and opinions to the participants and the environment in which to question and offer alternatives. Further, Clandinin and Connelly (1996) offer Bateson's notion, "to do good research, one needs to be a good human being" (p. 17), again linking this method to the subject matter in question, moral education.

Donald Polkinghorne (1988) insists, "narrative studies do not have formal proofs of reliability, relying instead on the details of their procedures to evoke an acceptance of the trustworthiness of the data" (p. 177). The narratives that make up the analysis in this project are based in data — descriptive accounts given by four teacher-participants over the course of four focus group meetings.

Educational stories are unique in their ability to provide rich knowledge and situated meaning. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) do not separate subject matter from method, pursuing "*narrative inquiry* with a rough sense of narrative as both phenomena under study *and* method of study" (p. 4).

Narrative inquiry addresses the "complex, narrative, historical, interwoven, and constantly changing landscape on which, teachers, administrators, and children's lives are lived out" (Clandinin and Connelly, 1996, p. 30). It seeks to shed some light on the rich and diverse, lived experiences of school people.

Finally, narrative inquiry serves to challenge the notions of dominance in educational discourse. For example, Carter (1993) argues that the language of research, unavailable to many teachers, denies teacher voice in the educational forum (p. 8). She extends the notion to one of gender hegemony, arguing that teaching has been largely women's work, while research has been largely men's.

A narrative analysis is a construction that seeks to unmask hidden meaning, make sense of events and interactions, and demonstrate the context and situated

knowledge of experience. The prolonged process of analysis and writing would allow for protracted member-checking, as I knit the descriptions into a united story.

### Data Collection

The focus group is the only method I used in this study. After invitations had been sent to all of the teachers in the Seven Oaks School Division, four randomly selected volunteers were invited to participate in a series of four face-to-face focus groups that took approximately two hours — a total of eight hours of data. The focus groups allowed participants “to answer from their own frame of reference.... to freely express their thoughts around particular topics” (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007, p. 3), resulting in rich descriptions.

We gathered for two hours after the school day, once a month, for four months. We met in a boardroom at the divisional office. Our meetings were intimate. The mood was light and comfortable. The relaxed atmosphere and the sense of common interest helped to reduce any anxiety that the participants may have been feeling before beginning.

The meetings triggered teachers’ memories of their experiences and ideas. There were a number of relationships that teachers described at different times during the meetings. At times, one teacher’s story would remind another teacher of a similar story. The focus group was a rich field for descriptive accounts. I was able to obtain rich descriptive data, one of the key features of qualitative research (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007, p. 5).

Howe and Eisenhardt question whether “the researcher’s assumptions are made explicit, such as the researcher’s own subjectivity” (as cited in Creswell, 2007, p. 212).

As a member of the focus group, my own ideas and opinions on the subject of moral education and the ethic of care were exposed. A transparent platform for discussion was provided.

### Narrative Analysis — What I Did

I missed the mark on my initial analysis of the data. I completed a conventional thematic coding in response to my original research questions. I identified three strong themes— *knowing students*, *modeling and dialogue*, and *authenticity*, as well as two emergent themes — *academics first*, and *kindness*. I coded my transcripts and they became brightly coloured.

I set out to write a narrative and came to the deflating conclusion that I could not write a narrative based on themes. I faced my first blank page. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) describe this unique tension that narrative researchers experience as they negotiate conventional theoretical research practice. I was stuck between boundaries (pp. 140-143).

Narrative research is a multi-dimensional search for meaning and I had already reduced the rich and intimate details of the participants' lives, separating them from their storied persons. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) note, "They are people in all their complexity. They are people living storied lives on storied landscapes (p. 145)." They suggest a model for narrative analysis — Three-Dimensional Narrative Inquiry Space, and a number of considerations for writing a narrative research text — voice, signature, and audience.

### Three-Dimensional Narrative Inquiry Space

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) borrow three terms from John Dewey to describe a narrative practice for research based on experience — *interaction*, *continuity*, and *situation*. Three-Dimensional Narrative Inquiry Space is a model for narrative analysis.

Interaction is movement between *personal* and *social*. When considering events and descriptions, within an emerging narrative, I had to move inward, “toward the internal conditions, such as feelings, hopes, aesthetic reactions, and moral dispositions” (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p. 50) of the participants and the people they described. At the same time, it was necessary for me to move outward, “toward the existential conditions, that is, the environment” (p. 50), made up of facts as well as participants’ descriptions and ideas.

Continuity is movement between *past*, *present*, and *future*. At its simplest, continuity means that you, the reader, can align the events of the narrative along a continuum — emplotment. As such, you can make meaningful sense of the story. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) describe moving “backward and forward” and “temporality — past, present, and future” (p. 50). Considering temporality allowed me to construct a series of narratives with chronological reality.

Situation “attends to the specific concrete physical and topological boundaries of inquiry landscapes” (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p. 51). I was guided by a consideration of real places and settings. These stories could not be placed anywhere but in schools. The hallways and classrooms of your memory are vividly present in the accounts of the characters in the stories you’ll read.

The consideration of interaction, continuity, and place evokes a three-dimensional space. It would be my consideration of the Three-Dimensional Narrative Inquiry Space that would allow me to draw loose descriptions together into a cohesive

and meaningful narrative.

Still, I found myself like many narrative researchers and, likely, authors in general, “less confident of what they are doing and what they want to say than they were when they entered the field” (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p. 145). Within the tension of uncertainty, Clandinin and Connelly suggest three issues to consider — *voice*, *signature*, and *audience*. A thorough consideration of these matters contributes to trustworthiness.

The free verse format that I eventually settled on would allow me to present my voice while maintaining the voices of the participants and voices of the people they described. I found that one of the strongest qualities that I exercised was “judgment ... always speaking partially naked and ... genuinely open to legitimate criticism from participants and from audience” (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p. 147).

By presenting a series of voices, I was able to step in and out of characters, maintaining the tension that comes from a multiplicity of voices, but striking the balance that was necessary to provide a trustworthy narrative. I was able to select events with meaningful plot contributions and I was aware of the events that I chose to omit, knowing that the potential to silence important voices also exists.

Signature is the consideration of appropriation. Whose story will it be when the telling is done? In order to establish signature, I had to balance the rich and meaningful descriptions of the participants with the need to put my own stamp on the work. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) caution against signatures that are too thin, “because other texts and other theories, rather than the writer, sign the work” or “the researcher imagines that the participants and their field texts author the work” (p. 148).

I consulted with each of the teachers on their section before presenting the final

analysis, “Is this you? Do you see yourself here? Is this the character you want to be when this is read by others” (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p. 148)? We are co-authors.

The audience is you, “alive in the researcher’s imagination at the outset of the inquiry, mostly forgotten during fieldwork,” (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p. 149). You have created a unique tension for me. I want to preserve the voices of my participants and I am reluctant to give up some of our shared moments and our intimacies. However, I have considered you as I have formed the narrative analysis that you will read. My first audience is the participants but you have been “always in imagination and outside the inquiry” (p. 149). I have had to find a balance between you — reader and participant, and my narrative has proceeded from that balance.

### A New Story

My initial coding had been thematic —a reduction of the data. Instead, I would have to narratively code my data. I headed back into the transcripts.

I isolated all of the descriptions of events and commentary that the transcripts would give up while consulting my initial notes from the meetings. I separated the passages by participant and matched complimentary events into plot events. I also created a second document for each character, made up of meaningful commentary from the transcripts — thoughts, ideas, conversations, musings, opinions, and observations.

Dale, a student of Mme. M., had been occupying my thinking for months. His father had died in the summer. I needed to capture the resonance of Mme. M.’s voice as she described his reaction to a construction table she had introduced into the classroom to support him. There was immensity to the simple lines,

Madame!

There's a construction table in there!

Oh, is there?

Is that good?

That's great

Around this time, I found myself rereading some of my favourite books. Edgar Lee Masters' (1915/1992) *Spoon River Anthology* stood out, "a series of compelling free-verse monologues in which former citizens of a mythical Midwestern town speak touchingly from the grave of the thwarted hopes and dreams of their lives" (rear cover). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) suggest that we ought to read a lot and pay attention to our reading choices, "noticing the kinds of texts read is part of what helps us, as narrative inquirers, experiment with possible new forms" (pp. 163-164).

The purpose of my research had been to find meaningful descriptions of the nature of teachers' caring relationships with students. What does it mean to engage in care? How do teachers make sense of the relationships? How does good come from them? It was the voices of the students and others in the participants' descriptions that spoke most meaningfully about the nature and significance of those very relationships. I chose to allow those characters to speak back to the participants, describing the relationships valued so strongly by the teachers.

The multiplicity of perspectives offered by the free verse format is especially appropriate because teachers must perceive the needs of many students and engage in many caring relationships, simultaneously. When I take on the voice of a student and

speak back the student's need, I am giving evidence of engrossment — a central feature of the ethic of care.

Separate voices provide access to the complexity of teaching relationships. Teachers find themselves fulfilling a multitude of roles, appearing differently to each unique person they engage in relationships. This narrative account can be compared to a web or a crystal, rather than a single thread.

I established multiple narrative threads through each teacher's account, synthesizing events that had been separated during the focus group discussions. I transposed a number of passages directly from the transcripts into the poems as I worked. This insures that the teacher's voices, and the voices they perceived in their students and colleagues, were retained, blended with my own story-telling voice — the signature.

I allowed for checking as I wrote the separate narratives. Each of the narratives was submitted to the participant around whom it was written. The participants noted that the analysis was meaningful, true, and satisfying. They could identify the characters and events. They noted some factual errors but insisted that the essence of their experiences was captured.

I also submitted the narratives to an outside reader, with the permission of each of the participants — a poet and freelance journalist. She provided me with critical technical guidance around format and gave me a meaning check. I produced 77 poems in four chapters, a chapter for each participant. Here, I present a small sample from one chapter.

Mme. M.

Shannon, teacher candidate

I'm not so sure  
She knows what she's doing in there  
The classroom  
I asked  
What will you do to build community?  
She — Hmm, I don't really know.  
Me — What will you do to blah, blah, blah?  
She — How about we'll see them  
And then I'll do it  
And then you'll see me do it  
And then we'll talk about it.  
Kind of laughing.

Dale, 10

My dad died in the summer  
And I wasn't ready  
To talk about it  
And Mme. didn't ask  
So when she was in the hall  
Talking to other kids  
I spotted a construction table  
With tools, each one I loved

Madame!  
There's a construction table in there!

Oh is there?  
Is that good?

That's great!  
Yeah!  
Almost like it just appeared,

Dustin, 8

I only thought  
Teachers saw me fight  
And knew my dad swore at me  
And drank  
And my mom yelled

But Mme. M. stopped me, saying  
Here.  
Here's what I've watched you do  
Someone dropped their pencil and I watched you pick it up  
Or I've watched you kick it  
But I've watched so I have a basis in saying  
I would expect something different from you.  
I saw someone who cares  
And because I've seen that exists in you  
I expect it from you.  
My eyes locking onto hers  
My lips mouthing  
You expect that from me?

Ella, 8

Mme. M. just jumped right in first and picked them up  
Saying,  
Oh, there's grapes.  
What do we do?  
With all the kids watching  
Just like she always does.

Nancy, 83, senior

It's time  
That the kids give us  
And how precious  
I've lived at the home  
7 years  
And they started the year before  
Once a month  
We in our wheelchairs, canes  
Unspeaking  
Or eyes goggling  
Asking the same things  
A hundred times  
They playing chess  
Sharing puzzles with big pieces  
Reading to us  
Playing cards.  
The little boy  
Eyes wide, wondering  
Where was Louise,  
Who he had played cards with  
These past three months?

Not understanding time's ultimate value.

Corey, 8

It's not just the cookies  
That we get after visiting  
And even though it smells  
And some of the old people  
Have lost it  
And need a lot of attention  
And once,  
That old guy ate my Lego  
I never say  
It stinks in here  
And I realize how important  
It is to give.  
Mme. M. says  
She really wants us to be people that care about other people  
And I think maybe  
I could do it myself.

Tariq, 8

Most of the time I'd come in angry  
And blow up on everybody  
But Mme. M. never made it about my home  
And pushed me to learn  
For the first time  
So when I found some rocks  
And good looking rocks  
I just handed them to some girls who had started a project on rocks  
Telling them I found them  
And thought they could use them  
And walked away  
Because  
On that day  
I had all I needed  
So here,  
I can give something to someone else.  
Megan, 8

I was new to French Immersion  
In Grade 3  
And scared  
But I was reading  
The same as the other kids

In no time  
Like I'd always been in French  
And that was where Mme. M. met me

Louis, 7

My dad taught me about justice.  
Knowing I had to  
Punch this other boy  
In the face  
Or punch him somehow,  
I crumbled after gym,  
Crying,  
Not wanting to.  
Wanting friends  
And kindness,  
The assault of two really different messages,  
Mme. M. finding me,  
Softly  
Speaking

Chantelle, 9

We started with a story  
About a seed that grew and grew  
Always wishing it could touch the stars,  
Never growing that big  
And sprouting flowers and apples.  
An apple fell to the ground  
And inside was a star!  
It had been there the whole time.

So I saw the stars  
Of the kids around me.  
And though  
Poor at writing,  
Especially in French,  
And scribbling what you might call gibberish,  
I wrote their stars.  
Because nobody seemed to know their own  
When Mme. M. asked them to share  
After the story.

Juan Carlos, 9

Mme. M. made a tree  
And all the kids made stars for each other.  
And I couldn't think of one for anybody else,  
Not even myself.  
And I was frustrated  
And troubled  
Because I hadn't been taught to think like that.  
Just,  
So-and-so is nice.  
Or,  
So-and-so is a good friend.  
Or even,  
So-and-so helped the kid in the room across the hall,  
Who has trouble walking.

## Conclusions

What does it mean to care for students?

*Know them.* There are a number of examples in the analysis of teachers knowing important details of students' lives. This allows teachers to respond, when motivation is displaced towards students, with appropriate and meaningful ways of caring.

*Be known.* Teachers allow themselves to be known. This might involve sharing details from our personal lives. It might mean acting naturally in front of them or sharing objects.

*See to students' needs.* Care involves personal motivational displacement. The appropriate response is to act towards the need we perceive in students. We act in ways that are meaningful and personal.

*Model care.* Teachers recognize that they are involved in webs of relationships.

They know that moral learning is frequently implicit. They act in caring ways in front of students and expect that students learn through their modeling.

*Treat some students differently.* There are numerous examples of teachers treating students differently. Inclusive practice and policy play a role but teachers also perceive unique student needs and offer some students unique conditions.

*Think about students.* Teachers frequently think about students but caring teachers think about particular students and reflect on their needs. Some students stay in our thoughts even after they've left our classroom or school. A number of cases exist where teachers were unable to recognize if the caring relationship was completed through acknowledgement by a student. These cases might haunt us.

*Talk with kids.* It seems like a simple concept but the analysis reveals the unique quality of dialogue. The teachers in this study talk to kids one-on-one about meaningful things and benefit from stronger relationships, are motivated to act, and see acknowledgement from kids. Teachers speak and listen in order to form and strengthen relationships with kids, as well as encourage or reinforce moral change.

*Be real.* The teachers in this study agreed that there is merit to actions that seem authentic. They were universally critical of formatted moral education programs. Teachers noted that the strength of their relationships rose out of the time and effort they spent with kids, rather than the quality of their lessons or reflections on school-based programs.

How does a teacher make sense of the caring relationship in the classroom?

*Moral activity and relationship building are more implicit than explicit.* The teachers in this study remarked a number of times that moral learning happens

implicitly most of the time. A notable exception would be when teachers choose learning materials that lead into moral dialogue with their students.

*The caring cycle is frequently left unclosed.* This part of the ethic of care creates tension in many teachers. The teachers in this study noted a number of cases where such an acknowledgement wasn't offered, was difficult to perceive, or became interrupted or obscured by other factors. On the other hand, some stories show that the caring cycle can be completed and extended over years.

*There is a tension between academic responsibility and relational responsibility.* A number of times during the focus group meetings, teachers would state that they always thought about teaching academics first and relationship building and moral outcomes came later. Teachers handled the tension differently. Some are more likely to dive into relationship issues and challenges from a personal perspective. Others are more likely to find a way for moral questions to be explored during the course of a lesson.

*There is a struggle between supporting some kids over others.* The caring relationship can be built up with some students at the cost of relationships with others. Teachers who devote the time that is necessary to achieve significant relationship gains with certain students may miss the needs of others. A relational way of handling classroom management may also impact children when they move out of the teacher's classroom into another.

How is a caring relationship between teacher and students transformed into moral good — good people, good schools, good communities, good world?

*Hope.* Paulo Freire (1970/1993) has suggested that hope is one of the necessary

qualities for transformative education — praxis, to occur. It is hope that sustains much of the moral and relational activity of the teachers in this study. Hope is its own reward and evidence of the possibility of good people, schools, communities, and world.

*Day-to-day return.* Sometimes, we see the evidence of our moral work in the day-to-day and month-to-month changes that happen for our students. We expect that our students will take these lessons with them when they leave us.

*Students tell us.* If we are fortunate, students tell us about the impact that we make in their lives. Long-term experiences of this kind are rare among the group of teachers in this study, but the relatively young age of the participants could be a factor.

*Teachers are transformed.* Moral activity on the part of teachers doesn't only transform the lives of students. In the caring relationship, it seems the one-caring may also be transformed. The teachers in this study give examples of cases where they were positively affected during the course of their own relational activity.

*Out of the classroom.* Students engage in moral and relational activity that moves into the public world. When students know that they are cared for, they are more likely to apply their own motivation outwardly.

## Suggestions

Just as the form of a narrative analysis differs from a quantitative analysis, or even a conventional qualitative analysis, so do the conclusions. As we emerge from the narrative space, it is tempting to consider “contributions to the field” or “areas of further research,” and suggest a case study of one of the teachers in this study, or a study that seeks to measure the effect of care on academic achievement, graduation

rate, student engagement, or creativity.

Instead, I will direct your attention to the poems and suggest that you read them. I also urge you to consider your own story. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) suggest this is the direction we should take, “The narrative inquirer does not prescribe general applications and uses but creates texts, that when well done, offer readers a place to imagine their own uses and applications” (p. 42).

This is not to say that I should neglect the consideration of conclusions. However, Sigrún Gudmundsdóttir (2001) puts the issue of generalizability in context, “One has good reason to be skeptical when narrative descriptions of practice — which are always local, provisional, and essentially personal — are used to generalize to situations and contexts where they are clearly out of place” (p. 230). The most important conclusions have already been resolved in the experiences and imaginations of the participants of this study. We have contributed, together, to school practice “by making the teachers involved ... partners in the research” (p. 229). We have aimed “to increase understanding of the central issues related to the dilemmas of school practice among the larger community of researchers who are conducting formal research on practice” (p. 229). I invite you to read and participate in the stories in the analysis, to imagine your part in the story and to imagine the possible implications and outcomes, reimagining your own educational stories. These are appropriate conclusions for narrative research.

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Writing a poem analysis essay requires one to take a more in-depth look at both the choices that a poet made and the overall effects of those choices. These papers need a detailed analysis of all of the parts that were used to form a work of poetry. Video Guide. Do you need some help with your poetry analysis? Free-Verse: Rather simple, free verse is poetry that does not rhyme or have a regular rhythm. All of those elements of the poem are essential to know when one is writing a poetry analysis essay because they are a part of the poem's structure and can affect the content. Learn About the Background of the Poem. This means that you can find it beneficial to look up the poet, the date that the poem was written, and the cultural context of the work. Free verse is an open form of poetry, which in its modern form arose through the French vers libre form. It does not use consistent metre patterns, rhyme, or any musical pattern. It thus tends to follow the rhythm of natural speech. Poets have explained that free verse is not totally free: "Its only freedom is from the tyrant demands of the metric line." Free verse displays some elements of form. Most free verse maintains the poetic convention of the poetic line to some degree, at least in written Create Free Verse in Seconds. Free verse is poetry that does not rhyme or have a regular rhythm. However, it can be packed full of literary devices such as alliteration and onomatopoeia. Choose a subject and let our free verse generator help you explore related topics, find alliteration and create rich verse. Tweet. Share. Free Verse generator has two steps, the first asks you about the overall theme of your poem. We quickly find a list of related nouns and step 2 gives you a chance to write your own descriptions for those nouns, or fill the poem with ones we've pre-selected. Free Verse Poem Generator. Quickly write a structure-free poem. free verse creator / structure-free poetry writer / verse generator / poems about life.