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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

COLLECTIONS AND RECOLLECTIONS:
A UNIVERSITY INSTRUCTOR'S SELF-STUDY

by

KAY KATHAN McFADYEN

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A thesis
submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in Educational Administration
and Leadership

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THE STARFISH

There was a young man
walking down a deserted beach
just before dawn.
In the distance he saw a frail old man.
As he approached the old man,
he saw him picking up stranded starfish
and throwing them back into the sea.
The young man gazed in wonder as the old man again and again
threw the small starfish from the sand to the water.
He asked,
"Old man, why do you spend so much energy
doing what seems to be a waste of time?"

The old man explained that
the starfish would die if left in the morning sun.

"But there must be thousands of beaches and millions of starfish!"
exclaimed the young man.
"How can you make a difference?"

The old man looked down at the small starfish in his hand
and as he threw it to the safety of the sea,
he said,
"I made a difference to this one."

Original by Irv Furman (n.d.)
and remembered to me by
Dr. Jean LaFrance, Response Committee Member

ABSTRACT

The old man throwing starfish from sand to water was challenged, "How can you make a difference?" His response, "I made a difference to this one" provides a way of thinking about many of our teaching stories. These stories are a link between who we are and how we understand and improve our teaching practice.

This study examines the teaching practice of a novice university professor. Building on assumptions of earlier research which establishes knowing as experiential rather than conceptual, the study was designed to capture the essence of teaching practice from the inside--from the instructor's perspective. Although it is a self-study research project, it is also collaborative in that it is directed through a social forum of three experienced colleagues who served as a formal response group whose task it was to review, discuss, challenge or support, and imagine other approaches to accounts of my developing teaching practice as a novice instructor within a changing organizational structure and dynamic social context.

As a formal self-study, this project moves beyond critical reflection or practical inquiry to the realm of formal research with aspirations that go beyond professional development toward wider communication and generation of ideas. It is a methodology that draws on other research traditions to provide evidence, insights, and ideas through narrative discourse as a basis for understanding teaching practice in a university setting.

Experiential learning presented as narrative discourse uncovers possibilities, both current and future, for individual educators, professional colleagues, and post-secondary institutions. My narratives are intended to pose a number of questions or possibilities, and ultimately, to make changes which enhance both student learning and teaching experience. It is my hope the stories are a way to empower teaching professionals to "make a difference" in our own lives as well as those of our students as we seek to improve teaching and learning in our university communities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Memories of my most special journeys have always included
the special people with whom I have travelled
and those I have met along the way.
This one is no exception.

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again, and again, and again,
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never to give up
as she never did and never will
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For keeping me whole and reminding me what is most important,
I thank my extended family and close friends.

For understanding,
I thank my closest family and friend, Gerry.

OTHER TRIBUTES

Robert Coles is a social scientist, humanist, storyteller, and psychiatrist who draws medical diagnoses and abstractions for human beings who he believes have their own stories. "The whole point of stories is not 'solutions' or 'resolutions' but a broadening and even a heightening of our struggles—with new protagonists and antogonists introduced, with new sources of concern or apprehension or hope, as one's mental life accommodates itself to a series of arrivals: guests who have a way of staying, but not necessarily staying put" (1989, p. 129).

Maxine Greene espouses a similar philosophy in applying the lives of fictional characters to her educational research. She says, "Informed engagements with literature... free persons to break with the taken-for-granted, with what appears to be 'normal' and unchangeable; they arouse persons to reach towards the possible, to look at things as if they could be otherwise" (1994b, p. 24).

I have included works of a number of Canadian fictional writers in this thesis as frames for my own teaching stories. To these works and to my Canadian literature professor (see *Learning Styles as Signs*), I offer thanks.

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INTRODUCTION: THE ROAD TO TEACHING

See, See!
See Mother go.
Go, Baby Sally.
Go, Sally, go.
See Dick go.
See Jane go.
Go, go, go!

from We Come and Go
by W. Gray, D. Baruch & E. Montgomery (n.d.)

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION: THE ROAD TO TEACHING

We have all heard the expression, "she's a born teacher." My parents used to say it about particular teachers who were persistent enough to make inroads with my sisters and me. My husband jokingly describes me that way when he feels I am "providing more information than he requires". My children say it sarcastically to refer to bossy friends or supervisors at work. When I think back, I too have probably used the phrase to refer to particular coaching behaviours or doting people. But I don't use the term anymore. Now that I am one, I realize I wasn't "born" a teacher. Furthermore, I question whether any are.

Playing school was always a favourite childhood activity with my sisters, and my best times were those when it was my turn to be the teacher. I felt knowing, in-charge, confident. We played for hours, and my mother told dad that I might have what it took. Whatever that was.

I remember attending high school career days and being mocked when I came out of the teacher presentation. Teachers were not cool to my 15-year old pals. They wanted to be doctors and engineers, hair stylists and sports stars. I smile to think of the courage it must have taken to walk alone into that presentation and, worse yet, to face the grins and snickering as I came out.

These are indicators, I suppose, of a wondering about teaching from an early age. They may even be glimpses of teaching behaviours to which I was predisposed. But I cannot claim to have been born knowing what I now know about teaching.

Finding the Way: Metaphors as a Map

Metaphors, according to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), are pervasive in everyday life and are found in our speech, our thoughts, and our actions. Van Manen (1990) tells us metaphors provide a way through which we may speak through silences and therefore that they enable us to transcend the limits of language. Hirschhorn (1991) adds metaphors can act as a kind of trigger that can provide access to thoughts and feelings that are

preconscious and therefore not easily verbalized. Morgan (1986) suggests that effective professionals from all areas must become skilled at the art of reading situations as we attempt to function and that because this ability is often intuitive and occurs at an almost subconscious level, metaphors provide a way to frame our understanding in distinctive ways as well as to view a situation from a new angle. Metaphors allow us to understand and transform situations to develop a deeper appreciation of the situations and to remain open and flexible. In these ways, metaphors not only embellish discourse but imply new ways of thinking and seeing.

The metaphor of travel is often used to describe various kinds of shifting or transformation in identity. Clark (1998) explores the travel metaphor as a territorial notion that can change our general understanding of the social context in which written words have a communicative function. He proposes that writers, like travellers, cross over or traverse territory and abandon fixed positions of time and space.

Lugones (1987) adds a cultural dimension to the metaphorical notion of territorial travel by comparing the experience of immigration for women of colour to "world travelling...a skilful, creative, rich, enriching and, given certain circumstances, as a loving way of being and living" (p. 3). This travel, however, when undertaken in hostile or racist territory, she says, obscures the value of world travel. Her recommendation to other women of colour, therefore, is to learn to travel to other worlds in a spirit of cultural and cross-racial appreciation and understanding.

In none of these metaphorical journeys have researchers claimed to have been born into the role. Instead, they purposefully set out to explore and discover the terrain, the people, the culture, and all environmental nuances that make the travel a learning experience. My becoming a university professor can perhaps be compared to this idea of world travel since it involves transformed understandings, territorial manoeuvring, and personal and cultural awakenings. I have chosen the travel metaphor, therefore, to describe my long-awaited, yet somehow unplanned, journey to teacherhood.

Reading the Signs: Stop, Look, Listen

I did not take the direct route to teaching after completing high school in the late 1960s. Instead, I built a career in office administration while supporting my husband through his university education during the early years of our marriage. Jobs were plentiful, my positions were challenging, and I pursued and enjoyed my work as we started a family, bought our first home, raised our children, and established careers for ourselves.

As our older daughter entered Grade 12, however, and we began perusing university calendars and attending open houses, the old urge took grip. Casual wondering turned to serious contemplation, and finally I traded familiar and nicely maintained roads of my business career for a tentative, pencilled new route. I became the timid explorer in a new academic and social territory of teacher training. With my daughter at my side, I entered university as a full-time student for the first time at the age of 40 years.

Travel to Teaching: Tracking the Route

I marvelled at so many surprises in my undergraduate education program--each day, each course, each professor, and each semester. I may have been born with some traits, perhaps even a predisposition that blossomed to desire, but it soon became obvious I was not born with the necessary skills to smoothly navigate the new teaching territory. These skills came slowly from hard work, embarrassing mistakes, and a determination to become that knowing teacher from our basement playroom of my youth.

Graduate studies followed and brought more surprises--closer traffic in narrower lanes, fast-paced and focused. Course work was intense and with it came teaching assistantships--the warm wind, fresh and fun and gusty, of exciting experiences and another way to learn by doing. All the childhood fantasies, all the years of my own schooling, and all the educational theory from my undergraduate program, however, did not prepare me for the roadways, roadblocks, and unfamiliar road signs on the buzzing freeway of university teaching.

Just as I managed to gain bits of confidence on this roadway, the map changed and I became a Sessional Instructor. Now I was without the guidance of a watchful supervisor, the reassurance of another's experience, and the security of shared responsibility. Every experience seemed new again, but this time more exhausting, sometimes even unnerving. I began to wonder if I questioned my thoughts and actions more than I trusted them. With every turn, I braced and held my breath, wondering if teaching would ever become predictable or, alternatively, if I would become accustomed to the constant change.

A huge bouquet of two dozen of the most perfect pastel yellow and pink roses (Figure 1) from my class at the end of that first semester magically eased the travel anxiety. I completed my Master's program and unfolded another leaf of the roadmap: I entered a doctoral program, this time to focus on teaching in post-secondary environments.

Combining doctoral course work with university teaching and new administrative and research commitments, even with my improved map-reading, proved a challenge. The transition was not so different from that between undergraduate and master's studies, but there were new patterns that I began to suspect were those of the researching teacher I was becoming.

An offer of a full-time teaching position during my second year of doctoral studies overwhelmed me in both positive and negative ways, and I accepted and approached this adventure with a mixture of enthusiasm and trepidation. Under the caring tutelage of an experienced doctoral advisor, I embarked on what was to become an amazing opportunity to research my teaching interests and experiences as I lived them, not fully knowing what these stamps on my teaching passport might mean.

In the year that followed, I taught six courses in the two faculties of my earlier training. Class enrolments ranged from ten to 175 students, totalling nearly 450 students over the two semesters. Three of the courses included laboratories; this meant supervising

a dozen Teaching Assistants. Very quickly, I made the decision to pare the scope and pace of my adventure after that first exhausting year.
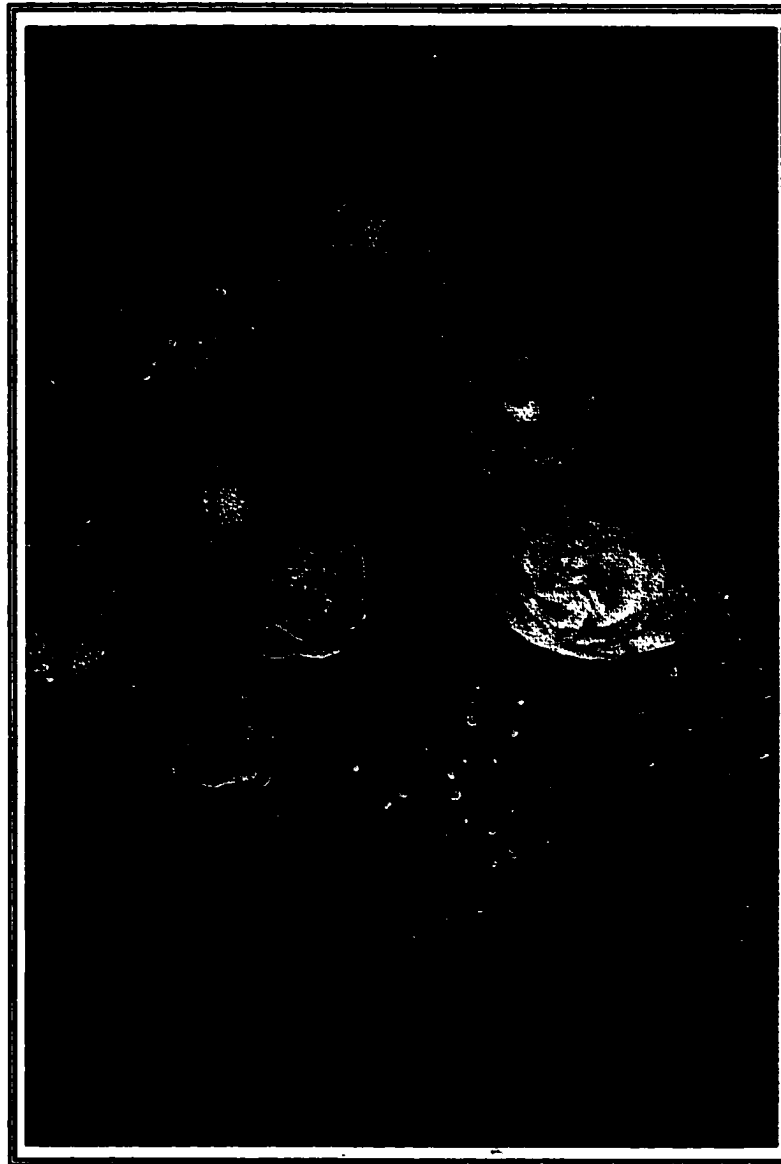
Figure 1:   Roses to Remember. Photograph from the collection of Kay McFadyen (1997).

The next decision proved equally difficult. Which courses should I choose--the most creatively inspiring? the most personally rewarding? ones with the most positive student response? the best long-term security opportunities?   I turned to people I trusted for guidance. Their counsel, however, surprised me and in the end, I accepted their

advice and chose the teaching that I had perhaps been looking for justification to avoid. It was the rugged rain forest trek of my teaching landscape where no roses bloomed--the course that had been the most challenging by virtue of class size coupled with the requirements for multiple labs. It also came with the least clerical assistance, the most dissatisfied and vociferous students, and the least opportunity for collegial support. It was the course, however, that offered memorable travel in terms of numbers and diversity of students, and so I set out with professional guidebooks, my own maps and, most of all, determination, to make it a momentous trip--inclement weather, hidden scorpions, and all!

Teaching Stories: Collections and Recollections

The route chosen for the coming year, I began to really think deeply about my experiences. As I reflected on my teaching stories, I wondered where they might take me, and also where I might take them. Teaching for three years (or was it four?) with assistantships for two years (or was it three?) blended into my experiences as a student in the three academic programs.

Eight years in university had certainly given me stories. I thought of how lucky I had been to stumble on the compressed undergraduate program for mature students that allowed me to convocate in three years instead of four. I remembered the second-year horror of hearing the Education Faculty would be imposing a quota for third year students and not knowing what criteria I must meet. I recalled the disappointment of being denied entry into a Masters' program in my undergraduate faculty and having to shop the campus for alternatives, but then the sweet discovery of a textiles program that tapped years of untapped creativity. I grimaced remembering the disruption and frustration of a faculty merger in my new program and wondered how that process could have been less painful.

I reminisced about the dozens of classes I had attended as a student and how those experiences had affected my own teaching. I reflected on professors who had influenced me--some positively, some negatively--and I wondered if I had lived up to promises I made to myself as I sat in those classes. I remembered the role models who had inspired

and encouraged me, some intentionally and others in unknowing ways. I smiled at my

bulletin board of cards, notes, dried flowers and snapshots (Figure 2), small gifts, award

certificates, and so many other reminders of the wonderful students and rewarding

experiences. But there were also the painful memories that had sapped my energy and

singed my soul. They were not on display, but they had made me a traveller with more

than one kind of story to tell.
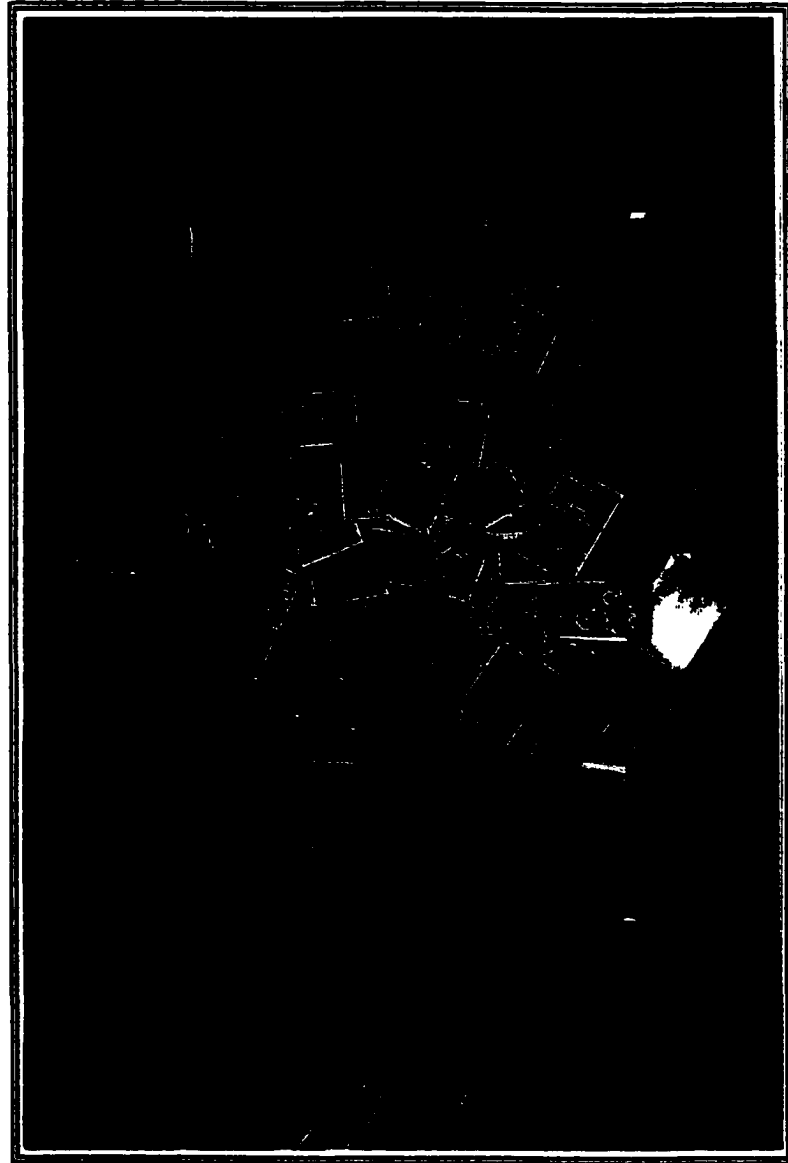
Figure 2: Bulletin Board Reminders. Photograph from the collection of Kay McFadyen (1998).

Souvenirs of my university travel also burst the confines of my tiny bedroom office at home. There were file folders stuffed with academic papers and instructors' comments, videos and evaluations of my early student teaching, and slides and posters from academic presentations during my undergraduate education program. There was a shelf of personal journals, binders of readings and notes, folders of newsletter and journal clippings, and bundles of all sorts of works in progress--publishing ideas, teaching tips, lesson concepts, you name it. There was the formal teaching dossier--two thick volumes of course information, process documentation, and teaching reflection. Beside it stood photo albums that began as undergraduate memoirs but later became research data for publication projects.

What did these mental images and paper trails mean? Did they define me? Did they speak to my learning? Did they mould my teaching? How had they influenced my decisions and behaviour? Did some represent frustrations or did they guide me through them? Who was I as a teacher and a researcher? How far had I really come; how far could I go; how would I get there? Where, exactly, was the destination?

An answer began to take shape in the summer of 1998 when, after renewed discussions with a patient yet focused supervisor, I found myself exploring narrative inquiry as the research turnpike for my interest in university teaching. It offered a creative and inspirational process through which to explore my travels as an adult learner in three university programs, as a student teacher working with experienced professors, as a novice university professor, and also as a teacher of other beginner teachers. Narrative inquiry paved a way to frame my experiences in stories to examine and improve my own teaching practice and, in so doing, to serve as a travel story for others interested in this teaching landscape.

Was I a "born teacher"? Absolutely not! The collections on my shelves attest to a great deal of wondering and exploring and changing. I hope that the stories that come from these folders and papers can serve as signposts for other travellers--to understand my

travel, to better appreciate their own and, most importantly, for all of us to imagine the possibilities ahead.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

How do you grow a prairie town?

The gopher was the model.
Stand up straight:
telephone poles
grain elevators
church steeples.
Vanish, suddenly: the
gopher was the model.

from Seed Catalogue
by Robert Kroetsch (1986)

CHAPTER II
NARRATIVE METHODOLOGY

Tourists and Travellers: Situating the Researcher

In the preceding chapter, I use a travel metaphor to describe my journey from business community to a university teaching landscape. The metaphor helped me to articulate this career transition so that others might better understand it. My hope is that this understanding will help educators to know the process in ways that promote discussion and acknowledgement of its rewards and obstacles, and perhaps even inspire them to imagine other possibilities for the future.

The introductory chapter deals broadly with a shifting or transformation of identity. However, an extension of the travel metaphor might include what Clark (1998) poses as the difference between travellers and tourists. It is one that perhaps captures more fully my experience as I began to teach. Clark (1998) describes travellers as moving away from the certainty and control of an identity secured by the familiarity of a home territory in which inhabitants are similar. Moving to places where lives are very different creates an interdependency with others in this new territory. In this way, he says, travel is not a place but a process mutually experienced, but without similar beginnings, ends, passages, or experiences for those involved.

It seems mine was such a journey. My moving was from a business to an education community, and within that teaching and learning territory, involved shifts in disciplines between Secondary Education, to a Clothing and Textiles focus, and then to Educational Policy Studies. From observing the teaching as a student, to applying theory as a student teacher, to practicing it as an independent instructor, and even teaching others to do it, the travel map was repeatedly and continuously constructed, deconstructed, and reconstructed.

My travels have involved not only a change in place, but also a change in person as I embarked on the hierarchical climb from undergraduate, to masters, and then to doctoral

studies—all as an adult student after extensive community, business, and family experience. At first, seasoned guides who were familiar with the territory stood ready with counsel. Then I ventured off on my own to meet new travellers and to experience more new territory. This travel has involved, to borrow Clark's (1998) analogy, much road talk— "conversations about road conditions and campsites, parts sources and repair tricks" (p. 15), as I explore the teaching terrain, picking my way through potholes, seeking direction where there are no signs, or recognizing dated maps or expired guidebooks.

Clark (1998) distinguishes tourists as those who interact with others who share a similar world view of their transience but who never actually transcend their home territory to experience the new place. Their purpose is limited to collecting experiences of difference, then returning home to show and tell. Travellers, on the other hand, cross into new territory, not for the purpose of accumulating experiential momentos, but to come away with impressions and stories that often change their world view. In applying this distinction to my own travel, stories of my formal training to become a teacher are perhaps my tourist artifacts while those of my immersion in the teaching culture to form relationships and make a new home are the authentic traveller credentials.

Clark (1998) further enriches the travel metaphor by suggesting that writing about travel is a form of social discourse where "we envision communicating with people as travellers who encounter and assist each other as they journey separately across a common space" (p. 17). These travellers, he contends, despite separate itineraries, readily acknowledge their dependence on other travellers along the road "by stopping, and talking, and sharing information" (p. 15). So, while the teaching experience may be a form of travel, sharing stories of that teaching adds a different stamp to the teaching passport.

My teaching stories, however, do not assume the genre of a travel guide in which directions are offered, options are weighted, and questions are answered. Instead, I have tried to create a type of travelogue where issues from my own teaching can emerge and be voiced by "stopping, and talking, and sharing..." (Clark, 1998, p. 15).

Narrative and Naming: Tools for Emerging Travellers

Dewey (1938) describes knowledge as something constructed through continuous and interactive experience. Schon (1983) builds on this by suggesting that naming issues and describing the context in which they emerge allows us to attend to them. Still later, Clandinin and Connelly (1986) describe narrative inquiry as a mechanism for naming and describing personal practical knowledge that is continually constructed and reconstructed by individuals. These constructs are signposts for this research.

Carr (1986) describes narrative as "semantic innovation in which something new is brought to the world by means of language" (p. 15). He helps us to understand this language structure as a temporal unfolding of complex parts of a story held together by the relation among points of view of various characters. These characters include the teller, the individuals or social collective within the story, and the audience. In this way, narrative represents the world, not in a physical sense, but based on human perception of reality.

Carr (1986) also explores metaphor to illuminate our understanding of narrative. He says that if metaphor is a "seeing as", then narrative is a "seeing as if". In other words, the story redescribes the world as if it were something it may not be. Narrative, he says, dresses up reality, reflecting human need for satisfying coherence. A more revealing term than seeing, however, may be discovering since Carr states, "...we often need to tell such a story even to ourselves, in order to become clear on what we are about" (p. 61).

Narratives have emerged as an important approach to social science research (for example, Coles's (1989) *The Call of Stories: Teaching and the Moral Imagination*, Polkinghorne's (1998) *Narrative Knowing and the Human Sciences*, and Van Manen's (1990) *Researching Lived Experience: Human Science for an Action Sensitive Pedagogy*). Interest in narrative structure is also growing among educators who present it as a way of knowing and teaching (for example, Clandinin & Connelly, 1988, 1996; Connelly & Clandinin, 1987, 1990; Greene, 1991, 1994b, 1997; Gudmundsdottir, 1991; Witherell & Noddings, 1991).

It is through narrative inquiry that I will explore my travel as a beginning instructor in a complex university environment. It is my hope that within the storied structures which are based on my teaching experiences, that I can accomplish what Carr (1986) calls a holding together of disparate elements while individual events and actions retain their identity and integrity. Their purpose, however, is not solely for me "to become clear on what [I am] about" (Carr, 1986, p. 61), although this cannot but assist an instructor in the quest for deeper understanding and continual improvement, but they are presented in ways I hope others might also benefit as we "journey separately across a common space" (Clark, 1998, p. 17).

Self-Study: Situating One's Self on the Travel Map

Travellers can read another's guide, listen to another's campfire stories, watch another's documentary video recording, and they can learn a great deal from these external sources. But if knowing is experiential rather than conceptual (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Dewey, 1938; Schon, 1983), then to truly capture the essence of teacher travel from the inside—from the instructor's perspective—self-study is not just important, it is essential.

> Self-study is the study of one's self, one's actions, one's ideas, as well as the 'not self'. It is autobiographical, historical, cultural, and political and it draws on one's life, but it is more than that. Self-study also involves a thoughtful look at texts read, experiences had, people known, and ideas considered. (Hamilton & Pinnegar, 1998, p. 236)

Questions have been raised about whether self-study is merely personal reflection (Loughran & Northfield, 1998). There are, in fact, such an array of uses and understandings of the term reflection (see Calderhead & Gates, 1993), that it is useful to briefly mention those that have been particularly influential for this study and to come to operational definitions and distinctions between the terms.

Early works of Dewey (1933) distinguish between action based on reflection and action based on impulse by emphasizing three attitudes of reflective practitioners: a) an open-mindedness to recognizing and acknowledging the validity in other perspectives;

b) an acceptance of responsibility for moral and ethical consequences of choices; and c) an acknowledgement of limitations in one's assumptions when making decisions.

Contemporary researchers continue to support this earlier thinking of Dewey. Schon (1983), for example, describes reflective practice as a professional development model and a powerful guide where valued respect for personal experience is the groundwork for new knowledge and understanding. Schon's theories on reflection-in-action are those connecting reflective conversations with practical and problematic situations in our professional environments.

Grant and Zeichner (1984) also build on Dewey's three characteristics of reflective practice in relation to classroom teaching and conclude that teachers must be reflective in order to effectively function in changing circumstances. Hutchinson (1998) uses Dewey's construct of critical reflection as a lens for gauging the quality of particular methodologies in teacher education. Connelly and Clandinin (1994) suggest that "when there is no reflection, or when the reflection no longer opens further possibilities, the boundaries of knowing are established" (p. 154). Baskett (1996), in support of reflective practice in university environments, points out that "the ability to learn from, and on, the job is the most distinguishing characteristic of effective practitioners [which calls for] reflective practice" (p. 77). Reflection then, from perspectives spanning half a century of philosophic educational writing, is a thoughtful process within individual instructors that is critical to our professional development in dynamic and complex teaching environments.

Self-study Conversations: Reconstructing the Map

By returning to the travel metaphor, we might see reflective practice as thoughtful analysis of teacher travel in changing landscapes. It is an open-mindedness to other ways of thinking and doing, an acceptance of the consequences of our travel choices, and an acknowledgement of limitations in our own and others' mapping efforts and abilities. Clearly, it is a personal process of thinking, rethinking, and developing actions.

Self-study, then, may be best regarded as a sequence of reflective actions that occur when a problematic situation is reframed and redefined, then changed, as a result of the intended action designed to resolve the problem. Self-study builds on reflection as a study begins to explore not just the reflective processes, but also the context and other people involved. As Loughran and Northfield (1998) describe it, self-study is an indication that a professional is willing to accept that experience is a major source of improvement in professional practice.

By moving beyond critical reflection or practical inquiry to the realm of formal research, self-study takes reflective processes and makes them public, thus leading to another series of processes that, of necessity, extend outside the individual (Loughran & Northfield, 1998). In this way, self-study aspires to reach beyond individual development by moving to a wider communication and generation of ideas. To illustrate the distinction between private and public forms, Richardson (1994) argues that, "Both forms...may be conducted by the practitioner, and at times, practical inquiry may be turned into formal research" (pp. 7-8). She suggests that practical inquiry may be foundational to formal research if it is to be truly useful in improving practice.

Other researchers explain self-study as pushing the boundaries of what counts as research (Hamilton & Pinnegar, 1998). It is an emerging methodology that draws on other research traditions to provide the necessary evidence and context for understanding teaching practice. It is not simply a recording of processes and outcomes similar to those carefully noted in a travel journal, and it is not a recollection of thoughts and behaviours in our photograph albums and scrapbooks. Instead, it is a critical examination of our involvement in the experience, of the context for the experience, of the possibilities that exist for improvement and, most importantly, of how we change our teaching practice.

Loughran and Northfield (1998) offer yet another possibility for self-study as "one way of helping...grasp the sense of excitement" (p. 8) in teaching practice to counter unimaginative teaching (Bland & Bergquist, 1997; Loughran & Northfield, 1998; Mid-

career and mid-life, 1998). It is this type of "stopping, and talking, and sharing" (Clark, 1998, p. 15) aimed toward heightening experiences for teaching and learning audiences that perhaps best supports self-study as a formal research tool and one that challenges reflective practitioners to make teaching journeys better understood, more meaningful, and creatively inspirational.

Travel as Dance; Experience as Data

> Women, as well as men, in all ages and in all places, have danced on the earth, danced the life dance, danced joy, danced grief, danced despair, and danced hope. Literally danced all these and more, and danced them figuratively and metaphorically, by their very lives.
>
> *from Dance on the Earth*
> *by Margaret Laurence (1989)*

As it pushes the boundaries of what counts as research, self-study also pushes the boundaries of what counts as data, how to collect it, and how to report it. It uses a variety of data sources including field records, journals, accounts, annals and chronicles, family stories, unstructured interviews, oral texts, photographs and personal artifacts, lived stories, letters, and auto/biographical writing as strategies (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994; Greene, 1997; Hamilton & Pinnegar, 1998; Pinnegar, 1998; Wilcox, 1998; Wilkes, 1998).

A number of researchers suggest possibilities for other creative data sources. Loughran and Northfield describe a combination of personal journal writing, student interviews and writing, and journal conversations with colleagues to capture "a more holistic sense of the whole situation" (1998, p. 11) in their educational research. McVea (1998) relies largely on conversations with teaching colleagues that are supported by photographic journals, to glean insights into the professional growth of educators. Gainor-LaPierre (1998) includes videotapes of classroom conversations in her repertoire of research field texts. These strategies represent innovative approaches to capturing both content and emotion of teaching research data.

A self-study researcher often relies heavily on self-text to understand professional practice and to facilitate an examination of events that influence thinking and action. Self-text leads self-researchers to link thoughts and feelings in our teaching work, understand our practice settings or contexts, question what might be possible, and then make changes to create such practice. In so doing, self-text creates learning possibilities for colleagues and future educators. Self-text brings research meaning to our stories and helps us participate as travellers and not simply pass through the teaching terrain as tourists.

Self-text demands that researchers always be conscious of self in the study. We must always be aware that multiple roles in the creation, collection, and presentation of data may create multiple interpretations. Self-text, therefore, must be thoughtful, not just of self but of others, as it draws out possibilities for consideration and action.

Steier (1991) describes this consciousness of self as self-reflexivity, a spiralling process that allows multiple views and perspectives as the researcher assumes various roles. It is this bending-back process that allows researchers to present multiple conversations of diverse realities as we move back and forth between theory, practice, reflection, and change. These processes occur, he contends, while spanning temporal bridges between past, approximately and immediately present, and future.

A sense of coherence within the teaching experience, considering this multiplicity of perspectives inherent in self-reflexivity, demands an understanding of the translations of the various conversations. These understandings allow the same self-reflexive educator to be different as a result of our own examination; they allow us to integrate imagination with reality; they allow us to look beyond what is actual and ordinary to actually experience the spirit of an educator's "life dance of pain and love" (Laurence, 1989, p. 17).

Self-study Research: A Travel Valuation

EVERYTHING I WRITE
I SAID, IS A SEARCH
(is debit, is credit)

from The Ledger
by Robert Kroetsch (1975)

Loughran and Northfield (1998) present a number of benefits of self-study, many of which appear straightforward, but upon examination must be deemed profound advantages to this type of research. Two of the most significant benefits relate to a timely capture of teaching experiences and to the potential for integration of complex multi-level environments in which instructors live and work to support our understandings of the process and outcomes.

The first advantage, recent and relevant experience, is critical in dynamic contexts and particularly in a Canadian context that has been accused of having "overstretched itself and developed into a multiheaded beast that believes it can offer everything to everyone" (Emberley, 1996, p. 257). The second major benefit relates to inclusion in that self-study considers "the complexities of teaching, learning, personal and professional beliefs and practice...in a real context" (Loughran & Northfield, 1998, p. 9). This advantage counters criticisms related to limited scope, selective and isolated contexts, and contrived situations that are sometimes attributed to traditional research approaches.

Self-study as a way of knowing and understanding the self, of developing new knowledge, and of generating change does not imply, however, that it offers generalizable rules. In fact, the contrary is more accurate in university teaching where thousands of unique instructors and tens-of-thousands of diverse learners interact in dynamic, complex, bureaucratic, and political organizations.

Instead, self-study brings insight. This insight rises from the use of multi-layered sets of data, the willingness of instructors to admit failure and learn from it, and the

evidence of productive change and professional growth of self-researchers. In this way, self-study can lead to reframed practices which reconceptualize what it means to be an instructor and what it means to engage in research in teaching (Hamilton & Pinnegar, 1998; Loughran & Northfield, 1998). Such insight is what Clandinin and Connelly (1986) refer to as the personal practical knowledge which is continually constructed and reconstructed.

Personal practical knowledge, however, can also bring humility. Just as reflection is sparked by dilemmas, tensions, and frustrations, so too are these inherent in self-study. Loughran and Northfield (1998) suggest, in fact, they tend to dominate the data gathering and occupy the researcher's centre of attention, and that successes become glossed over, almost as if they were expected, as the data focuses on the unexpected and unexplained.

Overwhelming attention to apparent conflicts and failures is demanding and involves risks. While it is often unrepresentative of the total situation being experienced, it can dull the confidence of self-study researchers and stigmatize them in the perceptions of others. Its risks in exposing frailty and vulnerability is evident where self-researchers grapple with conflicts between belief and practice (Loughran & Northfield, 1998; Smith, 1998) or with what Wilkes (1998) calls paradoxes in teaching. Within the classroom, for example, an instructor may struggle with balancing an ideal of caring with situations of unresponsive students or negative behaviours that cause caring to "predictably deteriorate" (Noddings, 1984, p. 181), and these dilemmas often overshadow the positive experiences.

Likewise, self-study involves risking disclosure and potential judgement as researchers attempt to examine the political context at an institutional level. For example, Bateson (1990) suggests, "The academic world is notorious for the nastiness of the power games it plays, sometimes for such very small stakes" (p. 87). The players in these political games, however, are not just faculty members, but include students in "a market-driven model in which universities compete for customers and students determine university priorities through their demands" (Emberley, 1996, p. 172).

Because of its inherent risks, self-study research demands an important belief that shapes the approach to the research. Its personal nature demands a high level of self-confidence and a belief in one's self because even positive experiences have unexpected and unintended outcomes, and personal values are exposed for question and criticism. Self-study researchers must understand the sense of vulnerability and dissonance created by personal conflicts if these projects are to be professionally rewarding learning experiences for the researcher as well as be considered authentic by the readers (Loughran & Northfield, 1998).

Travel Maps: Reliability and Validity Issues

Generalizability is not a claim made by the self-study researcher. In its place, readers are invited to link others' accounts with their own experience. This research approach, however, raises issues of reliability and validity in the face of criticisms of subjectivity and bias in the methods and results.

Reliability and validity issues in self-study research are addressed by the way the study is conducted and information is presented. Van Manen (1990) reminds us that human science research must be both objective and subjective since the researcher must be "true to the object" (p. 20) while also being "perceptive, insightful, and discerning" (p. 20) to present information in a truly unique and personal way. Because self-study acts as an invitation for readers to abstract occurrences to their own situation (Loughran & Northfield, 1998), it demands both cognitive and emotive elements to be informative.

Van Manen (1990) speaks to this practicality: "...we gather other people's experiences because they allow us to become more experienced ourselves" (p. 62). In order for readers to be able to add to their experiences through these connections, research collaboration is required. Self-study, therefore, demands a commitment to rigorous investigation into other accounts as well as checking new data and emerging interpretations with other professionals. It requires collaboration for scrutiny and professional challenge to ensure that descriptions and conclusions resonate with readers. It involves a joint

involvement in developing the study and learning through those shared experiences so that new understandings may emerge as situations become clarified and questioned. It involves a sharing of interpretations that will ring true for others (Loughran & Northfield, 1998; Pinnegar, 1994).

Van Manen (1990) believes human science research is rigorous when it is strong or hard in a moral or spirited sense but also has the courage and resolve to be sensitive, subtle, and soft in presenting the uniqueness and range of possible meanings of human awareness. Schon adds that reflective research "is to forgo a particular conception of rigorous research--the kind inherent in technical rationality" (1991, p. 10), and that correspondence to the facts, internal coherence, and pragmatism are more appropriate criteria to help practitioners learn from reflective studies. Self-study research, from these views, demands an integrity and rigor that allows the researcher to understand and act differently while also making the research authentic for readers. If an account is to be a useful contribution to better understandings of teaching environments and practice, it is the reader who must accept the account as reliable and valid for personal purposes.

Loughran and Northfield (1998) offer a useful summary of the criteria through which reliability and validity issues are addressed in self-study research:

- explicit links to relevant literature and other self-study accounts;

- sufficient detail of the complexity and context for it to ring true for the reader;

- inclusion of different perspectives and triangulation of data where possible.

Narrative Inquiry: Ways to Understanding Travel Experience

But the Elders say that storytelling is a gift too. If a person with a story can go deep, where people are angry, sad, where they're hiding thoughts and emotions, raise the past they've maybe forgotten and can't really recognize any more, push them to spirit-walk into themselves--to do that with a story is a gift.

from Stolen Life: The Journey of a Cree Woman
by Rudy Wiebe & Yvonne Johnson (1998)

In addressing the universalizability of the term experience, Clandinin and Connelly (1994) conclude that it is a manifestation of the relationships between people and our environment. As people live, we are always operating and interacting in some kind of environment or situational context. Meanings are ascribed to these interactions based on the perceptions, assumptions, and expectations we hold relative to the situation. Based on his medical research, Coles states, "few would deny that we all have stories in us which are a compelling part of our psychological and ideological make-up" (1989, p. 24). As it applies to research, Clandinin and Connelly identify experience as "the starting point and key term for all social sciences inquiry" (1990, p. 5). They suggest, "stories are the closest we can come to experience as we and others tell of our experience" (p. 7) and further, "life is a story we live" (1994, p. 149). Teaching lives, they indicate, are our stories of the professional knowledge landscape (1995).

As I explored my own professional knowledge landscape by reflecting and talking and writing, I came to realize that what was most important to me was not how much students learned or in what courses or programs the learning occurred. I was most interested in how, as an instructor, I struggled to find common understandings with so many other tourists and travellers—students, teaching colleagues, and administrators—in our daily but momentary encounters on buzzing freeways which were frequently under construction. I wanted to examine my own experiences in the academic environment for meanings that would help educators think about university teaching and the demands and tensions inherent in that landscape.

Narrative knowledge of experience is constructed and reconstructed as we tell stories of our experience to explain ourselves to ourselves and to others. Eisler (1987) speaks to the narrative mode in capturing experience as follows:

> The human psyche seems to have a built-in need for a system of stories and symbols that 'reveal' to us the order of the universe and tell us what our place within it is. It is a hunger for meaning and purpose seemingly beyond the power of any rationalistic or logical system to provide. (p. 183)

This system of stories and symbols is constructed from the particulars of experience and is an expression of our personal practical knowledge (Clandinin & Connelly, 1986). In this way, knowledge is embodied as well as embedded within socio-cultural historical contexts and forms and reforms as we interact with others. This way of looking at knowledge opens up a variety of ways of understanding. It suggests we can begin to inquire not only about what we know, but how we know it, how our knowing changes over time and across situations, and how we experience our knowing (Olson, 1993). In a university environment, stories open up possibilities for beginning to understand not only what professors know about teaching, but how we negotiate meaning in the socially-constructed, interactive, and dynamic contexts of classrooms and how such meaning manifests in our daily experiences. This view of knowledge does not separate the knower from what is known, but views knowers as continually constructing and reconstructing knowledge based on experience, making it a personal, holistic, and problematic view of knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Ginsburg & Clift, 1990). From his medical perspective, Coles seems to agree: "Their story, yours, mine--it's what we all carry with us on this trip we take, and we owe it to each other to respect our stories and learn from them" (1989, p. 30).

Florio-Ruane (1997) looks beyond the melding of knower and knowing in professional knowledge landscapes to include institutions themselves. She feels that if our personal stories are to be helpful in changing and building institutions and communities, we need to be willing to retell them. We must tell them to ourselves and to others if we are to open new questions, to form and question new ideas, to shape other thoughts and fill puzzling silences. "We must risk telling new stories in and by many voices. This," she says, "is an act of hope" (p. 160).

Travelled, Travelling, Will Travel: Temporality in Narrative Experience

Narrative knowledge is constructed and reconstructed through experience that is continuous and interactive. Crites (1971) understands the temporal continuity of narrative

knowledge as "the whole experience, as it is concentrated in a conscious present" (p. 303). However, the ways in which we choose to make sense of our experience affect more than the present moment. While experience happens in the present, the conscious present is more than an isolated point in time. It is a temporal unfolding that includes past memories, present actions, and future intentions (Carr, 1986; Florio-Ruane, 1997; Greene, 1994; Ricoeur, 1983). The very essence of experience is its temporality, its continuity.

> The conscious present is that of a body impacted in a world and moving, in process, in that world. In the present action and experience meet. Memory is its depth, the depth of its experience in particular; anticipation is its trajectory, the trajectory of its action in particular. (Crites, 1971, p. 303)

In this way, the meaning of experience is continually being constructed and reconstructed as we anticipate the future based on past experience. As each situation is lived, the actual experience gives us new stories to tell including new ways to retell past experience and new situations to envision. It is this immediacy of story, Coles (1989) suggests, that connects so persuasively with personal experience.

Individual experience, however, cannot be examined in isolation. We also have encounters with many other individuals with their own continuities of experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998; Gainor-LaPierre, 1998; Olson, 1993). As well, our personal practical knowledge shapes and is further shaped by reciprocal and continuous interactions with our multiple external environments including our social and physical world (Florio-Ruane, 1997; Greene, 1994; Kilsdonk, 1983). We are, then, present in the ongoing stories of our particular socio-cultural worlds that are also historically continuous and socially interactive, and these stories shape and are shaped by other individuals.

Sharing Travel Stories: A Bridge Named Possibility

> And you want to travel with her,
> and you want to travel blind
> and you're sure that she can find you
> because she's touched her perfect body
> with her mind.
> *from Suzanne Takes You Down*
> *by Leonard Cohen (1966)*

The interactive aspect of experience acts as a bridge, not just with external people and environments, but with the inner self. Crites (1971) describes two fundamental narrative forms that we use simultaneously to describe travel across that bridge: sacred and mundane stories. Our sacred stories contain cultural structures, the attitudes we bring to our experiences within the social context which frames our understanding of them. Clandinin and Connelly describe sacred stories of teaching as the "theory-driven view of practice shared by practitioners, policy makers, and theoreticians" (1996, p. 25).

Mundane stories, on the other hand, are those seen and heard within the social context. Mundane stories teach us what we need to know to live within a particular environment. They teach us what to pay attention to and what we should and should not do. They let us know if we belong. They teach us how to communicate in acceptable ways and how to respond to others in ways that will be heard. They teach us how to express our knowledge in culturally and socially acceptable ways. The more support for a particular mundane story, the more strongly we will try to fit our lives in that story. Often the strongly held mundane stories become the accepted version because of consensus among individuals within the context. When these accepted versions become so ingrained they no longer need to be told, they may become sacred stories. Mundane stories of everyday experience, then, may lead to, but do not explicitly direct, the sacred stories within particular social and cultural contexts (Olson, 1993).

Both sacred and mundane stories help bridge our "inner lives as well as orienting [us] to a common public world" (Crites, 1971, p. 304). The stories allow us to develop an empathic understanding of the experiences of others and to connect or relate our unique experiences to those of others. Our emotions can help us begin to distinguish between these stories.

Sacred stories of teaching are embedded to varying degrees within the institutional contexts as well as the personal practical knowledge of individuals with whom professors interact. They manifest themselves in practices and rituals where they become internalized

values over time, to be guarded as indisputable truths (Eisler, 1987). Feelings of alarm, annoyance, fear, frustration, or confusion may be signals we are meddling with a sacred story--that we are uncomfortable with an ingrained or accepted version of a particular story. Dissonance may be a sign of two or more sacred stories confronting each other. It may take form as an internal or an external struggle to embrace two or more sacred stories that, based on experience, are not compatible or harmonious. Alternatively, it can result from the same sacred story considered under different circumstances. This dissonance may shake our deepest beliefs about how the world works and how we fit into that world.

We need to be alert to stories we hear and tell because when we accept stories as sacred, we may accept them as the only right or possible way to experience our travel within a particular territory. Surprises or actions that test the ingrained practices or rules, however, can awaken new and informed ways of understanding others' stories and living and telling our own. They can open questions and possibilities for understanding experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998). Perhaps it is these surprises that may spark our creative and imaginative teaching.

In this inquiry, Crites's (1971) three dimensions of the narrative quality of experience--the sacred story, the mundane story, and the temporal form of experience--provide a conceptual base for exploring my experiences as a novice professor. The possibilities for professional development, for myself as well as for others, are a central focus. By being awake to both sacred and mundane stories through reading and talking and attending, and by overlapping these stories, I hope my narratives can provide bridges to personal improvement as well as spark ideas for others.

Travel Collections: Recording, Remembering, Reviewing

> When [Collections and Recollections] first appeared, it was stated on the title-page to be written "by One who has kept a Diary."
> ...Shall I be deemed to lift the veil of private life too roughly if I transcribe some early entries?
>
> *from Preface, Collections and Recollections*
> *by G. W. E. Russell (1903)*

Collections of many sorts have become a part of my identity--as a wife, mother, daughter, sister, friend, Canadian, and as a professional--and so it was quite natural to accumulate souvenirs from my university travel as a student and later as an instructor. Unknowingly, memorabilia from the new teaching landscape began to mark this new territory as something special, something worth collecting for later reflection.

From my earliest days at the university, I photographed the stately buildings and manicured gardens (Figure 3) and assembled the pictures in albums. Soon the albums became crowded with media clippings, photos of friendly faces and favourite projects (Figure 4), and notes and sketches to remind me of both the ordinary and the unusual, depending on the class, the course, the professor, myself, or perhaps just the day or even just the time of day. Audio and video recordings and reflective journals of my early training and student teaching experiences sit next to the beginnings of a teaching dossier.
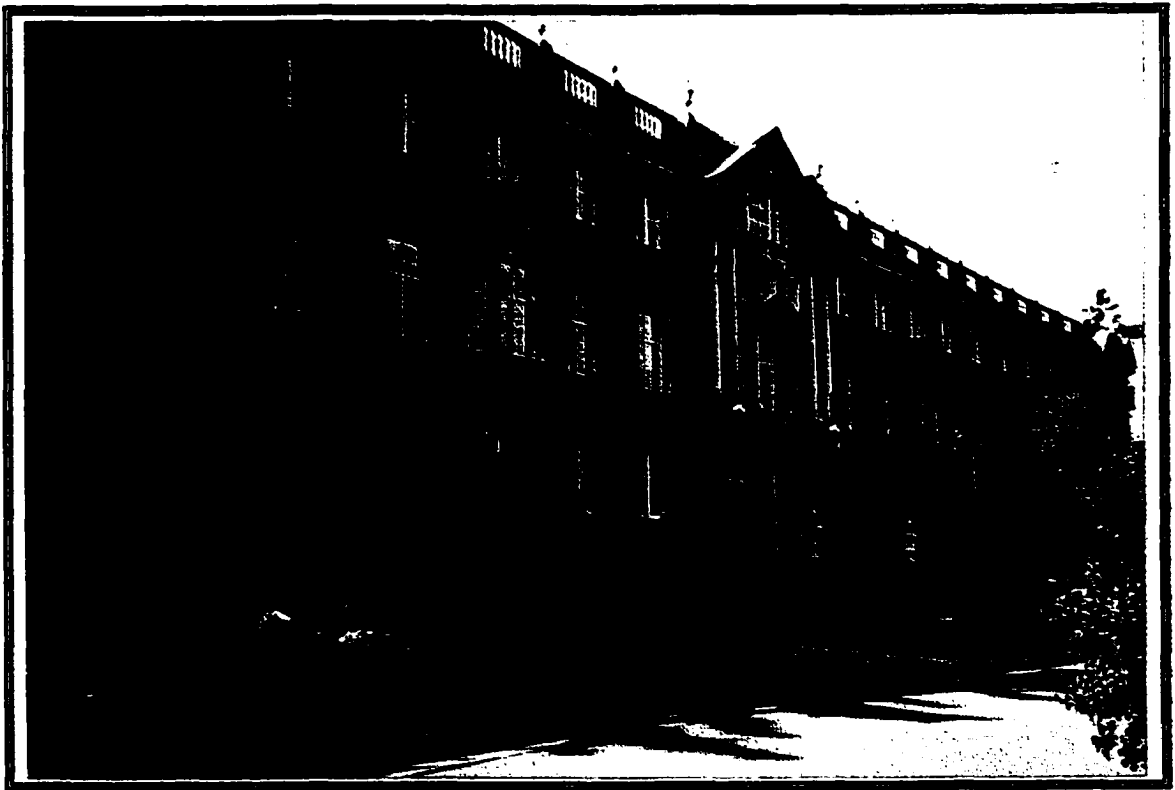
Figure 3: Old Arts Building, University of Alberta Campus. Photograph from the collection of Kay McFadyen (1995).

Figure 4: Periodic Costumes Research, University of Alberta. Photograph from collection of Kay McFadyen (1997).

Fledgling publishing files contain responses to early research writing that taught me to look at my teaching from other perspectives. Comments from student evaluations are reminders about the timing for this feedback relative to other activities in the course, decisions regarding mid-term evaluations, locations for exams, and other teaching issues.

Van Manen (1990) says that writing fixes thoughts on paper and externalizes what is internal. My journals supported the other teaching artifacts in this way. They made my experiences concrete, often in ways that seemed more compelling than I remembered the actual experience.

Writing provided the opportunity to more critically examine both planned and unplanned actions and reactions and to consider future alternatives. Writing helped me to think about how much of my teaching was based on personal experiences as a student and how much related to my teacher training. I wondered what parts came from my earlier

business career and what parts related to parenting and family experiences. Journaling also provided a welcome respite from the daily scramble to keep up; it was a time to breathe deeply, think deeply, and write deeply as I recalled, evaluated, critiqued, and planned. It was a way for me to bring rational insight and creative perspective to situations that were often otherwise and to discern changes in my understanding over time and across situations. Each experience and each semester seemed new in some way, and very quickly I realized the only certainty was constant change.

My teaching collections helped me to be more aware of what happens in my teaching as I collect, reflect, act, react, and interact. The journals documented personal stories, and the collections served as catalysts to draw out other ones. I realized that, based on these collections, I wanted to explore the place of personal story in my teaching.

Field Text and Travel Diaries: Teaching Stories Find a Home

I contemplated a number of approaches to examining my university teaching, but as I explored narrative inquiry during a intersession writing course, I began to realize the potential of stories as field text. I began to see narrative as a vehicle from which to explore territory that I hoped would become familiar but which continued to present new and uncharted landscapes. As the students began to write and share, I felt a kind of reassurance that I was not alone in inching my way to discovering meanings in everyday teaching experience.

The good stories of learning successes and positive relationships were easiest to write, and so I began with them. Soon it became evident, however, that these stories did not fairly represent my entire journey for there were also the threatening steep shoulders, the dead-end roads, and occasional empty gas tanks in my teacher travel. The larger, more complete, picture also involved tensions, disappointments, and disagreements. These were uncomfortable stories, and only reluctantly did I share them. Much to my surprise though, my classmates seemed to understand them, and they encouraged me to fill gaps, to describe them more fully, and to link them to other stories.

As the writing progressed, decisions got tougher. Which stories would I include? How many? Were they representative of my teaching days and the students and faculty members with whom I worked? Should they be? Did they do justice to these people and situations? Did they do justice to me? Would my beginner words really tell experienced teachers what I needed them to know?

My advisor talked me to, and then through, the dilemma. Although you've started with the easier ones, keep writing until you've included the difficult ones too, and until you've said what you need to say about yourself and your teaching, she encouraged me. We could look at combining, deleting, and grouping them later and see how the analysis might look. And so, I was able to begin.

I had used sticky notes to flag the journal entries that I felt were most powerful as I read and reread the journals. They weren't always the longest or most detailed stories, and they weren't always the ones which I felt confident, comfortable, or competent to discuss. I wondered what some of them would reveal to me, let alone what they would tell readers who may have little sense of context or tension. I only knew they seemed important to me. The general categories that emerged, however, related to teaching strategies, how they unfolded and often changed, and quite often, how they related to my understanding of students. I had come full circle to my childhood interest in teaching, and I determined that through self-study and narrative accounts, I would map my learning to teach in this complex university landscape.

Travel Tales: Portraits of the Landscape

Where there's a wall there's a way through a gate or door. There's even a ladder perhaps and a sentinel who sometimes sleeps.

from Where There's a Wall
by Joy Obassan (1985)

Changes in social, political, economic, and cultural climate have placed tremendous pressure on post-secondary education landscapes in Canada over the past decade. Higher education is under serious scrutiny as increased competition for shrinking resources is coupled with more vocal demands by an increasingly diverse student population (Emberley, 1996; Moysa, 1996; Smith, 1991). Among the questions which surface as a result of such change, the importance of the role of teaching in university classrooms repeatedly surfaces as a dominant theme. Linked to this theme, there appears to be three interrelated bodies of literature: (1) the nature of university teaching; (2) learning strategies employed by university instructors; and (3) political and practical contextual issues which shape teaching practice.

The Nature of University Teaching

A discussion of the basic tenets of university teaching is critical to understanding which and how other factors influence the teaching and learning experience. If instructors believe that teaching is about imparting knowledge, then a requisite content knowledge is imperative. Understanding teaching from this perspective, then, involves understanding what instructors know, what they do with that knowledge, and why they take particular approaches to teaching.

The more prevailing view of teaching, however, suggests its purpose is more ambitious. Ramsden, for example, argues the aim of teaching is "to make student learning possible" (1992, p. 5). This connected view of teaching and learning places great responsibility on instructors. We must know not only content, but something of student learning and about what makes it possible. We must know how to situate knowledge in the real-world activity of students. To do this, we must understand what students bring with them to a learning context—their conceptions of the topic and their representations of the topic through language, symbols, models, and interpretations.

As a student-instructor dialogue, the learning process requires understanding, communication, and an appropriate environment for action and feedback (Laurillard,

1993). Developing these learning relationships with students, however, also involves an emotional aspect. This facet of teacher-student relationships is, in fact, often considered more important than traditional aspects of teaching methods and techniques. Terms frequently used to describe this relationship include student-centredness, respect for students, student guidance, instructor-student rapport (Ramsden, 1992).

Who then are our effective instructors who build and improve these relationships? Many researchers have explored the characteristics of effective instructors from the perspectives of both instructors and students (for example, Angelo, 1996; Jones, 1995; Lowman, 1996; Lunde & Wilhite, 1996; Ramsden, 1992; Sawicki, 1994; Wilson, 1993; Zelm & Kottler, 1993), and while there is general consensus about professional requirements for content and pedagogic knowledge and particular personal attributes, there are no agreed specifics or definitive models that have been developed. Van Manen says that to spell out "a concept, theory, or model of pedagogic competence is an idle endeavour" (1990, p. 158) because it assumes we know conceptually what is unknowable in a positive sense which, of course, is an impossibility in human science since individuals, he says, are incomparable, unclassifiable, unaccountable, and irreplaceable.

While many researchers agree that student feedback offers useful information regarding the relative quality of teaching, student perceptions are shown to vary depending on the field and even within particular fields of study (Ramsden, 1992). Perhaps Van Manen best summarizes teaching competence as "knowing how to act tactfully in pedagogic situations on the basis of carefully edified thoughtfulness" (1990, p. 8).

In addition to content expertise, pedagogic tactfulness, and a variety of personal characteristics that support positive teaching relationships, good instructors are also said to be dependent on what impediments or aids influence their teaching. In a study of innovative teaching, Lunde and Wilhite determine that teachers feel their successful, most creative learning activities tend to be "situational, embedded in the discipline, and even serendipitious" (1996, p. 161). Sawicki (1994) summarizes this notion of excellence in

describing outstanding instructors as those who have individually gathered exceptional traits unimpeded by the cultural and political climate of the institute, and he states further that instructors are exceptional for different reasons. Lowman (1996) presents a vision of exemplary teachers as "those who are highly proficient in either one of two fundamental sets of skills: the ability to offer presentations in clearly organized and interesting ways or to relate to students in ways that communicate positive regard and motivate them to work hard" (p. 38).

Lowman (1996) notes, however, that student learning is also greatly influenced by two student qualities--academic ability and motivation--and that teacher contribution, along with course structure, are secondary influences. His work supports the contention that there is no universal set of characteristics or one best way of teaching or, as Ramsden (1992) indicates, there are alternative understandings about what defines good teaching, but that it does exist.

Although Angelo cautions "there are no simple one-size-fits-all methods to assess the effects of teaching on learning" (1996, p. 58), an integrated view of teaching and learning implies that improvements to teaching are related to improvements in students' learning. Because improved teaching implies changed teaching, understanding how instructors improve implies an awareness of how we change our thinking about teaching and then how we change our actual teaching experience.

To make changes in our teaching, Ramsden (1992) argues that teaching improvements require intervention at several different levels. The individual instructor is an important point of influence, but not the only one. To achieve change in teaching and learning, the environment must also be considered. Courses, departments, faculties--in fact, the institution itself--all influence the nature of teaching and the quality of learning. From this perspective, improved teaching that results in improved student learning involves a reflective and inquiring approach to the nature of good teaching that includes content

expertise, personal characteristics of good teachers, as well as an understanding of the context in which the teaching occurs.

Learning Strategies of the Professoriate

The term faculty development covers approaches to development at three levels: personal, instructional, and organizational (Smith & Geis, 1996). A blurred relationship between these levels, however, complicates our understanding. Boyer (1990) uses scholarship as an umbrella term to include discovery, integration, application, and teaching, and Smith (1991) suggests scholarship includes teaching preparation and action research relating to this role. It is these forms of faculty development related to instruction that are the focus here.

Smith and Geis (1996) point out that many post-secondary instructors have little training for teaching, with almost none having degrees or even courses in education. As teaching assistants, he says, they are often treated as a "pool of cheap academic labor rather than apprenticeships learning teaching skills" (p. 134), causing them to rely on their "intuition and experience" (p. 136) when they eventually assume a teaching role.

Once in a teaching role, however, university instructors employ a number of strategies directed at improving the quality of their teaching, and these are often related to requirements for periodic evaluation. Feedback from faculty and department administrators, alumni, and outside assessors are widely used as useful sources of improvement information (Braskamp & Ory, 1994; Centra, 1996; McFadyen, 1997b; Smith, 1991; Smith & Geis, 1996; Sweidel, 1996).

As well, many universities provide a resource centre which assists instructors to develop and improve through peer reviews and mentorship programs (Smith, 1991; Smith & Geis, 1996; Sweidel, 1996). However, as Van Note Chism and Szabo (1996) point out, such centres often serve either those faculty who are already good teachers, or those identified as requiring remediation and these users are shown to differ based on academic discipline, professional rank, and gender.

Student ratings also provide valuable formative data (Lowman, 1996; Ramsden, 1992; Smith, 1991; Sweidel, 1996). Feldman (1996) cautions, however, such data are not universally acceptable, and that some post-secondary instructors "believe ratings are not reliable, valid, or useful and may even be harmful" (p. 41).

Other research suggests that innovative teachers are often collaborative in that they seek out colleagues who also value learning as a source of self-development. For example, Lunde and Wilhite (1996) cite brown-bag sessions, journaling partners, Internet exchanges, university teaching centre events, workshops, and various forms of recognition as ways to promote experimentation, persistence, and risk-taking as strategies for self-improvement. Sweidel (1996) adds dinner meeting discussions to this list of valuable tools for the enhancement of professional growth.

Self-evaluation also offers instructors an opportunity to examine, analyze, and reflect on teaching strategies with a view to making improvements.

> Professors do not learn about how they function as professionals by first theorizing and then applying the theory to their work. Instead, they learn, understand, and change their work behaviour by continuously examining, analyzing, hypothesizing, theorizing, and reflecting as they work. (Braskamp & Ory, 1994, p. 6)

Self-evaluation is an on-going process which allows instructors to interpret unique challenges, develop innovative strategies, and evaluate the appropriateness of their strategies. While self-evaluation results have been criticized for a lack of objectivity in favour of the vested interests of the individual, Braskamp and Ory (1994) suggest faculty members themselves are the most important assessment source because only they can provide accurate descriptions of their work and the thinking behind it.

One method of self-evaluation recommended in a number of universities is that of teaching dossiers or portfolios which provide a cumulative and coherent set of materials including work samples, reflective commentary, and selected short descriptions compiled by instructors to accurately convey the scope and quality of their teaching (Braskamp & Ory, 1994; Centra, 1996; Gipe, 1998; McFadyen, 1997b; Seldin, 1993; Smith, 1991).

Seldin (1993) suggests the value of dossiers as a formative, self-improvement instrument which captures the individual approaches to teaching far offsets the labour-intensive aspect of their preparation. He also believes dossiers often provide an antidote to the isolated activity of teaching by promoting a "collegial exchange focused on the substance—the scholarship—of teaching" (p. 5).

This literature suggests university instructors employ a number of strategies aimed at improving teaching and learning, and the selection of a particular strategy is often influenced by administrative requirements for summative evaluation of faculty members. However, an integrated approach to university teaching implies a need for formative, often reflective and collaborative, evaluation as well if instructors are to anticipate and respond to changes in content areas, pedagogic strategies, and social and structural contexts of post-secondary educational institutes.

Political and Practical Issues

In response to concern expressed by the extensive community of university stakeholders, a Commission of Inquiry on Canadian University Education was established to report on how well the universities were carrying out their educational mandate and to make recommendations for the future. While its final report nearly a decade ago found Canadian universities basically "healthy and serving the country well" (Smith, 1991, p. 14), a number of recommendations for improvement were presented relating to areas of funding, curricula, staffing, and other major issues including teaching and research.

A major finding of the Commission related to imbalances in priorities in many Canadian institutes which resulted in an undervaluing of teaching. The Commission accepted the philosophy of other researchers that teaching was more than imparting knowledge and, in fact, what mattered most was the means of inspiring and motivating students to learn. While technical ability was important, respecting and accepting students as individuals, being available to them, facilitating discussion, creating small group and self-directed learning, and incorporating student experiences into learning materials were

considered crucial components of teaching. The Commission presented recommendations regarding teaching evaluation and support for innovative teaching practices and also recommended the development of instructional programs and support for new instructors with appropriate budgets to fund pedagogic innovations and teaching enhancement activities (Smith, 1991).

The Commission also identified a number of environmental issues that influenced university teaching. It suggested that teaching loads should be understood as including not only regularly scheduled classroom practice but also student contact outside of classrooms and time spent in learning and applying new teaching methods. It recognized the great diversity in class sizes that significantly influenced teaching and learning, and it acknowledged the changing student population which included increasing numbers of mature and part-time students.

Despite generalized support for the recommendations of the Smith Commission, there is little evidence to suggest that Canadian universities have responded in any substantial way. In fact, in 1994 and 1995, governments in Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, and New Brunswick announced major cuts of up to $400 million in each province in funding grants to universities which resulted in program closures, organizational restructuring and, in many cases, increased teaching loads and larger classes of an increasingly diverse student population (Emberley, 1996; McFadyen, 1997a; Moysa, 1996). Baskett (1996) suggests it is within this climate of uncertainty that the greatest proportion of practice problems are "resource, time, and political problems, not researchable problems" (p. 76).

This complex backdrop of social, political, economic, and cultural change undoubtedly creates colour and texture in the university teaching landscape. Most researchers agree, however, that a dominant force within any of the seasonal portraits of a university community is effective teaching. It would seem then that effective teaching in times of rapid and unprecedented change demands an understanding of teaching practice

that focuses on creative formative strategies which reward risk-taking and innovation as we travel uncertain roads within our changing universities.

Restorying the Travels: Linking Field Text to Interpretative Text

> Tournier, *The Ogre*. I have gone through a dozen novels, looking for a clue, finding none, and now, in *The Ogre*, I begin to get insights. Like Liebhaber, I begin to remember forward.
>
> *from Letters to Salonika*
> *by Robert Kroetsch (1989)*

Connelly and Clandinin say the important task in narrative inquiry is the "retelling of stories that allow for growth and change" (1994, p. 418). It is a way for humans to make meaning of experience by telling and retelling stories that make meaningful wholes of one's life and create purpose in the future (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994; Florio-Ruane, 1997; Greene, 1994). Polkinghorne (1991) uses the term re-emplotment to describe this process of telling new stories to construct new renditions of who we are at particular times. Telling the story of my teaching experience helps me to better understand my practice in the classroom as that place keeps changing and as I grow and change.

Reconstructing the journal entries into narrative text forced words to events and emotions that I experienced. Polkinghorne (1988) reminds us that language is a "great seducer" (p. 24) that tempts us to be satisfied with words that may hide reality or even disguise the truth. While my teaching journals stored the daily reminders of people, events, speculations, and critiques, each story had contextual dimensions that made it unique. How could I restory the teacher travel to say what I needed it to, to reflect the uniqueness I saw in each of the daily experiences?

After the stories were written, how would I decide which were most important for inclusion? My attempts to sort and group my stories were difficult; orders of chronology, significance, and topic seemed inadequate. Wilcox (1998), however, reminds us that there

are no formal procedures in presenting self-text based on journals and other data. Through

a process of writing and rewriting, arranging and rearranging, a number of connections

that had not been immediately obvious, began to take form as stories were examined in

new combinations and across temporal bounds. The teaching themes were ones that I felt

framed my experiences and that I hoped might offer insights to others.

Olson's (1993) description of narrative methodology seemed to fit my experience:

> Narrative inquiry does not confirm what we already know, but rather makes
> us rethink what we thought we knew...[it] explores new possibilities which
> emerge during the research process and thus is a form of educative
> experience...each inquiry must take the shape of what emerges during the
> process and as such each narrative inquiry is unique. Thus, it is impossible
> to set out a definitive set of steps in the process. (p. 251)

Noddings uses the term fidelity to describe the quest of educational researchers to

know ourselves "in such a way that the knowledge gained will promote individual growth

and maintain the caring community" (1986, p. 506). By looking closely at particular

moments of my teaching, with the help of students and colleagues, I attempt to uncover

meaning in my experience. Although this study is very personal by its nature, I hope it is

one that other educators can identify with and make sense of, and in so doing, gain insights

into their own situations. In this way, writing out stories can serve as a catalyst for further

interpretation by others as a way to see their own teaching in new ways.

Truthful Interpretations: Reality or Romantic Restorying

> Could we have shut out the profane sounds which came to us on every breeze,
> how deeply should we have enjoyed an hour amid the tranquil beauties of that
> retired and lovely spot.
>
> *from Roughing It in the Bush*
> *by Suzanne Moodie (1852)*

Each story I present is embedded within the contextual complexities of my

experience. As Connelly and Clandinin suggest, the stories provide examples from which

"we learn something essentially human by understanding an actual life or community as

lived" (1990, p. 8). Because of the complex nature of experience, the entire, complete, whole story can never be told. This makes the writing extremely difficult as each story leads to bumps and dips, detours and road closures, and occasionally to places that cannot be pinpointed on the map. Choices must be made throughout the research process, therefore, as to which stories are most significant or formative of the teaching experience.

The selection of stories is critical to achieving a unity which is meaningful and rings true for readers. Van Manen reminds us that "in our desire to find out what is effective systematic intervention... we tend to forget that the change we aim for may have different significance for different persons" (1990, p. 7). I have selected those sections of my field texts that give particular meaning to my study. They ring true and are significant for me. I am not searching for certainty, knowing that what may be certain for me may not be for others, and that what is certain for me at this point may become uncertain in the future. This narrative study, therefore, is part of an ongoing process.

As I reflect on my teaching at this stage, I perceive what Oyler (1996) describes as a shifting of authority which helped me develop alternative perspectives of my teaching. I began as a learner of teaching and progressed to student teacher in my undergraduate program. As a graduate student, I became an apprentice instructor but later assumed independent authority and responsibility as a sessional instructor. Through processes of understanding, doing, and reflecting, I have felt a shifting authority from learner to learner-teacher to teacher-learner. It is from teaching stories within these shifting identities that I will tease out stories in this narrative study that make most sense to me at this stage in my understanding of the teaching landscape in which I travel.

Examining my university experience is a journey to become a better professor and to share this learning with others. This examination through narrative inquiry, however, is a complicated process and I have tried not to fool myself. Even as it helped me to improve my teaching, and as the reading of it may hopefully inspire others, I am mindful of blind spots, some of which I must acknowledge as personal biases and others of which I am not

even aware. I am aware, however, that I may not always have seen clearly, that I may have missed signs and turns, and that accounts of my teacher travel may be presented as more deliberate and reasoned than I actually experienced them, or even more thoughtful than is possible. Van Manen (1990) reminds us that writing is an exercise in self-consciousness that is often more compelling than actual experience, and mine would be no exception.

Connelly and Clandinin respond to such a quandary: "...the judgement of whether or not one is 'telling the truth' has to do with criteria such as adequacy, possibility, depth, and a sense of integrity. This is no 'quest for certainty' in the writing of narrative" (p. 245), only hopeful promise.

Quests and Queries: Travel and Friendships

And love is a cord woven out of life,
And dyed in the red of the living heart;
And time is the hunter's rusty knife,
That cannot cut the red strands apart:
And I sail from the spirit shore to scan
Where the weaving of that strong cord began.

from The Camp of Souls
by Isabella Valancy Crawford (1880)

For their learned consideration of truthfulness and their sharing insights with me, I am most grateful to a small circle of university teaching colleagues who helped me to make truthful decisions about my writing. My doctoral advisor has patiently guided not just the writing, but inspired the teaching and the thinking that preceded it and the reflection that followed it, and I owe her much. I have also been privileged to work with three teaching scholars who served as a Response Group to provide feedback throughout the writing process. Theirs was a task of reading and watching for authenticity or a ring of truth to the stories. Did they evoke images from their own experiences? Did they seem complete? Did they present a current teaching landscape? Were they springboards for intellectual

discussion of the everyday experience of university teaching? Their watchful eye and

helpful feedback guided my writing path throughout the project.

The caring encouragement and counsel of these four mentors can compared to what

Noddings (1984) describes as "look[ing] beyond observable action to acts of commitment"

(p. 10) where the "motivation in caring is directed toward the welfare, protection, or

enhancement of the cared-for" (p. 23), or as she later describes it, "an ethic that has fidelity

to persons and the quality of relations at its heart" (1986, p. 498). The guidance and

support of these colleagues has helped me to be true to my experience as I write the stories

and reflect on their meaning.

Travelog Translations: Truthful Story to Reader Text

> She picks up the notebook that lies on the small table beside his bed. It is the book
> he brought with him through the fire—a copy of The Histories by Herodotus that he
> has added to, cutting and gluing in pages from other books or writing in his own
> observations—so they all are cradled within the text of Herodotus.
>
> *from The English Patient*
> *by Michael Ondaatje (1996)*

In pursuit of research rigor that combines what Van Manen (1990) calls subjective

and objective qualities, I have tried to be faithful to my materials, taking journal excerpts as

I found them. I did, however, correct technical writing errors, delete references that might

prove embarrassing or harmful to myself or others, clarify ambiguous events or

relationships, and remove coarse comments that must have helped relieve stress at the time

but that would not prove enlightening to the reader later. My journal thoughts, however,

warts and all, have found their way into this dissertation. This honesty involved risk and

"embracing rather than defending [my]self from contact" (Florio-Ruane, 1997, p. 160) that

was made less painful by the realization, after conversations with trusted colleagues,

particularly Dr. Haughey and members of my Response Group, that many of my

experiences and emotions are shared.

While this self-study is based largely on self-text, it is also a collaborative process that includes notions and comments from my advisor and Response Group, teaching colleagues, administrators and, of course, students. Individual identities are protected by substituting names, omitting course details and dates, using average numbers for class sizes, and generalizing titles or positions that may identify particular people.

Sharing these stories is a process for myself as well as colleagues and readers, and it is my hope that in the process, understandings can emerge, whatever the context. While acknowledging inevitable blind spots and occasional touches of generous insight, the possibility of uncovering the meaning of my teaching through this study have encouraged me to continue the journey.

Stake (1994) calls this examining of one's own teaching an "observation of operations... described and interpreted [or an attempt at the thick description of practice within particular contexts described in] sufficient detail so that the reader can make good comparisons" (pp. 241-242). In this way, I have attempted to overcome what Gainor-LaPierre (1998) refers to as surface meaning in my teaching stories.

Despite best efforts at thick description, however, shared meaning is complicated by interpretations of readers who bring their own personal practical knowledge to research texts. Writers cannot know which parts will connect with particular readers in meaningful ways. According to Connelly and Clandinin (1990), "a reader of a story connects with it by recognizing particulars, by imagining the scenes in which the particulars could occur, and by reconstructing them from remembered associations with similar particulars" (p. 8). My sense of connective reader text is one that enables readers to explore their own map-making—bumps and dips, detours and road closures, and places that cannot be pinpointed—with new insights sparked by these stories.

My hope is that the reader text may somehow prove useful to other educators, both novice and experienced, as one model of self-study rather than more traditional research with replicable findings. My goal is to present what may become new venues for

understanding university teaching, or perhaps ways of understanding old and familiar situations in new ways. Rather than providing conclusions, I hope the text will raise new questions among diverse audiences about university teaching in dynamic contexts. While I cannot know what particular meanings readers will construct as they read the text I have provided, I hope these meanings can help academic professionals to imagine new possibilities for telling and living stories of university teaching.

Summary of Methodology

Self-study is a contemporary form of research that is said to push the boundaries of what counts as research as well as what counts as data (Loughran & Northfield, 1998). It is an indication that a professional is willing to accept that experience is a major source of improvement in professional practice. It is also a means of sharing successes and frustrations with others interested in teaching practice with a view to inspiring insights toward improvement. It is my way of catching the spirit of what it means to learn to teach in today's universities.

Through narrative inquiry, I will explore my experiences of university teaching from the perspective of a novice instructor. It is my hope that in the process of this research inquiry that I can better understand my developing practice, but also that fellow tourists and travellers who share the roadways of the university teaching landscape can be likewise encouraged. These stories, I believe, are a way of developing a community of travellers who, in knowing and unknowing ways, teach and support one another on the teaching landscape.

CHAPTER III

TEACHER TRAVEL: A TALE OF ADVENTURE

When you are in the middle of a story it isn't a story at all,
but only a confusion; a dark roaring, a blindness, a wreckage
of shattered glass and splintered wood; like a house in a whirlwind,
or else a boat crushed by the icebergs or swept over the rapids,
and all aboard are powerless to stop it. It's only afterwards that it
becomes anything like a story at all. When you are telling it,
to yourself or to someone else.

from Alias Grace
by Margaret Atwood (1996)

CHAPTER III
TEACHER TRAVEL: A TALE OF ADVENTURE

It is only now, four months after my teaching landscape shattered and shook me,

that the pain of Rob has dulled to a point where I can take the words from my journal and

look at them, break the story apart, and think about it. After several false starts at

moulding those words into a tidy narrative, I decide I cannot convey the devastation with

this kind of structure for it seems to distance my emotional self and not tell the real story I

feel. The best I can do, I think, is present verbatim excerpts from my personal journals,

adding details only where they are required to clarify the events, context, or sequence.

* * *

Tell Me Why, Birds So High

Monday, January 19
A rattling experience today. One student, male, back row of two-storey lecture theatre took issue with an item from lecture at about the 10-minute mark and kept it up (x4 over 50 minutes) in front of nearly full class (175 students). I was thrown off--mixed up my material, couldn't answer a question I had posed--bloody awful. I did manage to stand up to his final interruption and made an OK point which shut him up. But too little, too late. I'd lost my confidence, and probably that of many of the students. Yuk.

Out of nowhere, I dumped on [husband] tonight, and afterwards decided two things: a) I lack mental toughness; and b) it is bad news coming in to teach a compulsory course that has a bad reputation. Students have given the course such a bad rap, there's no changing some minds. And dealing with these publicity stunts shut me down--right down.

Tuesday, January 20
...Best news of the day, another student from the class comes in for help, thanks me and says she wants me to know not all students agree with the disrupter, that he was also a pain in [another] lab. Oh joy! Support! A glimmer of hope. Face the monster again tomorrow.

Wednesday, January 21
...Well, low momentum. Struggle on. Hillary Clinton, I envy your toughness. On with the job. Screw opinion! Head up, work hard, keep the faith.

Thursday, January 22
Suggestion: Need administrative support to send strong message to students that this course is important, is going to stay, compulsory, status quo. None of this surveying students every year, raising expectations it will disappear. It gives messages that the course is not valuable, tenuous--

leaves the instructor in a no-power position. Many students this semester are 4th year who waited until the end of their degree to take it, hoping it would go away. Why? They'd have another course. Every new instructor keeps trying to nail the focus--maybe one would be OK, maybe mine is--just maybe.

Friday, January 30

Another week, a whole month. Exhausting, but everything that needed to, got done. This week I had three good classes. The mood holding on Monday, Wednesday, and actually buoyant on Friday. How long can it last? TA from last year asked if I was experiencing "SSS". He explained "Second Semester Syndrome" was his experience with the "down" group after Christmas--tired students, glazed, non-responsive. Hearing that actually boosted my spirits; thank goodness its the course and not me. So the Hillary Clinton approach was the right one.

...First assignments are due next week, must monitor TAs, deal with over-anxious students, hoping for one-week turnaround, busy, busy.

Thursday, February 12

[after lengthy entry]...The worst for last. Miserable students, at least two-thirds of class are dissatisfied with the course, me as instructor, probably other courses, who knows what all. But the negativity (heckling in lecture, written comments in assignments, lack of respect by students who walk out of lecture, trying to test me on extensions for assignments, no pleases, no thank-yous--it's wearing me down.

One of the assignments which really resonated for me was a sloppily presented one-page complaint session, but it really captured what I'm up against. I'll itemize/summarize:

a)   he resents taking the course;
b)   he's left it till 4th year, hoping it would be removed or replaced;
c)   he doesn't agree with the lecture theory, there's always more than
       the "right" way to do things, especially because he's so creative;
BUT, he acknowledges
d)   it must be tough for the instructor with everyone watching for things
       to pick apart.

Unfortunately, he wrote all this instead of addressing the assignment and so got 3.5 out of 20 on that part, and only 53% overall, and he'll likely complain loudly about that. But consider the technical errors, no understanding of format requirements, about 15 spelling and punctuation errors, all kinds of informal/slang inclusions. He's a student who could use this course!

Later that day:

Well, after all that philosophical chit-chat, patty-wack this morning, another blow around 10:30--yes, AM! I'm now thinking I know why professors are rewarded by less teaching. Today that would be a reward for me. Today I'm of the opinion there are many, and I mean many, students I could not possibly satisfy, not even remotely. And furthermore, I question the merit of trying. How can we model mature attitudes and behaviours when we flinch from immature (at best), devious (even worse), and immoral (worst) behaviour of students?

First, I'm so rattled, so mad, so hurt, so amazed at a student (from another course) who scheduled an appointment to talk about her exam, but (not surprisingly) really wanted to complain about her program, her marks, her son, her son's school, the lack of government assistance for her son's disability, and a couple of other things which she has "fallen victim" to. Needless to say, there was no satisfying her about her exam results, and she made a point of saying she would have the last word on the student evaluations [of teaching]. I can't wait!

Then I walk across campus to my office to mark assignments. First thing are the comments of my heckler. What a joke! And he's another of the ones who evaluate me. I shudder! ... Small wonder families fall apart, schools are zoos, and brilliant profs prefer not to teach. Admittedly its a small percentage of students, but they wreak havoc. So much energy that could be positive and productive is wasted on such unbelievable behaviour. Many kids need tough love, and many students need tough teaching. Profs need to take back the classrooms and learning community. Those who don't behave like thinking, caring adults, should be made to wait till--till what--Dunno! Just don't know ---

Friday, February 13
Returned assignments. TAs spoke briefly in the lecture theatre about results. They were nervous. Mood of students was negative. The heckler comes down from his perch to discuss his and the discussion with his TA started there--calm but assertive, and in front of many others. I watched him out of the corner of my eye and moved quickly toward the TA to rescue him. I made the conversation a threesome for 30 seconds or so, then moved it away from TA. Rob seemed OK as he sat on the edge of the stage and talked, avoiding eye contact and only occasionally glancing from under his baseball cap. Of course he wasn't happy with his mark; of course he knew he didn't address the assignment; of course he had more important things to say; of course anyone could do it, but he has creativity...of course, of course.

This guy is so certain about everything, it's scary. We ended the conversation amicably enough, with Rob suggesting he had potential for an honours grade if he chose to address the requirements for the course. I agree, I really do. Then, why?

Thursday, February 26 (after Reading Week)
First week back. Lectures on Wednesday and Friday seemed well received. What am I missing? There must be something--a catch. Balance of semester is in order I think...

Saturday, March 7
(regarding plagiarism by another student in the course) ...I'm madder at Rob the heckler, who now has officially appealed his first portfolio mark and who also gave a delightful 3-minute "crap on the course" impromptu speech in the lecture theatre on Friday--when I wasn't there, not that that would make a difference. He's one who deserves a 1-F [as the plagiarist received] for his antics. For the life of me, I can't phantom what makes him who he isn't. Jack's [the plagiarist] immaturity I can understand. Rob is coloured ugly, deep, dark ugly.

Friday, March 13
Highs - Wednesday lecture went well. I'm always surprised to feel the intensity after every class--sometimes high, high; other times, sick, low, frustrated, scared, angry. But I'm always feeling tested and always sensing whether I passed or failed. I'd like to pass every class. Unrealistic? The lows kill me; I'd like not to feel the intensity of that pain and humiliation. On those days, less aware, numb maybe, would be preferable. I'm reminded of Nodding's Caring.

Lows - Rob piped up again today. I'm surprised he shows up, he's so negative about the course. I never know if or when he shows because he sits in the back row of the theatre, two storeys up--but I noticed he sat alone when I heard his sweet voice challenging me. I wished he'd slip from that lofty perch way up there in the rafters with all that chirping and feather-fluffing. (It's worth noting I had an appropriate response which shut him down on the first shot and gave students the impression I was prepared and knowledgeable (I hope) and that he was once again spouting off just to hear his own voice.)

Friday, April 3
This morning my heart breaks as I write. My nemesis Rob has delivered a horrible nightmare--public humiliation --in the form of an editorial article in the [student newspaper] that labels our TAs as incompetent, me as even worse, the course as moronic, etc., etc., etc. I learned about it from his TA who brought the paper into my office minutes before we were to go into a 6 PM lab to hear oral presentations, amazingly enough the one in which Rob was to present.

It was an agonizing evening for me. No one spoke of it, although I'm sure many had read the article. Rob avoided eye contact and did not speak to me, thank goodness. TAs were marginally supportive; maybe they didn't see or understand my need.

I lay awake most of the night, in cold sweats, wondering about facing today, next week, my teaching future. What support can I expect from administration? I'm debating going to them, not just to salvage me, but to salvage the course--someone's got to come in to teach it again; it would make the road less bumpy for that person. But my inclination is to let them make the move. The article suggests [administrator] agreed with Rob. I'm sure that's out of context, but whether he'll pursue it is doubtful. He's busy; it's probably only one of ten fires for him to fight; he's already dealt with a couple of complaints from these students and he's likely tired of it.

So what? Finish the semester, regroup and work on PhD over summer, start fresh in September. Voila, another beginning.

Good Friday, April 10
Good god, the week is over, Good god, the semester is over, and I think, Good god, I won't do this any longer. A recap of this week's events--Thursday evening, April 2 - Rob's article appeared in [student newspaper] on the same evening he is scheduled for his oral presentation which is worth 30% of his final grade. It was a brutal, horrifying, humiliating evening for me. Two weeks of late nights and intense days, listening to

175 orals and trying to keep TAs motivated and upbeat, so I wasn't at my tiptop, bounce-back self by any stretch.

But I made it through today's orals, another 2-7:30 PM session, then return equipment and compare evaluations with other markers and home by 9. [Husband] is patient throughout these weeks, throughout these months actually, and I haven't told him about Rob's article--for several reasons...

But for now students are gone. Now for the aftermath with administration.

* * *

During the semester in which this story takes place, I was instructing over 250 students in three courses. There were 175 students registered in Rob's class and 60 and 20 students in the other two. Two of the three courses had laboratory components which, for me, meant training and supervising a cadre of Teaching Assistants (TAs), designing teaching materials that connected lab activities to theoretical constructs from the lecture, and developing evaluation systems that ensured consistency across labs since all students are graded on one marking curve. While this was a three-credit, one-semester course, it was offered in both semesters, and while I was instructing it for the second time that academic year, I was continuing to organize content and develop materials based on just one semester of experience, with minimal guidance or feedback from faculty administration.

This experience occurred relatively early in my teaching career and consequently it presented a number of instructional firsts. In my previous courses, class sizes ranged from 15 to 70 students, and this class of 175 students represented a huge increase. The number of students demanded a large venue, and it was a first experience in a two-storey, three-section lecture theatre, complete with stage, drapes, and podium technology (Figure 5). It was my first experience with a compulsory course and this, I came to believe, had a major influence on the behaviour and attitudes of many students who, because they were forced to enrol, determined that on that basis alone, they would not benefit from it.

The story of Rob is presented as journal entries that have been cut-and-pasted to include only those excerpts relating to this one event. There were, however, factors not directly related to my experience with Rob that likely influenced my emotions and actions

during this period. For example, my journal entry of February 12 describes a meeting with a student from another course whose issues were complex. I left that meeting feeling that she had unloaded frustrations from her entire life on me just because I was there and I listened. I heard about her dissatisfaction not only with a mark in my course, but with other courses, her entire university experience, her poverty situation, her experiences as a single parent of a disabled child whose schooling she saw as deficient. What insights or hope could I offer in such circumstances? What could I say about a test score which I felt was only a surface symptom of much deeper pain? With what reason or logic might I have responded to her threat of a damning teaching evaluation? This is one example where my journal notes reflect an "overflow" of emotions from other events, the details of which have been omitted for the sake of isolating one experience and simplifying a complex story. There were others, and they must be acknowledged since they surely contributed to my understanding of this experience with Rob.
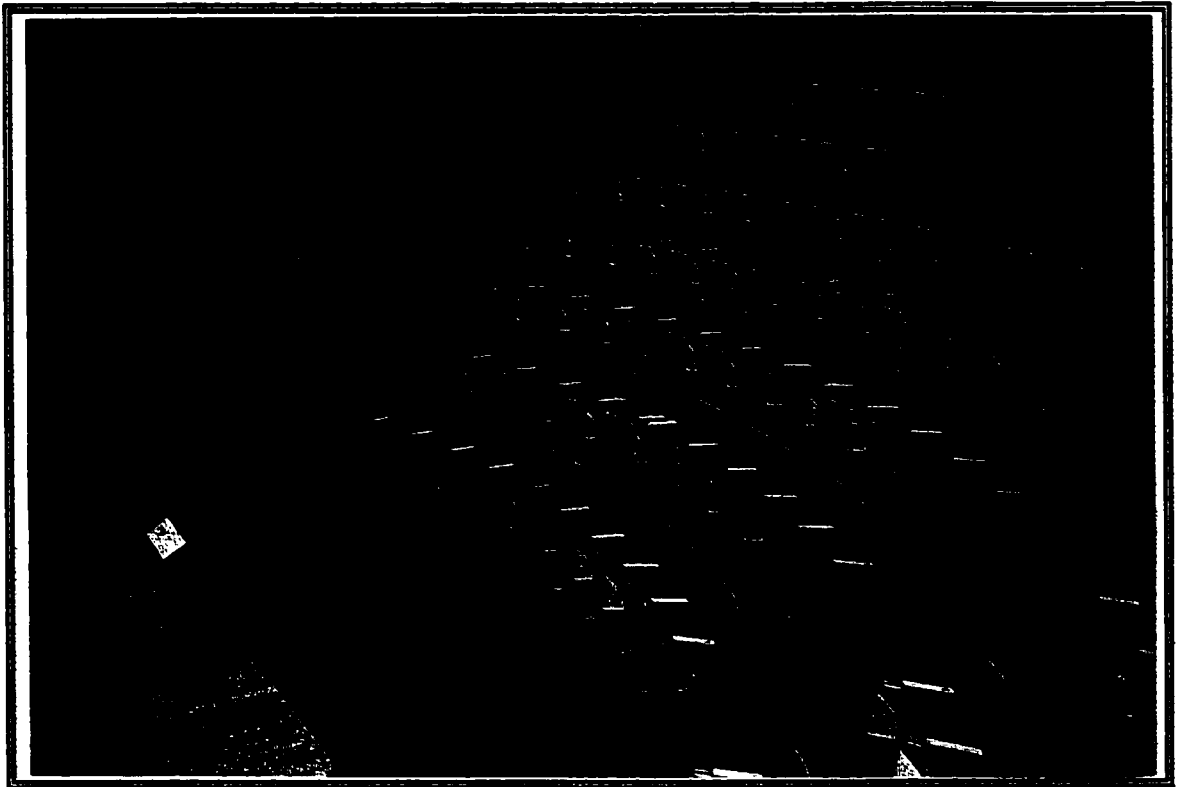
Figure 5: L-1 Translates "Large One". Photograph from the collection of Kay McFadyen (1999).

* * *

My experience with Rob is perhaps a mundane teaching story, but for me it was one that represented a chasm in the teaching landscape that was not marked on any of my roadmaps. I had not encountered educational theory nor personal experience--as a student or as an instructor--that prepared me for the devastation of this dark pit. It shook my faith in students, in administrators, and even in my new teaching landscape.

It was not just my faith in others that was rattled. Most surprisingly--and most significantly--it shook my faith in myself. It was an experience that rocked my confidence and blurred my long-range vision. It was a monumental disappointment that soured the sweet taste of earlier teaching successes and cast dangerous shadows on earlier philosophies of teaching practice. My gut reaction to Rob's behaviour did not support my belief in what Gainor-LaPierre (1998) terms shared authority in the classroom, and I questioned theories of empowerment which advocated encouraging students to develop their voice (Greene, 1994). Worse, because the numbing experience occurred so early in my teaching career, I seriously questioned my fit on this teaching landscape.

As the bitter taste dulled over the following weeks, I began to search for possible insights that would restore my faith in others and replenish my own self-esteem. I needed to understand this chaos and then move forward. I questioned my vision of self as what Noddings (1984) calls a caring instructor for there was no doubt that my feelings of caring about this student were not those she described, and this caused me great anxiety. I wondered about a wrong turn along the way.

When I checked back with Noddings, I was relieved to read that "conflict and guilt are the inescapable risks of caring" (1984, p. 18). She describes a number of situations in which those caring may feel overburdened. Our sense of falling short of doing what is warranted or bringing about outcomes we did not intend then give rise to feelings of disharmony. Noddings cites examples of situations where emotion is divided or uncertain or where several people for whom we care demand incompatible decisions. She also refers

to situations where someone for whom we care becomes singularly difficult, or where what someone wants is not what we think would be best for him or her, as cause for feelings of dissonance.

Certainly my experience with Rob fit several of these criteria. Being aggressively and unexpectedly challenged in the presence of 175 students threatened the sacred stories of reciprocal caring (Noddings, 1994). I *did* feel uncertain and confused: I *did* care for 174 other students who I felt deserved a learning environment free of the stress that one student had instigated; I *did* feel all students deserved a focused instructor and an organized lesson; and I *did* feel I had fallen short of that expectation. Rob *was* singularly difficult, and although he did not like it, we both knew he needed the course--for many reasons from my perspective, but if for no other, to satisfy requirements for his degree. Conflict and guilt were mild descriptors of the absolute frustration I felt--toward this student, toward the situation he created, as well as toward my response to it.

Noddings (1984), however, rejects universalizability in ethical caring because of its basic tenet of uniqueness in human encounters. She feels "it is impossible to actualize and leads us to substitute abstract problem solving and mere talk for genuine caring" (p. 18). Further, she observes that in order for one to care for another, both must contribute appropriately in ways that demonstrate a regard for the other's well-being. This made sense, but I wondered then about her contention that our ethical ideal of self as caring must guide us toward moral behaviour, and that the ideal is essential for there are no absolute principles or laws to guide us. Principles, she says, are often ambiguous, unstable, and often function to separate us, to devalue and treat another differently but an ethic of caring will not allow this to happen. "When we must use violence or strategies on the other, we are already diminished ethically" (Noddings, 1984, p. 5).

While I could not argue with Nodding's thinking, clearly my own ethical ideal of self as a caring instructor was in disarray as I acknowledged my emotions based on the principle of mutual caring and respect. Rob had violated this principle, but I had to

acknowledge that I felt dangerously close to "violence or strategies" (Noddings, 1984, p. 5), and I knew this countered my own sacred story of teaching. Tell me why, bird so high, so that this emotional turmoil can be a learning experience.

* * *

CHAPTER IV

WHO ARE THE LEARNERS?

He could not read; he did not write, either in a scribbler at his desk, or with chalk at the board. He sat always with his narrow, grey eyes distant, one arm over the back of his seat as he stared out through the school window at the prairie stretching from the school yard edge. He was bare-footed. In the rope that served him as a belt, he carried a leather-handled hunting knife. Sometimes, always with his strange eyes on the window, he would whittle - a piece of wolf willow, a length of Saskatoon, the lid of his desk.

from Who Has Seen the Wind
by W. O. Mitchell (1947)

CHAPTER IV
WHO ARE THE LEARNERS?

To Philomena, school was a chore. She dutifully learned to read and write, struggled with her sums. Pushed to the back of the room with the other foreign children, she was painfully aware that she was an outsider, branded by her tight braids, scuffed boots, dowdy clothes and lunches tied in a bit of flour sack.

from The Bootlegger's Bride
by Jock Carpenter (1993)

First Class, First Impressions:
Who are the Learners?

The university halls are deserted at 7:45 on a Monday morning in July, the first day of our intersession course. I step into the elevator, smile at the lone occupant, and turn to press the elevator button for my floor, but "6" is already pushed. The woman must be headed to my course. Is she the instructor or will she be a peer? I decide she must be a student; instructors would be there greeting early comers and checking papers on a first day. She seems my age--another "mature" student, stylish denim jumper with crisp white shirt, hair professionally coifed, conservative make up and accessories. I comment on the weather and she shyly responds. She is surely a student, and probably a new one to this university. The elevator stops and we step out, both scanning the room numbers to check our bearings. She is definitely as unfamiliar with the surroundings as I am. We exchange small talk as we make our way into the room and find vacant chairs around the table where approximately a dozen students are already seated.

The instructors are now easily identifiable. They are the ones at the head of the table, smiling over the stacks of papers in front of them. Around the table, nervous students smile at one another, chat about the foggy morning and crazy weather patterns. The early-morning, first-day tension quickly evaporates and a quiet buzz fills the room as classmates become acquainted. More filter in during the next minutes until eighteen faces are counted, and at 8 AM sharp, we begin.

The room takes on a first-day hush. The instructor is warm and friendly, quiet-spoken and smiling. She introduces her assistants and welcomes the students. She tells us a bit about her teaching history. Already I feel a warmth in the room.

The first activity will be to share personal stories as a way to introduce ourselves to the men and women who will be our confidants, our critics, and our teachers for the next three weeks of intensive study and writing. Tension returns as participants nervously scan the room. How safe is this environment, I wonder? What will these folks share? What will I share? Will I be an outsider? Who will start, the instructor asks. Silence. Seconds pass, then I hear my own voice. I do not know exactly what I will say, but I decide the risk of being first is less intimidating than the risk of being compared, and at this moment being first is best for me.

My elevator partner is next. She tells the group she is a seasoned teaching professional about to embark on new learning as she approaches an imminent retirement. She confesses her nervousness and wonders out loud about the rumoured energy attributed to mature women who initiate dramatic transitions in their life. Everyone laughs. The tension is sliding. I like this stranger from the elevator.

Others take their turn. Some seem eager and confident; others are more reticent. Many women are mothers of adult children who speak of that experience. Some are newer parents--one a new father of a three-month-premature infant son whose due date has not yet arrived! Some are from out-of-city and others from out-of-province, visiting Edmonton and either living in a university residence or staying with friends or relatives near the city. Some have their spouses staying with them, others are on sabbaticals from their families, distanced from their usual support.

A variety of career backgrounds are represented--medical, administration, social work, and others. Most, however, are teachers--some early in their careers, others exploring higher education as they near retirement and even "re-retirement" in a couple of cases. Some tell of experiences with special needs students, some of elementary and junior

high settings, still others of high school and post-secondary teaching. Many seem to have personal connections with our instructor; others have been enthusiastically referred; all are excited to be in the room.

One student is a Chinese immigrant, learning our language and culture while pursuing her educational credentials. Another spoke briefly of her immigrant spouse and the influence he had on her teaching perspectives. Others related professional experiences in foreign cultures where they were the outsiders--the ones having to learn and adapt. A husband-and-wife couple told how their "shared culture" had shaped their individual careers and family life as their three adult children moved away from home and they returned to university.

Some reluctantly squeezed out three or four hasty clips about themselves. Others apologized for sharing, and sharing, and sharing. Eighteen men and women, mid-twenties to mid-fifties, little-to-lots of so many kinds of experience--professional, family, cultural, teaching and learning.

Everyone had shared some kind of story, yet only the surface had been scratched. We knew little of the interests and aptitudes of these individuals. We knew nothing of their expectations for the course. We had little understanding of how we could individually contribute to both our own and each others' learning. How could one course address such diverse needs and expectations? How could one instructor touch so many unique minds?

As I looked at the faces around that table and speculated about the unfolding classroom dynamics, I contemplated my own university experiences. I knew that understanding students is a powerful part of teaching in these classrooms. I knew that what students brought to this room would somehow shape what we all took away. What were their expectations for this learning? How would this instructor uncover these expectations, then address and hopefully meet them? Would she know if she had? Who, exactly, were these learners and teachers of each other?

* * *

Instructional preparation seminars frequently address individual differences as they affect learning styles, and we try to consider ethnic differences as they affect classroom dynamics as well. Our goal, however, is often to work through such diversity among students to create some sort of community in these classrooms. Greene (1994) borrows from earlier works of Dewey as she refers to a sharing of experience through which we intermingle differences to create a new and broader environment. She writes:

> Today, with the recent emergence of what is called multiculturalism, with all the attendant demands and confusions and potentialities, we realize we have moved far beyond simplistic notions of melting pots and social balance wheels. We are challenged to come to terms with conceptions of difference and heterogeneity that go beyond what Dewey seems to have had in mind. We are asked to acknowledge contingency, meaning the dependence of perspective and point of view on lived situation, on location in the world. We are only beginning to realize the significance of perspectivism, of the rejection of objectivism, of fixed authorities, of standards residing in some higher realm—standards that apply to everyone and everything.... (Greene, 1994, p. 12)

First Class, First Impressions describes a classroom experience in which I participated as a student but in addition to being aware of my own space and responsibility in the class, I watched that of the instructors and other students as we began to work together. As Greene (1994) calls for pedagogic strategies that empower learners to develop networks as we seek understanding and develop voice, I watched for teaching strategies that empowered diverse students to reach our own diverse objectives, relationship building in the group, tests of trust, and looking beyond our own perspectives to build a learning community.

There were several indicators of these strategies. The physical set-up as we entered the room on that first morning provided a first one. Chairs were placed in a circular formation around a cluster of tables so that each student assumed a random but "equal" station next to others and we immediately began to talk.

The next indicator, immediately after, came as we introduced ourselves. Interestingly, even within this academic context, many of our stories focused on family and home. As we listened to others' stories of people, places, families, and careers, we forged

pathways or connectors between theirs and our own. These kinds of personal stories also demonstrate to instructors the importance of acknowledging the complex holistic person in our students (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Ginsburg & Clift, 1990; Kilsdonk, 1983), even as instructors focus on unique learning selves within a particular academic context.

There were many more mundane stories that came from this classroom community experience that touched me in profound ways. As we told our stories of family and home, we moved toward trusting connections and mutual learning. These links of personal understanding then provided a foundation upon which to explore the larger landscape of teaching and learning as professional colleagues from our multiple social and cultural perspectives. From this perspective, it became a story of "justice and caring and love and trust" (Greene, 1994, p. 25) among a group of diverse students who formed a learning community within those walls during three short weeks. It became an example of what Clandinin and Connelly (1996) call sacred stories of the teaching profession.

The connection between personal experiences and the broader world of education that occurred in this class supports Crites's belief that both sacred and mundane stories link peoples' inner lives as well as "orienting them to a common public world" (1971, p. 304). Stories become sacred because of their universal appeal to individuals and institutions, and my experience among these diverse learners who came together under the caring and watchful eye of an instructor who established a just, caring, and trustful context for learning and inspiration is one that is in harmony with this sacred story. It is also a story that gives new meaning to the collection of international flags that, in their contrasting beauty, complement each other to become a harmonious collage of colourful identities in our university halls (Figure 6).

Those first opportunities to share were pedagogic strategies to situate our unique selves as we bridged paths between difference and sameness with others in the room. They were a small but important first step in giving individuals the courage to find our own voice as we joined our individual stories to form the collage of difference that served to

become a unity in learning. It is a sacred story of "justice and caring and love and trust" (Greene, 1994, p. 25) that deserves taking apart and putting together in other ways.
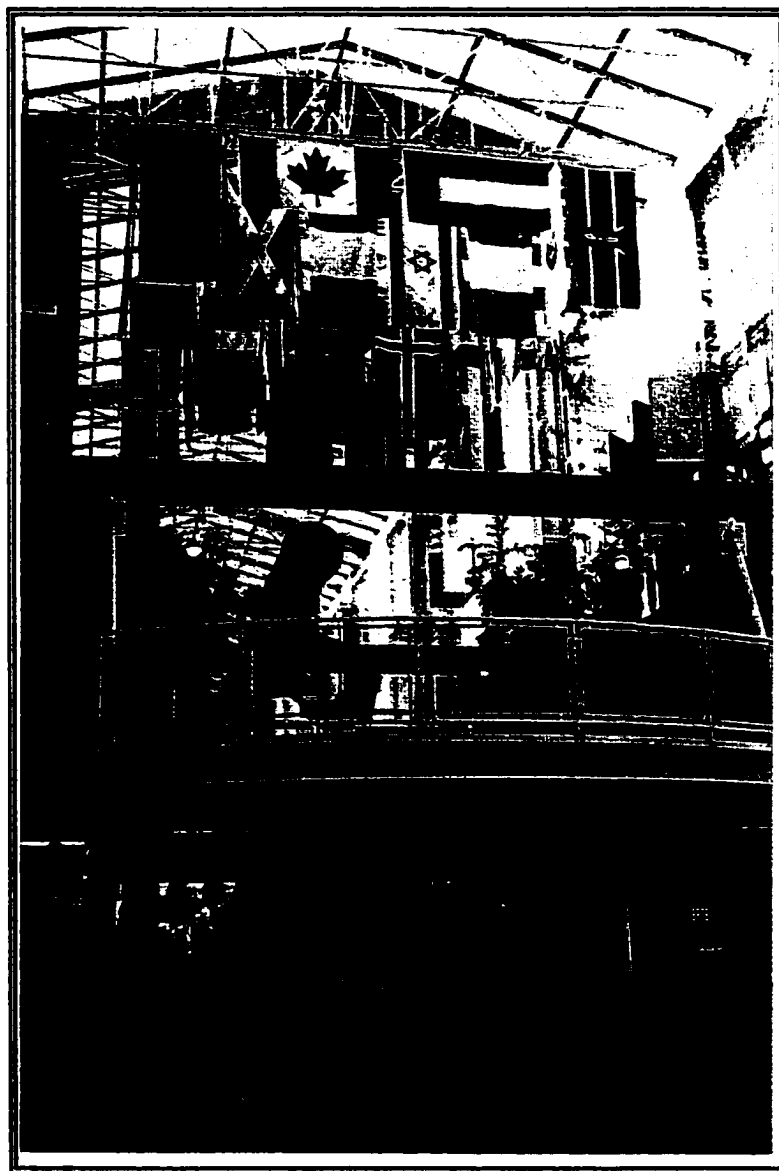
Figure 6: Our International Community. Photograph from the collection of Kay McFadyen (1999).

It is a story that I have attempted to emulate as a construct in my own teaching, with varying degrees of success, as I learn to teach.

WHO ARE THE LEARNERS?

"My dear Bellairs,- I love you very much; but if you ever come here again to inspect, I will lock the door of the school, and tell the boys to put you in the pond."

from Ch. XXXII, Letter-Writing,
Collections and Recollections,
by G. W. E. Russell (1903)

Letters and Lessons: Words as Windows

For a fiftieth birthday present, my daughter surprised me with a book--a bulging volume of raggedy-edged, thick greyish sheets unevenly spilling past the plain cardboard cover that strained to confine them and necessitating the brightly woven Mexican sash that became the final authority on keeping the sheets in place (Figure 7). I love books, especially ones with surprises, and this one held wondrous promise.

Intrigued as I was with its appearance, the real surprise, it turned out, was what was inside, for each of the wavy pages contained envelopes--folders of all sizes, shapes, colours, and patterns--each decorated with various artifacts from the layers of our lives. There were cut-outs of maps from our travels, dried flowers we had pressed, feathers we had collected, magazine pictures she had enjoyed, and stamps and postcards from our journeys near and far. But the best surprise was that within each of these magical envelopes, she had tucked a piece of correspondence from our twenty-two years.

She had saved notes that I had written from the Easter bunny and the tooth fairy, ones I had tucked into her lunch boxes in elementary school, ones to the teacher for missed classes in junior high, disciplinary ones for neglected chores and rebellious attitudes during her teens, ones of advice in her various jobs, and longing letters after she moved away to attend university in another city. There were telephone messages and chore lists, home-made and store-bought cards, scribbled notes that thanked or threatened, and amateur

efforts at verse, some silly and some sentimental. There were small fridge notes, folded

newspaper articles, and long, long letters. The odd note or letter from her older sister and

her dad enriched the collection by adding another dimension, sometimes completely

contradictory, to my own thoughts and ideas.
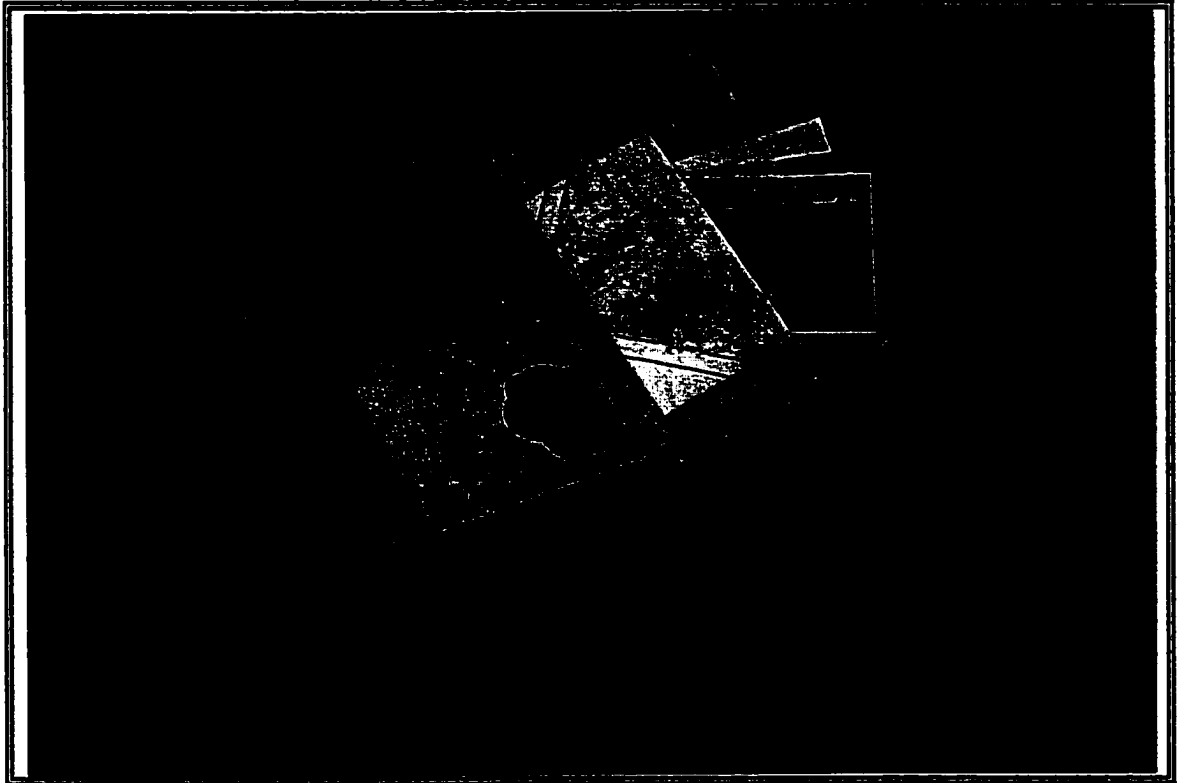
Figure 7: Surprise Diary. Photograph from the collection of Kay McFadyen (1999).

This diary of sorts surprised and amazed me. I was surprised that I had written so

much to her over the years, and I was amazed that she had saved so much of it, even in her

youngest years. I had unknowingly left a trail of love, hope, anger, frustration, joy, hurt,

healing, and growing--the evidence of our mother-daughter relationship throughout what

now seemed fleeting years of her infancy, youth, teens, and young adulthood, from within

our home, to across the country and around the globe, pasted there and secured with the

sturdy sash so that none could slip away.

Each memoir, needless to say, flooded me with emotion. As I considered the

words I had written and as I imagined the feelings beyond the words, I realized the power

of written correspondence to capture experiences, thoughts, values, priorities, goals, and aspirations of the correspondents. I became aware of the number of issues, both commonplace and unique, in our lives; I became aware of a changing nature of the issues over the years; and I became aware of changes in my perspective on particular issues as we both grew and changed.

As I thought more about the meaning and insights of these powerful conversations, articulated in print and now preserved as a hard-cover book, I began to wonder about the potential of student correspondence in understanding teaching and learning communities in our universities. I reflected on the notes, memos, cards, and letters, that I had received from students. I began to see these words as windows into the thinking of students and their responses to university life.

I searched my teaching collections and gathered a sample of correspondence I had received as an instructor. I share these samples as a way to understand students' university experiences. They were not part of student evaluations, but represent samples of unsolicited comments, and they arrived in both paper and electronic formats.

The samples suggest themes and issues which I expect are not unique to my teaching experience, but which may be starting points for further study, reflection, and dialogue. They are presented in no particular thematic order as none are intended to represent particular perspectives or attitudes. As well, they reflect individual motives, experiences, and outcomes of a diverse student population, and they invite readers to discover the complexity of student voices and to consider possible meanings.

Where I felt it was useful to frame an issue, describe a student, or illuminate the context for the message, I have included editorial cues that take the form of greetings, closings, and introductions. These inclusions are intended to provide background but are not part of the original text and so are marked with brackets and also excluded from quotation marks that identify verbatim material. Original text within quotation marks is unedited with respect to word choices, punctuation, or other technical aspects.

[To Teaching Supervisor:

You raise a good point regarding presenting both sides of an environmental issue. I agree that instructors must be perceived to be open-minded to issues which support and others which contradict. Further, I agree that Teaching Assistants are ethically responsible to encourage critical thinking and reflective questioning in students.]

"But with that said, I take great exception to your suggestion. My environmental beliefs are a part of me, and I don't in any way speak for the university. I am not their puppet. My graduate studies are supported almost entirely by [a particular corporate entity], but I still don't believe in [their philosophy], and I do not plan on pretending to be a friend of [this] sector for the next two years in order to justify the deeds of my financial supporters. I don't consider it very professional of you to ask us to disregard our beliefs when in a teaching atmosphere. These are university students perfectly capable of making up their own minds as to what they believe. Perhaps the university should be reminded that so long as we are not slandering a company (i.e. disparaging comments without support from scientific community, etc.) then we are doing nothing wrong. Is this not an institute of higher learning or do we cater to the requests/fears of industrial powers?

"I made it perfectly clear to my students that I was indeed biased, and that my opinion may not reflect the truth according to others... Perhaps if this is such a concern to you, you may have made a more astute judgement as to my character during the interview..."

[Biased and unabashed,
(Funded) Graduate Student & (Salaried) Teaching Assistant]

[To: Busy Professor
From: Much-Busier Student
Subject: Reference Letter]

"Thank you for the excellent reference letter. I really appreciate you taking the time out of your busy schedule to accommodate my needs. Certainly, I will talk to you later."

[Grateful but forgetful
4th Year Graduating Student]

[To (Unknowingly Honoured) Professor.]

"Thank you for reading Nurse Horror Tale. I appreciate the fact that you went out of your way to spend the time to read it and in addition gave a feedback letter. I apologize for the fact that I did not write you a thank you letter sooner...

"I liked that the story gave you some feeling, which was my intent. I also believe that people want to hide from the truth by denying events. It is hard for myself to deny what happened... Successful or not I will try to put things to rest.

"By going to University I am trying to build a bright future for myself. I do not know if this is possible as learning is difficult. It is probably worth the effort. I had a bright future before my accident, but am worried now. Again, thanks for being helpful."

[A survivor, by any standard
A learner, by every standard]

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"Dear Professor McFadyen,

"I am writing in regards to the portfolio assignment that is due in my laboratory session this afternoon. I will be unable to attend today due to circumstances beyond my control. Recently, I purchased a condominium and moved in one week ago. However, due to strict condominium bylaws against noise I have been unable to leave because my dog has a serious barking problem. If she is left alone she will continue to bark until someone returns home (sometimes for up to six hours straight). Unfortunately, I have tried almost everything at my disposal including behaviour books, conditioning, and the other standard methods used to correct this problem but have been unsuccessful so far. One month ago, under the advice of a veterinarian, I purchased a citronella collar which is known for its success in correcting barking problems in dogs. It is a collar consisting of a sensitive microphone and a canister containing citronella and when the dog barks the microphone detects the vibration and the canister releases a mist of citronella near the dog's nose (very humane). In most cases this proves to be a strong deterrent to the animal but it has not been successful in my situation. Then two weeks ago the dog began to receive anti-depression drugs at the advice of her veterinarian. These drugs have been known to correct various behavioural disorders in animals such as continuous barking (due to separation anxiety) but so far they have not been effective. This weekend I will be dropping my dog off at my parent's house in the hopes that we can come up with a non-surgical approach to correcting my dog's barking problem. Unfortunately, if she is left alone her barking will exceed the maximum daytime decibel level permitted and will lead to a large fine and the possibility of petition for her permanent removal as stated in the condominium bylaws.

"Enclosed is my completed assignment. I am sorry for any inconvenience this will cause you and would like to apologize for not being able to attend my scheduled lab. However, under the circumstances I cannot think of a different alternative (unfortunately the dog's dog-sitter works days and my friends are students with a full course load)."

[Absently,

Anxious Student]

"Kay,

"I wanted to thank you for all that you've done for me. I am thankful for having taken your course not only because of the material I learned, but also for having met you. The time you took to help me with my quest for employment is really appreciated. Although I didn't get my 'ideal' job, I did get my second choice, and I'm really looking forward to spending my summer in the field.

"Your kind reference letter and help with cover letters, resumes, and the interviewing process have not only gotten me a great job but have also helped me in getting my foot in the door with several potential future employers.

"Thanx again, and I hope you have a wonderful summer."

[Sincere,
Ready & Realistic Student]

[To: Old Fashioned Professor
From: Student in Mourning
Subject:]   "Thank you"

"I did not know that people still did sympathy cards. Wow! It blew me off my rocker. The fact that in the fast-paced life of university, people still find the time to care, shows me that I am surrounded by a bunch of wonderful people. Thanks a mil."

[Rockin'
First Year Student]

[To the Professor.]

"Personally I am offended of the mark I received, I misinterpreted the objective of the assignment. ...I am still somewhat confused when talking with people about environmental situations as all the knowledge I have attained in the past 4 years seems to all bubble up at once. I can not afford to attain a low mark in this class at this point in my university career. Please advise me whether it would be wiser for me to drop the course or hopefully work my way through it. I do understand that this course is a requirement that I must complete before my degree is finished. I do believe the information taught could be valuable if I didn't feel so horrible about the quality of my work that appears to have taken a tremendous dive suddenly.

"I also hope that you realize that this is in fact a requirement course and some of us were less than thrilled to take it. What I mean is that I do not have hours and hours to sweat over this course. I do pride myself in good work and have felt that up until now I have portrayed this fairly well. I hope that you understand my position and can direct me accordingly to my next step."

[To Stay or Not to Stay, or
Is That the Question?]

"Dear Ms. McFadyen:

"Thank you for another great course. [This course] contains very practical information and encourages the development of skills that are easily transported into the workplace. It was presented in the same thoughtful and student-centered manner as [previous course].

"The added value to both courses is your attention to detail and desire for excellence from the students that is provided in a very encouraging and supportive environment. I find that you challenge me to perform well, particularly in writing research papers.

[One comparing,
Two-Course Student]

"Dear Kay:

"Hi, how are you? I am pretty bad.

"Everything, e.g. lab reports, lab exams, h/w assignments, essays, etc. give me a BAD time... and the research, the draft of it, I don't think I can done it before the Easter holiday. Even my birthday is very close (in the holiday indeed, my holiday I mean, that is a Tuesday), I need to work on those things I had mentioned. I am pretty upset... Although I am going to be 18, I can't feel anything (positive) on it...

"~>_<~ Can you help me? Please tell me what can I do, or give me some direction... I really need help here...

"Thanks..."

[Lonely and struggling,
First Year Foreign Student]

"ps: from when I was a kid till now, I hate my birthday. I have no idea why that happens, but, it is getting worse and worse."

"Dear Kay,

"Thank-you for your letter on 6 May 1998 and your offer of assistance. I think that placing the emphasis on the students through the term project allowed me to use my creativity and get the most out of the course. Your genuine care for your students made it a pleasure to attend your class, even though it was at 8:00 in the morning!"

[Creative and courageous,
A.M. Challenged]

[Dear Suspicious Professor,

I do not understand your concern about the difference in my writing assignments. I have an explanation for the improvement from 20% to 75% in the last two assignments. Here it is, in my own words.]

"Reading week, or so call the 'ski week' gives university students lots of fun. Students in high schools and primary schools maybe very jealous, however, do they understand what we have undergood in the two weeks before we can enjoy a week of holiday?

"Assignments, projects, mid-terms. Most of the Professors would like to get these done before the holiday and the week before the reading week is even call the 'mid-term week'. As other victums (students), I was busy to death in that weeks. My assignment 2 was due on Thursday... how could I make it? Of course, mid-terms are more important than an assignment which is only worth 5% of mark. As a result, I planned not to hand this in. I studyed my [other course] like crazy on Wednesday night till Thursday morning. Around four o'clock, I done most of my [other]. I thought "there are still several hours before I need to leave home for school." Then, I switch on my computer, and started typing something while all in my mind was numbers. I did it for keep up my appearance, but not for marks.

"The hard time is passed somehow and I was sick in the whole reading week. (As every Chinese New Year). Yea! Letter to editor. It sounds better to me. One of the reason is because this is what I did sometimes in Hong Kong, also, I really have some opinion to express refers to that artical... I want that letter to get published. However, my English course marks told me, with my spelling and grammar errors, THIS IS NO WAY TO GET PUBLISHED.

"The Saturday before the assignment is due, I have a chance to see my tutor. As usual, she points out the careless mistakes I made in my writing. Also, she will teach me the grammar which I don't know. When I have some 'Chinese structure English', she will teach me how to write those in 'real English' as well. I like my tutor..."

[In any language,
P for Pressured]

"Professor McFadyen,

"Thank you so very much for all your care and support this year. It is so greatly appreciated! It is because of professors like you that students like me still have faith in the education system. Throughout the semester you have made me feel valued and special, and no other instructor has EVER done that for me! I can't put into words how you have made me feel.

"Your understanding of my situations has helped me all the way... allowing me to "hang in" there and complete my work. Acknowledging me as a student made me realize that people genuinely do care... especially at points where I had no hope.

"All is going OK now... and I hope that it continues.

"Thank you again for everything you've done. It really means alot. Six years of university, and you made it all worthwhile."

"Respectfully,"

[Student You've Named Nora]

[To the Professor,]

"This is an apology letter. Unfortunately I have not completed the term project due today. As you know I have been away for 2 weeks and that has taken its toll. As much as I know it is the students responsibility to catch up on class work, but I was hoping you could see your way to give me an extension...

"I would also like to thank you for that card. Olympic Trials went well for me. Although I did not make the team, it was fairly unrealistic [to think I would]. I did however equal personal best time and placed 13th in the country in my best event. As much as I am proud of these accomplishments, please do not share this with the class as I will feel like an idiot."

"Thank-you,"

[Apologetic World-Class Athlete]

"Date: 11 January, 1998

"To: kay.mcfadyen@ualberta.ca
"Subject: New Year Response

"Thank you for the formal congratulation. I may just take you up on your offer for a written recommendation in the near future. Your letter was quite a surprise and a coincidence since I had been recently discussing how poor teacher and student interaction seems within this university with many of my friends. You see, it seems many professors are not truly concerned with the academic advance and well-being of their students. I realize that the University in no way demands such an interaction but this impersonal approach was very disheartening to me in these last two years. If I ever receive the opportunity to be an educator I feel that the one aspect that will make me rise above the rest is that I really and truly enjoy it. I would want to see my students succeed and would do anything to help them accomplish their goals. In my opinion, this is the aspect that makes you one of the best educators I have ever had. Thank you once again for the letter.
                              "Sincerely, "
                              [New Ways in New Years]

These samples of correspondence highlight the diversity in students' lives and learning experiences. Some of the writing suggests personal values which influence thinking and behaviour. Some speaks to the physical and emotional struggles and dilemmas of students as they attempt to rise to personal challenges and negotiate identities. Some presents glimpses into the reciprocal effects of personal lives and academic study in both positive and negative ways. Some points to tensions between instructors and students that may impede mutual learning. Some illustrates the fear, loneliness, and isolation of young people who are removed from family and home, perhaps for the first time. Some shows us that students have visions of teaching and learning that sometimes do, and other times do not, match our own. All the pieces of writing offer the potential for unique interpretations and new possibilities.

To my daughter, thank you for bringing back so many memories. While many of the notes depicted a warm and loving dialogue of our changing lives, there were others I would have chosen to forget but which, in retrospect, provided many new wonderings.

Thank you also to my students for their cards and letters. I have learned so much from and about them. While many are positive and supportive, there are others which cause me to wince, and from these I also learn about you, and about myself. These are the lessons in letters as I try to see your words as windows to another view.

* * *

Crites (1975) speaks of stories as artful forms that both render and subtly shape our sense of social and private experience. He suggests stories present readings of another's world and that occasionally we may even test those worlds in relation to our own. Written correspondence offers a special kind of story, one that takes readers to the heart of an issue, often where other forms of text cannot. Fictional writers have often used correspondence in this way (for example, Alice Munro's (1994) *Open Secrets*, Margaret Atwood's (1996) *Alias Grace*, or Nick Bantock's (1992) *Sabine's Notebook: An Extraordinary Correspondence*).

My correspondence to my daughter, while not intended as art, perhaps became art when transformed into a medley of personal stories over many years. Likewise, letters and notes from university students assume an artful forum that tells educational stories. The work of a number of educational researchers supports Crites's (1975) theory that correspondence serves to enhance a sense of social and private experience where other forms of conversation might not.

Child (1985) tells us about counselling in a Saskatchewan high school through a collection of fictional correspondence from a guidance counsellor to his prospective replacement as he prepares to retire from this lifelong profession. Child creates an imaginative but enlightening story using irony, sarcasm, and humour to convey "a man's honesty and sensitivity to his job, but also [to] serve as a middle ground between time

present and time past" (Introduction). His *Wishbone Epistolary* colourfully captures the philosophy, economics, politics, and personalities in counselling over an extended period, yet humourously connects readers with a real person, with real successes and failures, and real values and insecurities that teachers share and that label all of us as human. The idea of personal letters allowed Child to tell a story of school counselling in a way that left readers not just knowing the thing and feeling the changes, but understanding the personalities that made it that way. He lured readers into a relationship between a retiring educational professional and his novice replacement, inviting us to participate in the interpretations and imagine other possibilities.

McPhee (1997) explores voices of high school students, also through a correspondence format to uncover insightful ideas and feelings. He explores the theory that students need to be heard by teachers and principals if educators are to understand what young people value in relationships with school authorities. While some of the messages are verbatim material from students, others are ideas he pulled together, "sometimes from two conversations with an individual; at other times from three or four conversations with a number of young people" (p. 119) to convey a complete message. All the messages are intended to support a concept that students "aren't really used to talking to adults [but because students] don't know how to respond... with a note there is less pressure, and it is something you can look back on" (p. 119). In using correspondence as narrative representation, McPhee successfully transformed students' words and expressions to a voice for those who are often voiceless in a high school learning community.

In their research on the "reflective milieu of written dialogue" (p. 71), educational researchers Knowles and Cole (1995) explore written correspondence as a method of extending boundaries in the thinking of novice educators to understand their roles as teachers, researchers, supervisors, and colleagues working through creative tension created by multiple and often conflicting demands of their professional practice. Through an

examination of their own correspondence as neophyte professors, they were challenged to discover how these conversations captured their joys, sadness, successes, and insecurities, and how this written voice reflected emerging professional identities. They began to see the potential of this non-traditional way of looking at how lives are created, changed, and sustained. They also began to wonder if how we think, plan, know, create, mediate, and resolve issues is perhaps *best* uncovered by examining letters as textual conversations in our social worlds.

Correspondence has been used by other educational researchers to explore particular phenomena. In her writing about finding voice as a beginning teacher, Bellamy (1997) addresses e-mail contact as a means to reflect in a communal sense with people from outside her immediate environment yet within education. "I was able to express myself without the inhibitions imposed by institutional etiquette and to receive responses which reassured, reinforced, challenged and enabled me to move my thinking forward..." (p. 116). The electronic connection, she suggests, also alleviates a sense of isolation within a broader community of educators and provides a "reflective fix" (p. 116) that helps her to learn to listen to the authority of our experience as a beginning teacher.

While correspondence offers educational research a narrative structure that illustrates or illuminates, Crites (1975) insists that narrative depends, not on its explanatory power, but on its "complete response to the life of experience... the immediacy with which narrative is able to render the concrete particularities of experience" (p. 26). In the samples of student correspondence that I share, many controversial issues are presented. One deals with an ethical dilemma where a neophyte philosophy conflicts with a sacred story regarding a teaching responsibility to instill critical thinking in our students. Several related to approaches to learning that may serve the competitive nature of post-secondary institutions, but at the expense of personal needs and expectations of students. Some address the isolation and loneliness of students struggling in new homes and in new communities and countries, and others question cultural understandings. While many of

the messages are clearly stated, other meanings are only implied and invite interpretation. Readers cannot resolve these issues; I have not shared them so that they might be explained. Considering the correspondence, however, does present glimpses of experience in the words and worlds of university students and invites readers to reflect and to speculate.

Crites (1975) describes narrative as being populated by "agents who move its action" that is not "mere behaviours or minds or motives or symptoms, but characters that are mysterious and whole, undivided, underway" (p. 16). Readers can identify these kinds of agents in the correspondence. There are graduate students struggling to make the transition to teaching, graduating students looking for jobs, students with medical conditions and emotional situations that confound their learning experiences, undergraduate students frustrated with competitive environments and others who thrive in them, lonely students removed from family and friends, students who excel in athletics and search for balance in their commitments, and students who seek a better world for the future. In this way, student correspondence "evokes for us the sense that we are encountering real persons" (Crites, 1975, p. 30). Further, each student voice conveys an image that often creates a tension, and these images also double as benchmarks against which others' experiences can be compared and new outcomes can be imagined.

Crites (1975) also suggests that narrative "aesthetically reproduces the temporal tensions of experience, a moving present tensed between and every moment embracing a memory of what has gone before and an activity projected, underway" (p. 26). Correspondence also assumes this narrative quality. Each sample of student correspondence—whether the central issue is economic, political, philosophical, ethical, professional, or personal—tells a story with a past, a present, and a future. While temporal dimensions may be explicitly stated as past beliefs, current encounters, or future behaviours, they occasionally are only implied. In such cases, readers' interpretations are critical as multiple meanings may be formed.

In considering correspondence not just as a narrative form but as a research form, Knowles and Cole (1995) point to its usefulness as a paper trail in making sense of the larger schemes of university life. Their own correspondence, they felt, served to illustrate processes that contributed to professional growth, raised awareness of critical issues, and served as a record of some of the elements of their thinking and development. In this way, correspondence serves as a reflective lens as researcher-instructors attempt to analyze and to improve our university teaching and, as we see from the samples, as students attempt to define and analyze their participation in these institutions.

The effects of paper trails, however, are not always positive in that they can uncover uncomfortable or unpleasant memories. This is especially true with correspondence since it can be hastily composed and quickly dispatched without the usual rigour of more traditional research writing. Knowles and Cole (1995) confirm this as they recall actions they considered transitory or unbecoming and mistakes they tried to blot out in their minds, but which endured with a sense of permanency as words on paper--the hard-copy evidence of frailties and mistakes along the way.

Some of the samples of student correspondence suggest this kind of discomfort. I can imagine the dissonance of the graduate student who condemns actions of a funding agency while accepting its financial support. I smile to think of the "Much-Busier Student" who remembered to ask a favour but forgot his own promise. I am amused to consider the irony of a story of his dog's distress from a student who was obviously equally anxious. I wonder if the student who felt "bubbled up" could see how she might benefit from "working [her] way through [a communication course] " if she really thought about her statement that somehow denied her problem. These samples suggest many potential pitfalls of permanently penning words to paper.

My own correspondence is no exception, and I am embarrassed to see hard-copy reminders of my own slips and blunders that my daughter had saved. I am reminded of one particular note, hastily scribbled on a now-fragile slip of faded newsprint, "Happy,

happy birthday! Enjoy yourself! Love mom & dad. PS: Please clean your room and the gold bath." While I might offer some weak rationalization about her previous record or the pending birthday party and my own busy schedule, I am horrified to confront the insensitivity of that message to a young child on a very special day.

All the notes, however, leave a trail. They tell stories; they centre on real people; and they unfold a kind of unified meaning as pieces in the complex web of roads on our unique roadmaps.

Whether it be fictional or actual, positive or negative, one-time or sequential, personal correspondence meets the three desires of narrative, "...the desire to tell stories; the desire for relationship; and the desire to think again, to reflect on actions taken and things thought..." (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995, p. 154). The stories may be about places and events but, most importantly, they are peopled by writers in a relationship. They may amuse or embarrass, they may explain or question, they connect a present with past and future. In all these ways, they serve as benchmarks upon which we compare our own experiences and consider possibilities for future actions.

Written correspondence offers much promise as a format for narrative research. From it, educators might access insights, ideas, and possibilities where voices of students call out, not submerged by what Knowles and Cole (1995) identify as the strength of other people or events, on issues commonly experienced yet infrequently discussed in public. In this way, correspondence provides a reflective basis for what Crites (1975) terms "genuine stories" (p. 25) that invite interpretation, lure new interpretations, and cannot be replaced or exhaustively explained by the interpretations. Most importantly perhaps, correspondence offers a way to tell stories and provides instructors with tools through which to examine intricate and complex patterns and exceptions on the teaching landscape.

* * *

Summary: Who Are the Students?

There are two narratives presented in this chapter that are intended to remind instructors about how little we know of our students and how valuable this information might be. *First Class, First Impressions* is the story of a graduate class experience in which justice, caring, love, and trust are presented as a cultural construct for effective teaching and learning. The story describes mundane classroom experiences that support the sacred story of respectful teaching and learning relationships, and it is presented as a model for rich and rewarding university classroom experiences.

Letters and Lessons presents a venue through which students answer the chapter question. Through correspondence, we share genuine stories that invite others to consider, explore, interpret, and share ideas. The stories are ones of experience, values, hopes, and frustrations. While some correspondence presents direct messages in its explicit wording, other messages may be hidden, but all invite our interpretations. Correspondence offers university instructors a valuable medium through which to understand who our students are and, perhaps, who they might become.

CHAPTER V

VOICES IN THE CLASSROOM

Paul shows me his collection
of immigration pamphlets
meant to attract settlers
to the West. "Notice," he says,
"the writers weren't allowed
to use the word *cold*."
Weather became *Invigorating*.
Healthful. Fresh.

Imagine! It would be like
being forbidden to say
wind in this place,
or *dust*, or *loneliness*.
What words are left?

from "What Words Are Left"
A Saving Grace by Lorna Crozier (1996)

CHAPTER V
VOICES IN THE CLASSROOM

> Ham was a nice enough boy. Immature--enthusiastic--brilliant. Mozart would have liked him, she thought; for the games they could have played. Shelley would have liked him for his pockets full of books. Whitman would have liked him for the walks they could have taken. Einstein would have adored him--what a pupil! All his answers were *yes* and *no*--and all his questions equally terse: *why?* he would say--and *what for?*
>
> Nothing more.
>
> *from Not Wanted on the Voyage*
> *by Timothy Findlay (1984)*

Voices of Student Diversity:
When the Younger Parent the Older

My story of Nora is one of amazing maturity in a young university student as she deals with adversity in the many parts of her complex life. I was instructing a medium-size class of 60 students in which Nora had enrolled two weeks late in the semester. When she came to have me sign the authorization, I recognized her name as a student in a previous course of over 175 students. While I had not made a personal connection with all of those students, I had remembered Nora because she turned in a final project several days late which had significantly jeopardized her otherwise excellent mark in the course. On that occasion, she had left a short note with her work, simply apologizing for a situation which forced her to return home to another city on the due date.

It was approximately mid-semester when Nora visited my office to "ask yet another favour," she said. Her family situation demanded that she return home to attend to an urgent matter and she was requesting an extension on an assignment. I knew little of her background, except that I could see she was fairly young, probably early 20s, and from a cultural minority group. Based on a classroom comment regarding patriarchal decision making in her family, I suspected hers was a traditional family in that culture.

She offered nothing further about the present circumstances, and I did not ask. We quickly agreed on an extension and as she turned to leave, she said very quietly, "I really appreciate that you seem to understand. It's my mother. She's on dialysis and is having a bad reaction."

She looked down, and I sensed the words were very difficult for her. I waited and she continued with clips of her family story. As I listened, the empathy welled. My own mother was in the hospital recovering from a severe stroke, and I could feel tears begin to blur my vision, for my own as much as her pain. I rose from my chair and walked toward her. When I reached my hand to touch her shoulder, she twined her arm around mine, and tears began, for both of us. She spoke of the stress in her life--stress of travelling back and forth to her home city, stress of keeping up in courses, stress of not knowing whether enrolment had been the right thing when her mother needed her, and stress of having to ask for favours.

The most poignant part of her story for me, however, related to her role within her family. I asked Nora if she was an only child or whether she shared responsibility for her mother with others. She had not mentioned her father to that point and did not now. But she said she had a brother who lived in another city even further away who came when he could. Actually, she added, he comes when it works for him, not necessarily when mom really needs help. Actually, she went on, it didn't really matter when he comes because he didn't help their mother with bathing and caring for herself anyway. Her voice quivered with an afterthought, "He won't even change her bedding when he does go home."

She stayed a while longer that afternoon, and it was a conversation that touched me in many ways. It forged a bond between the two of us that blossomed during the following months and made me wonder about other silences in Nora's life. I wondered too about silences in the lives of hundreds of other students I see each day. It made me wonder how these silences affect what students bring to university classrooms and how they make sense of what goes on here.

This story of Nora speaks to the diversity of students in university classrooms. It speaks to brave and responsible young students, often from great distances and even other countries and other cultures, who may be removed from social support systems. They deal not only with academic performance in new settings, but often with altered familial situations. Some are guardians of adult siblings, some have their own young families, and some, like Nora, parent their parents—all this while balancing academic study, frequent travel across great distances, and limited incomes that may necessitate employment or personal loans or both. This story reinforced the fact that learning and teaching roles are mutual and, just as parental roles can be, they are often completely reversed, and that this can be a natural order for life experiences. Certainly it was the order for me as I learned from this student.

<div align="center">* * *</div>

Many teaching issues are imbedded in this story. One of the most important, however, is knowing and understanding a university teaching audience and dealing with difference in our classrooms. Maxine Greene (1994b) uses a collection of literature to frame a basis for understanding pluralism in our teaching selves and in our classrooms to create what Dewey termed a sharing of experience. In it, she reflects,

> ...I want to suggest that teachers break out of the confinements of monologism, open themselves to pluralism, become aware of more possible ways of being and of attending to the world. (p. 21)

In her writing, Greene (1994b) uses literary works to demonstrate how various pathways or links between reader and character can be forged despite physical, historical, social, and emotional differences in understanding. Through connections with the context or an appreciation for the particular milieu in which the characters lived, another's reality of people, places, and events can be constructed. While my story of Nora is not fictional, it does demonstrate the importance of linking the understandings to which Greene refers.

Greene (1994) suggests that, for instructors, these connections between humans must include pedagogies that empower learners to develop networks or relationships as

they seek understandings and find voice. Further, she notes that just as no two readers experience the literary characters in exactly the same way, the landscape in which teaching activities take place can never be experienced in exactly the same way by two people, or indeed, twice in exactly the same way by any one person. She concludes that because of this unpredictability, as instructors we can only affirm our commitment to human rights as we create a spirit of welcoming and inclusion for all participants.

My thoughts came back to Nora many times in the weeks that followed our emotional exchange. I did not initiate contact with her after that day, somehow apprehensive of others' perceptions, and she too seemed sensitive to this possibility. At the end of the semester, however, she came to thank me for the course and for support regarding assignments, and it was a warm and genuine offering. Over the next semesters she maintained contact, and I was pleased to be able to provide several employment references for her. Infrequent and unexpected meetings on campus, although momentary, were always special occasions because of her warm reception, no matter where we were or who we were with.

I smile to remember Nora thanking me for the teaching when it was I who had learned so much from this student who was the age of my own daughters. From her, I learned to become more attentive to details which casually surface about the lives of my students. While I am wary about initiating discussions about their personal lives, I came to realize the importance of attending to information they share, knowing that our lives are often very different. Nora's situation reminded me that when assignment dates become an obstacle for students, family situations rank among the most valid of reasons for reconsideration. Nora's sharing served to connect us in another way: outside of the classroom I am reminded that no matter how different our backgrounds, we often share familial needs and demands that link us as humans.

Nora and I had forged a lasting trust from which we both benefited. Possibly it is the mutual caring in student-teacher relationships to which Noddings (1984) refers that

facilitated this connection. I suspect it may have been this caring that empowered Nora to find voice--the sense of time, words, and perception--to share a glimpse of her life with an instructor and hopefully to continue to seek the support we all need at particular times in our lives. Certainly I had benefited through a heightened awareness of cultural differences that overlapped with familial similarities that, in many ways, connect the lives of diverse individuals.

The most profound benefit, however, is the feeling of honour which this connection kindles within me--the feeling Greene describes as "justice and caring and love and trust" (1994, p. 25), the same feeling I later experienced as a student in *First Class*. As an instructor, however, this feeling was a teaching surprise that placed a mundane teaching incident into the realm of sacred story of caring relationships in my own teaching.

* * *

VOICES IN THE CLASSROOM

I typed four names. Damon Ira Chance. Denis Fitzsimmons. Rachel Gold. Shorty McAdoo. I sat and stared at these names for some minutes, then I typed a fifth, my own. Harry Vincent. (p. 5)

...

I end with a list of names as I began. Shorty McAdoo, unconscious... Wylie hanged... I said good-bye to Rachel... Chance had written me... I never did write to Rachel Gold... I never married... (pp. 324-325)

from The Englishman's Boy
by Guy Vanderhaeghe (1996)

Names, Numbers, and Stories:
Individual Voices in the Classroom

The sea of bodies that flood corridors and spill outdoors to carve paths where manicured lawns were intended are an awesome phenomenon to anyone privileged to walk on our university campus. I remember how the blur of faces on my first registration day was so amazing and so intimidating. How would I get to know anyone? How would others know me? I wondered if people went out of their way to connect, or maybe it just happened in this campus sea of people and activity. Maybe it wouldn't matter if I got to know anyone; after all, this was just a short stay in my life. I quickly scrapped that notion. Of course it was important to me. I wanted to be known, at least by a few people. I needed to connect.

That need to connect stayed with me throughout my undergraduate years and into my graduate programs. I learned that it took concerted efforts to make connections in a large impersonal institution where your ID number was often your password to information, to people, and to personal identity. I had appreciated professors who made attempts to remember and use students' names. I most certainly remembered theirs. But as an instructor, the sheer volume of students whose presence ebbed and flowed with the tide of semesters became a challenge I had not truly appreciated as a student.

My first class as a sessional instructor was with a group of 60 students, a large group compared to those from my secondary school training yet considered only a medium-size class by university standards. Suddenly there were more names to remember than three high-school classes. Compressed semesters of 13 weeks made the challenge more urgent. Sixty names for sixty unfamiliar faces that flowed through the semesters was a new experience for me. However, I knew how important it was for me to be a "real person" with a "real name", and I sincerely wanted to get to know my students on this basic personal level; I wanted to learn their names.

I set a personal goal of "five-a-day" until I remembered names for at least half the class. I repeated the names as often as possible and by mid-point I was pleased to be using all the names. That part of teaching my first course felt good. The next semester, however, I was teaching multiple classes and the number of students multiplied accordingly. My five-a-day wasn't enough. A journal entry captures my frustration:

> Names were a ball of confusion for eight weeks--I didn't seem to make progress and felt bad. Even in the small classes, I couldn't keep track. The number was overwhelming. But by the first of November, it clicked. I think I knew about 100 (of 175) in one group, all 20 in another, and 30 in the third. But it took WAY too long--even in the small classes. I must fix that. (Journal, December 15, 1997)

I developed a number of strategies, different ones for different class sizes and structures. I tried the mental image association game. I tried having students introduce themselves and hoped the clues would be memorable. I tried having them introduce each other. I tried having them use word games, or drawings, or stories as personal imprints. I tried all the methods my instructors had used, and more. Each met some degree of success, and there were many embarrassing moments when I confused or forgot names. Some classes seemed easier, but depending on the number of students, the physical layout of the classroom, the course, and probably a myriad of other factors of which I was unaware, there was no sure-fire way to remember them all. And so I decided that the key

to slow-but-sure measures of success meant the hard work of repetition and practice, coupled with resiliency when I goofed.

Without exception, however, knowing names made a difference. Not only did it give me a feeling of personal connection (and I later learned, power, for nothing surprised a student into thinking and responding more than using his or her name!). But addressing students by name meant so much more--to them as well as to me. For some, using their name meant respect as a student and as another human being:

> "very friendly professor--took a genuine interest in students, knew our names and was accommodating."
>
> (Comment from Student Rating of Instruction, Winter, 1997)

For some, it meant involvement with the material:

> "Thank you very much for the use of the book. It was useful in numerous areas. Thank you also for your encouraging letter. Rarely do professors even attempt to 'personalize' their courses by making the effort to learn a student's name or by encouraging participation. This is definitely the best class I have had, even at 8 AM!"
>
> (Personal correspondence from student, Spring, 1997)

For some, it provided a model of teaching:

> "I think everyone was pretty impressed with your knowing our names from the first class. I hope I'll be able to do that when I get out there teaching."
>
> (Conversation with Student, Winter, 1997)

For others, it simply presented an opportunity and opened a trust to talk. For example, I recall the day Pete dropped by with a question about assignments and ended up pouring out the story of how he had been fired from his three-year job, and how that incident had provoked arguments between his parents about whether the incident was 'life-threatening" or just a "minor casualty". As the story unfolded, it seemed Pete was an

eighteen-year-old trying to make sense, not just of his own dilemma, but of the confusion of his parents toward him, toward each other, and toward the issue.

I can still picture Michelle, one of many mature students, standing in my office speaking of her home-based business in one breath and, in the next, casually mentioning that her husband had left her and their four children after nearly twenty years of marriage. Matter-of-factly she added that she and the children were in a pyjama-party mode just now, but that the party would soon end as reality set in for the kids. It was her story, but it was me who was in shock as I listened and hurt so badly for her.

I recall the shock of a telephone conversation with Maxine, also a mother of four children, who apologized for "disturbing me", but she needed to let me know she would be missing the next few classes. Her thoughts were rational and ordered and her voice was calm as she told me her husband had physically abused her and she would have to take a week or so off to arrange treatment for him. She added that her parish priest was helping her to tell the children. I could not just listen this time; the telephone made that inappropriate. I struggled desperately for the right words to speak into the wire and plastic in my hand, knowing it was linked to a warm and probably trembling hand at the other end.

There were other stories--Nora's adult brother who couldn't change their sick mother's bed linen, Jessica's women's hockey adventures, Marvin's second break-up with his partner, Trevor's cruise with his parents during Reading Week, Andy's brother's cancer treatment, Anna's two-day employment interview, Melody's acceptance into a New York design school, Tasha's being locked out of her parents' home, Karen's disease-related hair loss, Andy's new baby girl--the list goes on. Some stories are jubilant, some are sad; some are hopeful, others register defeat; some are invited, others just happen. There are enough stories to script a soap opera series, but these are real people with real lives that they have a real need to share. These are conversations that make teaching

memorable for me, but I am not sure they would happen if students had to say their names before beginning.

* * *

In her research on teaching and learning in higher education, Cranton (1998) places the goals of higher education within three domains: (1) transmitting instrumental knowledge and technical skills; (2) facilitating communicative knowledge; and (3) fostering emancipatory learning. She relates the transference of knowledge and skills to the manipulation and control of our environment to meet human needs. Communicative knowledge, she says, relates to understanding each other. It is a non-scientific approach to increasing mutual understanding aimed toward enhanced social behaviour which meets our shared interests and needs. The third domain, emancipatory learning, she relates to self-reflective and self-determined learning gained through processes of critical questioning of ourselves and our social systems.

Cranton (1998) asserts that although it is natural to seek knowledge that supports our interest in controlling the environment in which we live and work, that knowing about teaching is rarely a form of instrumental knowledge. More important is the communicative knowledge that fosters emancipatory learning, and it is these goals, she suggests, that in turn affect opportunities for enhanced instrumental knowledge.

Zeichner and Liston (1996), in their exploration of crucial issues facing educators during times of remarkable change resulting from social controversies, political struggles, and changing cultural and demographic make-up, determine "what goes on inside schools is greatly influenced by what occurs outside of schools" (p. x). They feel it imperative, therefore, that discussions of educational issues include larger social contexts and conditions. In addition to an understanding of personal assumptions, attention to institutional and cultural contexts are central to what they termed a developmentalist perspective that focuses on reflection about students, their thinking and understandings, their cultural and linguistic backgrounds, their interests, and their approaches to learning.

These contemporary theories can be linked to Dewey's (1938) philosophy that effective educators possess an openmindedness to more than one perspective, a responsibility to consider long-term consequences of action, and a wholehearted approach to regular examination of personal assumptions and beliefs. Each of these educational theorists explore teaching practice framed within unique social contexts, and each support the necessity for holistic reflection that extends beyond instrumental knowledge and skills to include an examination of relational knowing and social behaviour.

Names, Numbers, Stories describes my approach to helping students find voice. It is what Cranton (1998) describes as an effort to enhance the communicative knowledge that supports mutual understandings of human connections and social systems. It is what Zeichner and Liston (1996) describe as a sensitive and respectful yet challenging discussion that examines educational practice within larger social contexts and conditions. The conversations in this narrative are those between students and instructors as we attempt to understand each other on personal, academic, and social levels. They are stories of individual experiences based on unique circumstances within a dynamic academic setting and complex work and family contexts. It is this understanding of voice which, for me, promotes an awareness of student thinking, interests, understandings, and cultural backgrounds. It is this understanding that offers the promise of enhanced learning in communicative and emancipatory domains which, in turn, supports the exchange of other forms of knowledge in university classrooms.

* * *

Summary: Voices in the Classroom

Two narratives in this section, *Voices of Student Diversity* and *Names, Numbers, Stories*, illustrate the importance of understanding how students and teachers are affected by cultural assumptions, social influences, and contextual dynamics that influence learning outcomes. They are stories of students and instructors finding voice to develop mutual understandings.

During one particular conversation with Nora, I knew the experience was somehow special--a rare and emotionally powerful experience--without really knowing why. But as I thought about it during the day and later that evening as I tried to attach words to the events in my journal reflections, I came to realize it may have been a serendipitous experience of voice or, in other words, a unplanned and unexpected moment of her filling a silence in her life story. And I began to feel so very fortunate to have been the one to hear her.

Knowing the right words--*Pete, Michelle, Maxine, Nora, Jessica, Marvin, Trevor, Andy, Anna, Melody, Tasha, Karen*, and *Andy*--has helped facilitate similar experiences of finding voice for other students. These words, I find, are difficult to learn as I cope with large numbers of students and limited opportunities to practice them. They are words, however, that are crucial to rewarding relationships and mutual learning in teaching practice. Names are the pillars for personal connections, the structural constructs that give form and shape to our stories on the teaching landscape. They are words that educators can use as qualitative constructs of teaching that must continually be aligned with quantitative demands necessitated by increasing numbers of students in our multicultural universities.

CHAPTER VI

FINDING MY TEACHING SELF

Sometimes voices in the night will call me back again
Back along the pathway of a troubled mind
When forests rise to block the light that keeps a traveller sane
I'll challenge them with flashes from a brighter time

from "I Think I Understand"
by Joni Mitchell (1998)

CHAPTER VI
FINDING MY TEACHING SELF

> A letter comes for me
> From my beloved Mother.
> I have no pen or ink
> With which to write her.
>
> *From "Song of Louis Riel"*
> *by Louis Riel (n.d.)*

Lonely Paths and Blind Turns:
Finding My Way to Teaching

<u>Good Friday, April 10</u>

...Back to the calendar to recall the events. Monday morning *[Administrator]* calls me in first thing, tells me how bad he feels, that he was misquoted *[in the student newspaper]* and is upset about it, that he and *[other Administrator]* hosted the student clubs at the acreage on Saturday and heard about it from students, dah, dah, dah, da, da ... He suggests we (I?) can't mark Rob's work because we will be accused of being biased after the article, but that the article is libellous, that the Student Code of Conduct should be a basis for action, that Rob should be asked to publish an apology, more dah, dah, dah, da, da. I feel some relief. There may be some support from administration after all.

But office staff are acting strange. The odd student asks and giggles about the article. Some support came at noon after one of the student oral presentations. She delivered a well-prepared and creative talk on "noise" in lecture theatres--all three types: physical, psychological, and cultural. She named names (mine anyway, then everyone knew the other). It was such an uplift for me. She was saying it, out loud, to all present. Hurrah! Tears nearly came to my eyes. The chatter after the class of course focused on Rob (and it was NOT supportive of him I might add). Even better, many were saying how the class had served them well.

So I get through Monday and then Tuesday. Then on Wednesday morning when I still haven't heard from *[Administrator]*, I e-mail him about marking Rob's assignment. Just before class time, I decide to go down to see him because he hasn't responded. I need some guidance--urgently-- since other students are getting their assignments back today. He's not there, so I decide, yes, return Rob's to him. I deliver it to the TA to return with the rest.

When Rob sees his mark, he expresses surprise to his TA that he "didn't get slammed" and even seems pleased with his 83% mark. A difficult spot for the TA in front of dozens of other students. Why should he need to deal with this?

So, OK [Administrator] is too jammed to get back to me. I'll live. And students were kind. TAs delivered a bundle of flowers and thanked me for untiring support when the course was getting such a bad rap. Applause was wonderful. Many students came up to express sympathy and kindness and support and shake my hand (Alice, Andy, Betty, Bob, Clarence, Candice). One student had a wrapped gift, a couple others I couldn't name shook hands and spoke briefly. It was quite moving. The TAs walked me back to the office and talk was light and lively, spring-and-beer stuff.

I worked all afternoon and my office was flooded with a steady stream of students turning in final assignments. Some didn't say much, but others talked--mostly about how I must feel and what a horrible article it was (David, Dolly, Elsie, Evan). Some from last semester drop by as well (Frank, Florence).

Around 6 PM as I'm cleaning up to drag myself home, [other Administrator] appears at the door. He comes in and sits down to talk. A nice gesture, I think. He says he feels bad about the article, and I tell him how hurt I feel. He says he's talked to a few other students to see if there's a "general malice" out there. I am surprised by this--he hasn't talked to me, but he has talked to students. What does this mean?

Anyways, we fumble through an awkward five minutes or so and [his Assistant] arrives with a message, so he gathers himself to leave. But before he does, he "encouragingly" tells me I should shrug it off; I need to develop a "thick skin."

I appreciate that he dropped by. He was in his overcoat and, judging from [Assistant's] comment, he had not been in the office all day and was now doing some late errands. So he tried to do the "right" thing. Why couldn't I feel better?

As I gathered my papers, got my coat and shut off the lights, the tears started. By the time I was through two buildings en route to my parking, I could hardly see through them. My heart was breaking and I wasn't sure why, but the pain was devastating.

Luckily [husband] wasn't home to see my red eyes and shaking body. I quickly showered, walked [dog], went to store for Easter treats for my [other] class, came home and made pancakes with whipped cream and strawberries for dinner. By 8:30 [husband] was home and I was calmed.

And able to think about the hurt. And it became so obvious. I had seen that the Faculty would not be taking any measures against Rob and, in fact, would likely have taken them against me should [other Administrator's] "investigation" turned out anything else. I also realized he does not know me, and doesn't realize I am not "thick-skinned", especially regarding students, and that it is unlikely I can become thick-skinned. Furthermore, it is NOT, I think, what this Faculty (or any other) needs; it is NOT what earned me teaching awards; it is NOT what I am about. I felt trivialized, marginalized, humbled by someone whose opinion likely represented most in the Faculty. And, like the hurtful comment of just one student, his one opinion mattered a great deal to me.

*Head aching, heart breaking, I fall into bed at 11, read a bit to dull my
brain, sleep 3-4 hours (the usual, since this incident), then bolt awake for
several hours.*

*Thursday morning, last day of classes--one at 8 AM, next at 10:30. I'm
ready for both. [Administrator] comes by to apologize for not getting back
to me regarding marking, cites too many meetings and then e-mail
problems. I nod, listen. No other comment about the Rob situation until I
ask directly. It seems nothing has, is, or will, happen. Obviously not a
priority.*

*Our talk moves to another multi-cultural project we had discussed months
ago. Would I be willing to work on it over the summer? I tell him my
research priority which he understands. We dart around topics, mostly my
fault as I am sad and mad, at me, at him, at this moment, for the absence of
support and action re Rob. He's talking about the summer project and
somehow the words "safe environment" come up, and I feel the tears
building. I'm not in control, words are coming fast-forward, he is not
understanding (who could?), I'm panicking, I say finally (I think) he can let
me know what work he needs and I'll get back to him. Finally he leaves,
pretty confused I'm sure.*

*I realize I've connected his cultural-SUPPORT project in the Faculty with
the Rob issue (for which I'm feeling NO SUPPORT) and probably some
other issues into one big "You need to SUPPORT me" conversation in my
head. And, of course, he thinks I've lost my marbles. Of course I'm too
emotional. Of course it hasn't occurred to him there is a connection--and
that for me that connection is "people -- needs, differences, strengths".
And, of course, I failed to get my point across. (Journal, April 10)*

* * *

Obviously I felt deeply about this teaching experience that shocked, shamed, then

saddened me. The length of the journal entry, poured out in one long sitting, speaks to my

pain and illustrates how it affected my confidence, my energy, and my understanding. It

was a traumatic episode early in my teaching career that reverberated beyond the classroom

to relationships with administration and support staff, other students, and family.

I expected there would be challenges from students and colleagues and that I would

experience feelings of insecurity and frustration as I learned to teach, but I had to admit that

until this point, my confidence had not been tested. I had invested a great deal in university

teaching and had met with successes that surprised and delighted me. I attributed these

successes to a realistic awareness and conscientious approach, combined with my teacher

training and expertise in the subject matter which I trusted would guide me through the

process. Nothing in my training, experience, or repertoire of knowledge, however, had prepared me for the pain of this student's challenge and its repercussions. The positive surprises, it seemed, had blinded me to the possibility of other kinds.

While the immediate shock lessened over the following days, a dull throb persisted as I puzzled over the events and I subconsciously labelled this throb as a personal failure. The research said, "People fail because they have plans and goals, and invest themselves in projects to attain their goals" (Payne, 1989, p. 4). I had worked so diligently to develop a distinctive and caring teaching style, but I had not envisioned nor prepared for this chaos. "If people did not do things, try to act upon their worlds, if they did not propose to actualize inner wishes and dreams, there could be no senses of inadequacy, misfortune, or error" (Payne, 1989, p. 4). At this point, the sacred story of self-actualizing professors was shaken; at this point, I felt very alone and inept on this landscape.

Payne (1989) suggests there are two routes to repairing our sense of failure. The first relates to compensation where we try to balance things or find another way to achieve the original goals or perhaps set and gain even higher goals. We may take a different route to our goals or repair the failure by simply starting over. Alternatively, we can compensate for failure by shifting our criteria for success.

When the goal is unobtainable, however, loss must be accepted and dealt with through a second route of consolation. Consolation occurs when there is a loss or hardship for which there is no real remedy and when some sort of comfort is accepted, usually as a substitute for what has been lost (Payne, 1989).

My immediate response to the event was one of irreparable loss. I could not see an immediate remedy to the situation and, furthermore, I was unable to shift my vision of university teaching to allow me to set other goals that might allow me to accept the incident or rationalize it in my teaching context. I had set a path for myself that I felt I could not adjust and still honour my teaching beliefs.

I then experienced a second-wave shock when faculty and staff who I had expected might console me in the face of irreparable loss, did not. Based on my previous business experience, I had expected colleagues to provide some form of compassion or commiseration for my perceived loss of dignity and credibility. Instead, it was business as usual. The Administrator did allude to an injustice, but he did not follow up as I expected he might. Other administrators also seemed casual. These people who I assumed were my support system did not speak to me in a voice that I could understand. In fact, I felt they did not even hear my call of distress or urgency.

I was surprised when the Administrator came to my office since this was not a usual practice, but when he did, I expected consolation, perhaps by placing the incident in a broader context, perhaps in the form of support from the Faculty. This too did not materialize and, again, I felt unheard.

I began to reflect on earlier situations when I might have expected administrative support. I recalled several occasions during the year when I had requested assistance and it had been offered, generously. When I had needed advice regarding a grading issue, several calls were made and a satisfactory recommendation was presented. Staff had been accommodating as I learned reporting procedures and administrative roles. It occurred to me that I was heard when I asked to be, but also that my requests were infrequent and related to more quickly "resolvable" tangible issues. I wondered if perhaps administrators had seen the episode in a different way. I tried to put myself in their place to see it from their perspective.

I had been the fourth instructor in the previous five years who taught this compulsory course. Originally it had been one of three that were compulsory in the faculty, but the other two recently had been discontinued. Student comments had been consistently negative despite different content and teaching approaches by the various instructors. Faculty, however, viewed the material as useful, as essential, and in fact had

determined the course should remain a requirement--and at a more senior level. This may have surprised and disappointed students even more.

What did administrators know of me or of my teaching? I had been recommended for the position by a senior faculty member who had been my advisor in my Master's program. I brought extensive business experience to a business communication course. My teaching experience in two other courses in the faculty had earned me several awards, two of which had been presented by this administration. It seemed, I expect, I would be an appropriate fit with this faculty and this course.

My thoughts turned to Rob, and I wondered what the administrators knew of him. At least one senior member would have known who he was; he had met with him to complain about the course (although not divulging he intended to publish an article). They may have known he was studying at a junior level, and they may have known his department, but I expected they likely knew little more than this. They would not know about the sarcasm in his written assignments, that he had formally appealed one assignment mark and verbally criticized others, and that he had bullied and embarrassed a Teaching Assistant during an impromptu presentation. I doubted they knew that he had been heckling me in the large two-storey lecture theatre for over ten weeks. His story in the student newspaper, I expect, would have been as surprising to them as it was to me.

Through this process of reflection and speculation, I came to appreciate that perhaps administrators did not see the episode from my perspective. They had likely seen it as merely an inappropriate, albeit embarrassing, venting of a student toward a compulsory course. They likely assumed that I would handle it and only needed administrative confirmation regarding appropriate action. They may have assumed their support was to be taken for granted.

From this perspective, administrators had not likely seen the outcome as an irreparable loss; perhaps they had not even seen it as a loss. It was merely a fact of

university teaching. Because they had not understood my sense of irreparable damage, they did not try to "lessen rather than vanquish" (Payne, 1989, p. 42) my sense of loss.

Schon (1991) suggests that through reflective turns, researchers can:

> ... observe, describe, and try to illuminate the things practitioners actually say and do, by exploring the understandings revealed by the patterns of spontaneous activity that make up their practice...[and that] in order to discover the sense in someone else's practice, they question their own. [Further] when they bring an explicit theoretical framework to their studies, they use it to guide observation, description, or analysis of what practitioners already know or how they already learn in the context of their own practice. (p. 5)

This kind of reflective turn helped me to frame a new understanding of what I initially experienced as failure by opening new ways of thinking about it.

I am reminded of Hirschhorn's words, "Competence grows not when the [practitioner] grasps more laws of behaviour, but when he or she has access to a wider and increasingly diverse set of models or stories" (1991, p. 124). Similarly, Schon (1991) describes repertoires of know-how as professionals develop. I began to wonder if administrators had perhaps seen this teaching issue from a broader experience than my own.

The development of such repertoires, Schon (1991) suggests, is related to reframing problems within a larger awareness. Seeing the responses of administrators in a broader perspective that included Payne's (1989) theoretical backdrop served to enrich my own repertoire of professional skills as I come to new understandings of relationships with administrators in my teaching landscape. I had come to understand administrative support, not as expressions of compensation or consolation, but through indications of respectful autonomy as I found my way on this new landscape.

Summary: Finding My Teaching Self

This narrative describes administrative response to a teaching incident that I experienced as exhausting and unnerving. The analysis describes a reframing of that personal experience against a backdrop of failure response theory that included

compensation and consolation approaches as alternative ways to understand the issues. A further reflective turn, however, allowed me to understand the responses of administrators as expressions of support in a new and different professional landscape.

This analysis may prompt educators to examine other personal experiences to come to understandings of ourselves and our environments. We must also seek--watch, listen, read, view, live within cultures and subcultures--that inform our practical theories in order that we might test and alter our beliefs and behaviours. This awareness or alertness to both internal understandings and external knowledge can then be used to broaden our perspectives, our repertoires of professional skills, as we confirm certain beliefs, reject others, and modify our practice as we attempt to improve.

CHAPTER VII

PATHS TO TEACHING

I imagine that there are among you university teachers who are familiar with the dispiriting work of teaching university students basic things that they should have learned before they appeared in your classes, to say nothing of teaching them what logical argument is, and the necessity to express considered opinions in concise and literate prose. But you are too often faced with young men and women who have no experience of intellectual rigor, and no conception of the root of all education, which is the thirst for knowledge which can only be slaked through self-education.

from Happy Alchemy
by Robertson Davies (1997)

CHAPTER VII
PATHS TO TEACHING

> Today, for the first time,
> you drew me:
> purple, curly hair,
> straight red limbs,
> ...the matchsticked legs and arms
> leave a torso quite invisible;
> you have seen me as
> I really am.
>
> from "Child's Drawing with Crayon"
> by Janis Rapoport (n.d.)

Learning Styles as Signs:
A Mother-Daughter Classroom Experience

It was a wonderfully warm late August evening. My daughter and I were walking our wheaten terrier through the ravine, excitedly comparing thoughts about the approaching university year, her first and my second in our undergraduate programs. We were chatting about courses, timetables, and a myriad of other details. Then the tone changed as we stared at each other in disbelief. We were both registered in a six-credit, full-year, 300-level, English course. It must be a coincidence. No, the course was not a comparative literature course; no, it was not a Shakespeare or American literature course; no, it was not feminist writing, or creative writing, or poetry, or any of the other types that interested us. Yes, it was a Canadian literature course. Our exuberance quieted as we wondered; how many of these courses could there be?

"This wouldn't be a Tuesday-Thursday afternoon course, Tory Building?" she asked, dread creeping into her voice. "Gosh, I think it is," I chirped brightly, trying to calm her anxiety. "Oh my god, say no," she begged, always honest in her feelings with her mom. Then we were quiet as we both realized that words could not untangle the mixed-up emotions. Of course she was proud of her mom becoming a university student;

of course she thought this would be a great course; but still, who needed a parent in their classroom (as a fellow student no less)?

I immediately understood my daughter's feelings. This was her time and her social space as she began university. I understood that my presence could complicate that. I began to feel a little uncertain myself. How would the competition that had surprised me a year ago, and which she had yet to experience, affect our relationship? Both of us were motivated learners, but neither of us was competitive, so much so that we ridiculed it as a weakness in others. Surely this was a case of imaginations gone wild.

We decided there must be some misunderstanding, that with all the English courses available, it would be highly unlikely we could be registered in the same one. We continued to walk for awhile, but the enthusiastic chatter had slowed and we tried to move the conversation to other things. Finally we turned toward home, the talk darting between various topics as we both tried to hush the uncertainties. As we approached the doorstep, she blurted, "I'll run up and check my registration, and you do the same." "Sure thing," I agreed, by this time really wondering about the possibilities.

Needless to say, our timetables showed the same course section at the same time. Few words were spoken as we took this shocking information away, afraid to say something which might hurt the other. Days passed until the first class. By then, my curiosity was piqued, and not just about the course, but more about our relationship in what could be an impersonal and competitive environment.

The class was medium size with approximately 50 students. The instructor was affable, calm and organized, obviously with a passion for literature and an assurance about teaching. The class looked interesting from both content and pedagogical perspectives.

For my daughter and I, the first issue was situating ourselves in the room. Thankfully, that decision was an easy one since the younger students claimed the back seats and the left side of the room while a dozen or so "mature" learners clustered on the right side toward the front. For several weeks, my daughter and I avoided contact in the

classroom and made only guarded and cursory comments during class discussions. We seemed to have an implicit understanding that to speak presented untold risks, different for each of us, but somehow threatening on so many levels.

But in the safety of our home we did discuss the class, with her father making jokes about the "kids" skipping classes, or about the "ole folks" asking embarrassing questions. Gradually the tension lightened as she began to see the humour in the situation and feel less self-conscious by having her mother as a classmate. I too lightened up and was relieved to finally have license to speak up in class, albeit very cautiously.

Conversations began to unfold at home, particularly on Tuesday and Thursday evenings after the lectures, and later almost daily as we worked on papers and readings. We mimicked Haliburton's stereotypes and ridiculed Grove's chauvinism; we sneered at Suzanna Moodie's naiveté and feigned Leonard Cohen's sexuality. We debated the autobiographical in Atwood's fiction, place in Kroetsch's poetry, and charity in Kogawa's chronicles. We learned that our understandings were often similar at the deepest levels, but that they manifested themselves very differently in conversations and writing. Seemingly insignificant detail to one was central to the other. Seemingly common words took on multiple meanings, descriptions of context conjured different images, and emotional responses to perceptions of sensuality and sensitivity surfaced as we passed vegetables and bread at the dinner table. Of course, my husband and other daughter joined in the banter and, as a result, their inquisitions gave us even more ideas and wonderings.

Exam time was especially revealing with respect to our different understandings. We felt our collaboration on papers had been productive with her sparkly creativity and insights and my bent for detail and technical mechanics. We agreed to share our class notes and study summaries which then led to discussions and practice essay responses. I was flabbergasted after reading approximately a dozen pages of her notes to see that I did not recall much of anything that she had written in her own artistic shorthand, complete with cartoons, speech bubbles, coloured flowers and banners, and happy or sad faces in

the margin. She was equally amazed to recognize so little familiar in my plain outlines with the wide margins. We even checked dates to be really sure we were looking at the same lessons.

Two women, both of whom spoke, wrote, and understood English, both of whom had similar cultural backgrounds, both of whom had been sitting in the same class, with the same professor, studying the same material, had focused on entirely different material from the lectures and student conversations! By this time in the course (and in our lives), however, we had built a deep appreciation for the other's abilities, and so we enthusiastically talked even more about how we felt about the literature and what we were left wondering. We also wondered, of course, about the exam, about what the professor felt was important in the literature. Had one of us read him more accurately?

It seems not, for the exam covered material from both of our notebooks. Our collaboration had paid off for both of us--on the university's competitive judging scale, but more importantly, on levels of intellectual understanding, mutual appreciation for diversity, and especially (for me) a unique opportunity for mother-daughter bonding. We had learned some amazing things--about Canadian literature, about different learning styles, about relationships--and about how each of those things influences the other.

* * *

This is a story about caring. It touches on that experience between professors and students as well as between students. This particular experience, however, extends to a most unique and special type of caring that reached beyond classroom walls and university boundaries. It tells about an immeasurable and unnameable caring between a mother and her daughter as we negotiate unfamiliar territory, not as parent-child, but as fellow travellers, in this university classroom.

These feelings first surface when we discover we are enrolled in the same course and, rather than spontaneously express our immediate inner emotions, we deliberately withhold these feelings for fear of offending the other. The caring is manifested when I

internalize that the university setting is the rightful privilege of my 18-year old daughter, and that her freedom to enjoy this privilege supersedes that of her mother who has had many other opportunities, and further that I will relinquish my voice to allow hers to flourish.

> Noddings (1984) aptly describes this caring:

> when I care...there is more than feeling; there is also a motivational shift. My motive energy flows toward the other and perhaps, although not necessarily, towards his ends. I do not relinquish myself; I cannot excuse myself for what I do. But I allow my motive energy to be shared; I put it at the service of the other. It is clear that my vulnerability is potentially increased when I care, for I can be hurt through the other as well as through myself. But my strength and hope are also increased, for if I am weakened, this other, which is part of me, may remain strong and insistent. (p. 33)

This is the caring of which instructors speak and write and, in fact, is the kind that Noddings (1984) ascribes to caring instructors. Indeed, it may be the sort of caring implied in sacred stories of university teaching. However, I believe it holds another qualitative level for intimate relationships such as those among family members that cannot be truly and wholly applied to other contexts, even teaching contexts.

Voicing this belief stirs a dissonance within me. If I aspire to be among those deemed to be caring instructors, I wonder about the shifting frameworks for my caring. I question whether the freedom to alter the parameters of caring in one direction opens possibilities for altering them in other ways, in other directions, for other reasons. Furthermore, if this caring can be manipulated to fit select circumstances, is it really the caring to which I aspire as an instructor? Is it the fidelity that Noddings (1986) suggests has "the quality of relations at its heart [and] may be applied to issues in teaching..." (p. 498). This story of shifting paradigms of caring presents unresolved issues as I attempt to understand and improve my teaching.

The second issue presented in *Learning Styles as Signs* deals with learning styles. The narrative speaks to Ramsden's (1992) theory of teaching as changing understandings which he suggests relate not just to teacher qualities or methods as something done to the student, but which embrace the learner as a critical determinant of learning outcomes. This

view of teaching demands two things: first, that instructors know our learners in order to effect the change in understandings and, second, that we appreciate that the effects of our teaching are often not what we expect.

Ramsden's (1992) perspective of learning as changed understandings involves not simply a connection between instructor and students, or between content and experiences, but includes how material is actively processed by students. In discussing learning in university classrooms, Ramsden states that different approaches to learning affect understandings or outcomes. He believes that what students learn is closely associated with how they go about learning it, regardless of subject area, regardless of grade outcomes or other evaluations, and regardless of the type of measurement strategy to determine these outcomes.

This story of mother-daughter learning suggests that, despite a number of similarities between learners, our strategies for learning differed significantly. While we both held a strong interest in the material and both felt note taking was important to learning the material, the type and quantity of information we selected to record was remarkably different. What one felt was important, the other often regarded as trivial, sometimes not bothering even to note it. What one felt was intuitive, the other felt required reminders or explanation. One sketched artistic collages to creatively record, remind, and question; the other wrote structured outlines.

As well, based on individual goals, understandings of our own learning styles, and expectations for the evaluation outcomes, each of us employed different strategies for our learning. Through collaboration in the form of lively dinner discussions and family teasing, sharing notes and writing, discussing understandings and perceptions relative to classroom activities, and preparation for the ultimate measure of our learning, the final examination, we were able to pool our individual understandings for an even greater and more rewarding understanding.

Variations in our approaches to learning in this course and within this classroom support the notion that learning outcomes for individual students are greatly affected by what Crites (1971) terms the temporal dimension of experience or, in other words, how we approached life stories from past, present, and future. While I had not formally studied literature since the mid-60s, my daughter had recently graduated from an accelerated high school program the year before. While the focus of my much-earlier schooling had been in technical writing and dealt mostly with British and American literature, hers had focused on creative interpretation of a wider genre of material. By relating Canadian content to how each of us perceived the broader world of literature, and by connecting this material to our personal interests and concerns for evaluation outcomes, we arrived at different understandings. However, by acknowledging these differences and sharing these understandings, we both enhanced our overall learning.

Despite similarities in interest, motivation, and classroom practices, learning styles may also have been influenced by differences in expectations and needs related to social roles. I suspect we both approached the course with similar goals that balanced personal learning and academic evaluation. However, in terms of relational goals, I suspected that hers were more complex and included not only those between the two of us, but also those between her and other students. Mine, on the other hand, were not influenced so much by other students, but focused largely on how the two of us quietly negotiated our relationship with the material and with each other.

Learning styles, however, are affected by more than goals, processing strategies, temporal dimensions of experience, and attitudes and needs of learners. Ramsden (1992) suggests that students' learning approaches are also related to how much satisfaction they experience in their learning, and further that deeper approaches or higher order learning, in addition to being more enjoyable, is related to higher quality outcomes and better grades. While a single narrative of an individual experience may not in itself reveal truths in such theory, certainly the qualitative and quantitative results for both my daughter and I support

Ramsden's contention. Discussions of Canadian literature and Canadian writers became a dinner ritual during the two semesters of the course, and these topics continue to excite us eight years later. We also became keenly aware of the insights and abilities of diverse classroom participants and, for me, this awareness was sharpened by knowing that we *would* discuss it. Finally, seeing our grades at the semester's end was cause for one more celebration in a series of many in that course.

A third theme of *Learning Styles as Signs* relates once again to student diversity. Writing this story reminded me of my own uniqueness as an undergraduate student that proved a discovery of sorts, not because it was a novel idea for others, but because it came to me as a sort of revelation or surprise since I had always considered myself a mainstream participant, part of the majority, average and ordinary. It was others, I often felt, who may be different. In this classroom, however, there were obvious distinctions and I became keenly aware of my being "other". I was "mature", sitting up front with other "different" students just like me, with none of "them" among us.

Cranton (1998) acknowledges the presence of mature students as a major contributor to changing landscapes in Canadian universities. She says older people become more similar to each other, but different than other age cohorts, in that they confront more of society's dilemmas. Yet mature students are also more different, from each other and from other age groups, based on specialized circumstances, abilities, and experiences. Certainly the student conversations in this classroom would support her observation. Because the older students could be counted on for an opinion, the class often deferred to us to initiate questions or begin discussions, and it was a role most of us accepted readily.

In retrospect, the instructor respectfully acknowledged these differences through both actions and inactions. He made no attempt to alter the student-selected seating arrangement, yet he minimized the effect of our "segregation" by facilitating discussions which avoided a "we/they" approach. I recall summaries in which he pointed out

similarities and differences in thinking among various students, with no names mentioned, and I remember the quiet satisfaction when hers and mine happened to agree (and my amusement when they did not, for dinner would surely be interesting that evening).

This story further demonstrates that, although he was not likely aware, his teaching effected what Ramsden (1992) calls surprising results. They included learning outcomes related to Canadian literature, but also related to how each of us experienced learning in our life. It is a story that introduces new connotations to caring, new insights about the importance of learning styles, and new dimensions to our understanding of diversity in university classrooms.

* * *

PATHS TO TEACHING

Sabine/ I was clinging to logic like a life buoy. Now, in the flick of an eye, I'm trying to follow intuition. I see a reflection of a samurai in the glass of a painting and I come to Japan--reason is discarded & I'm going where the voices of the moment seem to send me. I'm the barbarian stalking the temples of Kyoto for long-departed wisdom; I wallow in the aesthetics hoping that they will purify the beholder... Love Griffin

from Sabine's Notebook
by Nick Bantock (1992)

Reading Beyond the Signs: First Lessons About Teaching

Tonight I feel rather confused--at first angry, then guilty, but now inspired to write; perhaps that will settle the confusion. I squeezed a Learning to Teach seminar into an already-jammed day of teaching, developing questions for a final exam, preparing for and then meeting with the six Teaching Assistants, marking papers, and dealing with a near-steady stream of students at my office.

The seminar was for graduate student instructors as we begin to teach. While I had some experience under my belt and had learned a great deal, I knew there was a great deal more to learn and I felt there must be easier ways--shortcuts, pat answers--about issues I struggled with. How is content established, and how do you know if you've got it right? Where do you begin in the jungle of textbooks and publishers? Are there faster ways to review books and select readings? How do you develop then improve assignments? Are there procedures for handling difficult students and awkward classroom situations? Where do we go when we don't know?

So I left a long "to do" list on my desk and set out to get some answers. The room was filling with an interesting mixture of approximately 30 to 40 people. Some looked like high-school seniors; others like their parents. Torn jeans and jackets sat next to fine flannel suits, and tattered backpacks lined up beside pert briefcases beneath the chairs.

I took a seat in the middle section next to a 30ish woman, and as we introduced ourselves, the instructor began. Our smiling grey-haired instructor started with a biography on his first overhead that indicated 34 years of university teaching. Impressive, I thought, and we poised our pens for indelible solutions from this voice of experience.

One hour later I had not written one word, and neither had my neighbour. Our expert was wrapping up and we glanced at each other, a little perplexed, and perhaps disappointed. The presentation had focused on rudimentary aspects of carefully prepared lectures, clear voices, legible overheads, good textbooks, established office hours, and welcoming students--the kinds of things I felt would be largely intuitive or at least learned in a first classroom experience.

I wondered first about the instructor. How long had it been since he taught? (He said he had been retired for the past three years and was a senior administrator before that.) What type of classes and students had he taught with his legible overheads and clear voice? (He said he had been a science professor.) How many students were in his classrooms? (Had he ever welcomed 175 students in his office during the course of a semester?) How did he know what comprised a "good" textbook, and how did he go about finding it? Those were some of my questions, and his common-sense suggestions did not illuminate the real world I knew.

But I also wondered about the rest of the participants in the seminar. Why had they come? What was their experience? Had this presentation been practical or motivational for them? Was I different somehow?

Finally, it was time for discussion, and I expected I would learn more about both the instructor and the participants. Questions began slowly, with just two timid hands gently extending from bent elbows on the desks. The first was from a young fellow, middle 20s probably, who wondered "how the heck" to deflect students who pried and pressed for answers to questions which were assigned to them, until finally an instructor just gave in to get rid of them. Laughter, including his own. Then a general response

about trying to frame questions which would get the student thinking about the process of finding an answer. Long pause. No example; no probing. I wondered if others felt better about this information than I did. The lull continued, and I waited. But there was no response, verbal or otherwise, and the expert moved on.

The second hand was no longer raised, but the instructor had remembered the individual and invited his question. In very laborious English, a middle-aged man asked about giving marking grids to students. Laughter again. Then the instructor said it surely was a good idea--after the assignment, of course. More laughter. I was feeling uneasy-- about the laughter, for the man, about the answer. I had experienced this kind of unnerving confrontation with a student, and it was no laughing matter.

After a few seconds of awkward silence, a third person asked about the university marking curve. I was surprised at this question: Perhaps the session had not been too basic. Perhaps these really were inexperienced instructors who had not yet struggled to transform raw scores to GPAs which fell into tidy ranges and neat averages prescribed for certain levels of courses. A scientific explanation followed and while it was brief, it seemed to satisfy the question. At least, there were no follow-up comments.

Then came a fourth question: What becomes of instructors who have unfavourable student evaluations? I recognized the voice and moved ever-so-slightly to see if I could attach a face to that voice. The instructor's answer was simple: They get called to the Chair's office, either for reprimand or for assistance; perhaps they should not be teaching large classes; perhaps there are interpersonal conflicts; perhaps they have not worked on rapport with the students. I sensed this participant must have had a different experience.

Suddenly I realized I knew the young man who asked. He had taught another section of a course which I instructed the year before, and we had got along well during our brief exchanges. Although my section had managed to escape mishap, grapevine had it that some of the instructors had been struggling. Now I suspected he was one of them. I also suspected he had not summoned the courage to discuss the issue with our Chair, and

obviously he had not been summoned for either a reprimand or assistance. Oh why had I not tried to be more supportive of this guy when I had a chance, and what could I do now?

The questions seemed to have dribbled to a halt, and participants shuffled a bit, waiting to be dismissed early. My neighbour and I sat a moment, then at the same time looked at one another. I imagined she must have been as uneasy as I was, but neither of us spoke of it as we collected our things and filed out of the room. I felt bad--perhaps a bit angry, perhaps slightly guilty, certainly very confused--for myself, for her, for my former colleague at the back of the room. I also felt bad for this very experienced instructor who I assumed must feel frustrated in his hopes of inspiring fledgling instructors.

As I began to write later that evening, I was able to sort some of my emotions. I felt cheated of my time until I realized it had not been a waste. I realized there were no pat answers to many of my questions, and I felt silly for having imagined there might be. I felt guilty about not having reached out to participants, either in that room or in other rooms much earlier. I also had not reached out to the expert instructor whom I felt had struggled that afternoon.

Thinking about the session from these various perspectives helped me to see that learning to teach was not about finding simple answers to complex questions, for no instructor would be able to provide all the answers or fill all the gaps for this large group of beginner teachers. Each instructor, I realized, will understand the questions differently and see the context differently, particularly during times of dramatic change in institutions. The best instructors can do, I believe, is care enough to share their experiences in the hope of providing creative insights and moral support for others. The answers, I realized, are wrapped in the experience, with each one very different and often hidden from even our own view, for there are no patterned people nor frozen moments, least of all in institutions of discovery and learning. I had learned after all, and I would try to remember.

* * *

PATHS TO TEACHING

O Life is intuition the measure of knowledge
And do I stand with heart entranced and burning
At the zenith of our wisdom when I feel
The long light flow, the long wind pause, the deep
Influx of spirit, of which no man may tell
The Secret, golden and inappellable?

from "The Height of the Land"
by Duncan Campbell Scott (1916)

Ignoring Teaching Roadmaps: Tricksters and Sceptics

The longer I live, the more I am convinced that the one thing worth living for and dying for is the privilege of making someone more happy and more useful. No man who ever does anything to lift his fellows ever makes a sacrifice.

(Booker T. Washington, 1856-1915)

I was not familiar with the quotation, but I was pleased to have it penned in a card from a first-year student in one of my classes. She was thanking me for allowing her to reschedule an exam.

Our final examination had been scheduled for a Tuesday morning in April. Hers was the only missing signature on the list of 60 students in the class. After the exam I had a quick lunch then returned to my office to find a note on my door. "I've just done the stupidest thing in my life. I showed up at 1:00 for the exam, and the room was empty, so I rechecked my schedule and found it was THIS MORNING. I am just sick. Please call me."

I allowed time for her to get home (and hopefully calm down) before telephoning, but when I reached her she was still panicky. On and on she explained. It was her first year living away from her family and they had moved during the semester. She was worried about returning to a new town, and wondered about getting a job. She couldn't believe this had happened. I tried to quiet her anxiety, eventually working out a plan to have her come in the next day to write another exam.

She presented the card when she arrived the next day. I was touched by her effort. I was truly impressed with the touching verse. I knew, however, that others would find the sentiment amusing, attributing it to an ulterior motive of an unprepared, perhaps even devious, student vying for a break.

My suspicion about my colleagues was not unfounded. When I shared my treasure with office mates that afternoon and with my family at dinner later that evening, the reaction was predictable. One colleague quipped, "Oooooh D-o-c-t-o-r McFadyen, can I get a [GPA] nine, p-l-e-a-s-e." The other instructor grandly waved the card above his head, flashed a huge grin, and blew an exaggerated kiss to the heavens. We all chuckled, and little more was said.

At home that evening, my daughter, also a university student, read it then dashed the card to her room and promptly returned with a huge happy face scribbled on the envelope. She had sketched a cartoon face with a nose that consumed about two-thirds of it, boldly coloured--kindergarten fashion--a deep, dark, rich chocolate brown! Everyone was having fun, including me, each of us for different reasons.

I catalogued that card in my teaching dossier with class, date, and occasion carefully recorded (Figure 8) and placed it in a section labelled unsolicited student feedback, but it was more than what the theory labelled naturalistic evidence of positive teaching relationships. For me, it represented a very special and personal teaching reward.

But the story does not end there. The following week, I was strolling through a busy farmers' market on a sunny Saturday, dressed in jeans, sun hat, and sunglasses. Through the crowd of colours, music and chatter, food and flowers and general confusion, I became aware of two young women picking a path toward me. I soon recognized one as my student who had missed the exam. We exchanged brief pleasantries and then she introduced her older sister who she said had just come into town. Upon hearing my name, the sister set down her packages and extended both hands toward me as she spoke, "Mrs. McFadyen, I've heard so much about you. You saved my sister's sanity."
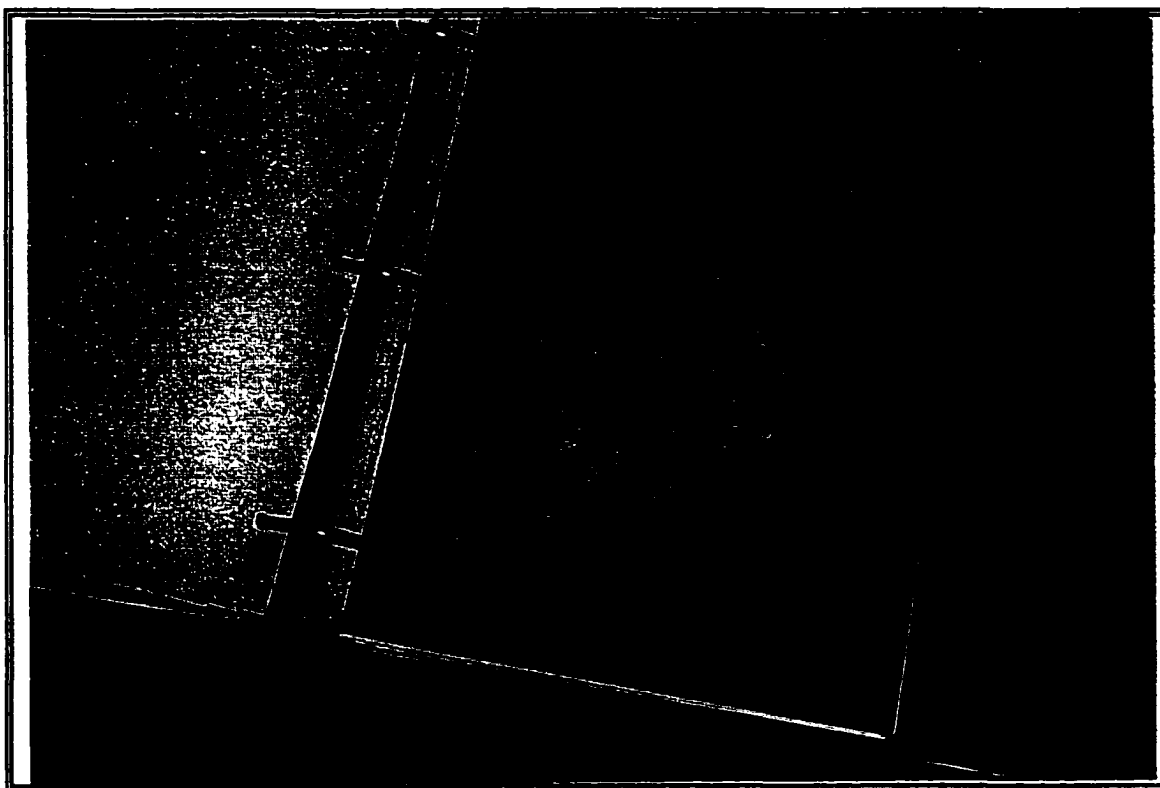
Figure 8: *Naturalistic Evidence. Photograph from the collection of Kay McFadyen (1999).*

I smiled and quietly mumbled some brief comment, but inside I was near bursting. Being sought out in a crowd by one of my students was not a common occurrence for me, and I felt flattered. But having my name recognized by someone I had not previously met was the most delicious feeling. My student had not been a trickster; my colleagues and family had been sceptics. This student had been genuine in her appreciation. She had needed support and my response had made a difference. And yes, Booker, you were right--that small action was lifting--for both of us it seems.

* * *

These two narratives, *Reading Beyond the Signs* and *Ignoring Teaching Roadmaps*, describe several tensions as I seek to understand my teaching, to unravel my beliefs and values, and to attach rational explanations to my teaching practice. The first describes a seminar on instruction in which I sought guidance, directions, perhaps pat answers to teaching questions. As the session progressed, however, I became aware of

my discomfort with explanations that were offered, and I became frustrated with solutions that did not match my own experiences or, it seems, those of other beginner teachers.

I was drawn to the session in search of solutions, and solutions were offered. Yet I came away disappointed. A process of reflection and reframing, however, helped me to see the experience as a discovery, or as Ramsden (1992) suggests, a surprising result of teaching. I had discovered what Wilkes (1998) calls a teaching paradox that caused me to further examine my beliefs about learning to teach. I learned that, for me, these types of learning sessions are more about hearing others' questions that help me to form my own answers, than they are about customizing generic answers to predictable issues. I realized that what is good for a particular teacher at a particular time and in a particular context, may not be the answer for another person at another time or in different circumstances. It may not even answer the same teacher's query if another situation presents. I saw, clearly for the first time, that while some teaching dilemmas might be illuminated by a discussion of rules and policies and principles of fairness, that teaching experiences must be understood on the basis of something more. As Garrison (1997) suggests, teaching must be guided by professional reason and personal emotion as well as by an appreciation of the quality of a particular situation and the uniqueness of particular people. Realizing my naiveté in imagining otherwise was significant and meaningful learning from this session.

The second narrative, *Ignoring Teaching Roadmaps,* recalls the experience of an ordinary student who faced a particular dilemma. It is a story, I believe, about what Bateson (1994) terms responsible caring. From this perspective, it is one that might also be considered a sacred story (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996; Crites, 1971) of caring relationships (Bateson, 1994; Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule, 1986; Noddings, 1984; Witherell & Noddings, 1991) between students and instructors in everyday teaching contexts.

This narrative might also be considered what Crites (1975) calls a genuine story in that it invites interpretations, none of which can fully explain the experience. Readers may

sense a similarity in its theme to earlier stories of caring (for example, *First Class, First Impressions* and *Voices of Student Diversity*), but they may also sense a dissonance with other stories (for example, *Tell Me Why, Birds So High* and *Lonely Paths and Blind Turns*), all of which address relationships between students and instructors. While similar types of stories support the notion of responsible caring, contrasting stories pose questions of truthfulness in the sacred story and invite readers to consider the "genuineness" of relationships and to question another teaching paradox.

To illustrate this tension, I am reminded of an earlier situation in which I made a decision regarding a student's behaviour that was later challenged by another professor. The situation dated back several years when, in my eagerness to publish, I decided to share my enthusiasm for teaching by describing a personal success in establishing positive instructor-student relationships. I carefully outlined the experience, describing how a student had knowingly "stretched the truth" about submitting an assignment. Although I was sceptical, I chose not to challenge her, but instead created the opportunity for her to come forward on her own. She had met the challenge, and I felt we had both grown from the experience: I had learned something about balancing trust with responsibility, and she had learned something about honour and professionalism.

I was delighted when the article appeared as a cover story in a university newsletter (Figure 9). Within a week, however, that pleasure turned to a knot in my stomach when an experienced professor disagreed, in no uncertain terms, with my approach in allowing the student to come forward rather than confronting her. He felt, quite adamantly it seemed, my action was not in the best interests of this student, other students, nor the university. He felt it had encouraged the student in the wrong direction, that granting her the benefit had given her an unfair advantage over other "sincere" students, and that I had set a dangerous precedent for other instructors.

I was shaken as I read his forceful words. I had to admit I *had* taken a gamble in granting the student the opportunity to reconsider her actions, and I realized she may *not*

come forward, in which case she *would* benefit from a privilege not granted to other students. I passionately believed in treating students fairly, so why had I made this decision? How would I handle another situation? If the result had been otherwise, would it change a future approach? The interrogator's comments stirred an uneasiness I could not settle quickly. My teaching decision had been based on my best judgement at the time, but when it was challenged, I realized that caring relationships as I understood them may not be the lived story of others. Further, if there was a good reason, perhaps I should be the one rethinking them.
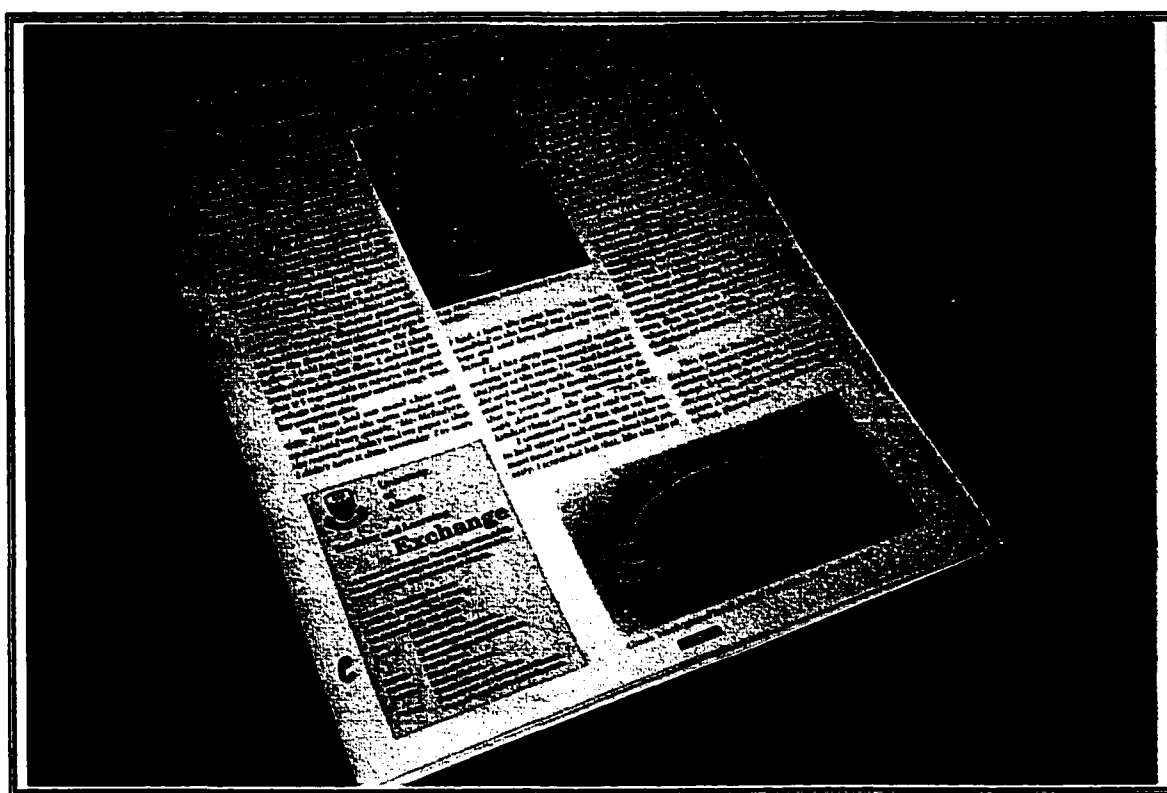
Figure 9: Beginners and Publishing. Photograph from the collection of Kay McFadyen (1999).

In addition to the teaching decision which I then questioned, I also wondered about the risk of exposing myself to colleagues by publishing this type of story. I was a novice instructor, a sessional no less, with no established reputation or long-term status. Was I shaping an image as a "liberal-hearted soft-touch" among students and instructors—students who might test my trust in the future and instructors who might influence future teaching

assignments? I reflected further on how I had handled the incident, I reflected on publishing its details to an audience I did not know well, I reflected on my experienced colleague's criticism, and I reflected on a dissonance between my teaching philosophy and how I now felt about enacting it. Then I sat down to draft a response to him.

The response was difficult; the writing seemed scattered and the words lacked conviction. As the document took shape, however, I felt the knots in my stomach begin to ease. I had not drawn on particular teachings, theories, or role models to guide my behaviour toward this student, yet I felt my actions were the right ones—at least in this instance. Even as a novice instructor, I really did *know* what was right for this student. As Garrison (1997) suggests of teachers, I responded to tension through imaginative problem solving which I trusted would generate the best outcome for her and one which I too could live with.

To my surprise, attaching words to my thinking was a way of confirming what I knew. While they confirmed my own practical knowledge, I wondered about his reaction to my reply. I was not optimistic it would change his strongly-stated opinion, yet this was less important as I considered Garrison's (1997) observation that what is good for one is not necessarily good for others as teachers deal with the ethics of rules and justice along with the ethics of caring in daily teaching decisions.

What was important, however, was that his voice had helped me to find my own. I was reminded of Featherstone, Munby, and Russell's writing that "giving authority to one's personal experience while learning to teach is central to understand how and what one is learning from experience" (1997, p. 3). Certainly, this process of finding voice helped me to link experience and understanding. It instilled a confidence, an authority, that empowered me to trust my knowing. Further, when my intuitive knowing was challenged, reflection and an examination of competing theories gave me the confidence to trust my personal practical knowledge. As Bellamy suggests, "it is not enough to have experience. One must attend to what the experience really says, being conscious of the

reframing that makes the experience significant" (1997, p. 116). What I discovered by examining my practice in this way is perhaps what Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule (1986) call connected knowing, and this offered me what other researchers (Witherell & Noddings, 1991) have also discussed: private understanding and reflection linked to formal public voice.

Initially, I questioned my decision to publish an account of this experience. Erickson and MacKinnon suggest, however, that "accomplishing significant shifts in our personal and institutional perspective requires individuals who are prepared to take personal and professional risks" (1991, p. 34). It is now my hope that others will also share their experiences, risk voicing their stories, to add one more possibility to our stories of responsible caring. It is a way to uncover what we know about being what Garrison (1997) labels as sympathetic and caring, imaginative and creative, and morally perceptive, as we respond to unique needs of the diverse students we teach.

Ignoring Teaching Roadmaps presents a complex set of stories, with the apparently smaller story opening larger vistas. It is intended to capture the paradox of supporting particular teaching principles of caring and fairness while creatively dealing with dilemmas in ways that may challenge traditional understandings of the principles. It perhaps challenges a sacred story and therefore invites instructors to explore other understandings of what it means to participate in caring relationships. While the main story deals with the immediacy of teaching decisions, the analysis introduces a second story of how those decisions can be challenged and this can result in new learning and can lead to unexpected results. For me, the personal empowerment that came from attending to and reframing a criticism that, in turn, connected my personal knowledge in both private and public spheres was this result.

Summary: Paths to Teaching

This section contains three narratives. The first narrative, *Learning Styles as Signs*, the mother/daughter classroom experience, supports Garrison's perspective:

—

> To fulfil the obligations of a caring profession, to bestow value on students..., teachers must recognize their students' unique, individual needs, desires, interests, dreams, and best future possibilities [which he calls] 'moral perception'. (1997, p. xvii)

The story illustrates how an experienced professor applies theoretical knowledge about learning styles and student diversity to effect positive experiences and deep learning. We see how, despite particular similarities in people and place, learning outcomes can differ based on personal experience and needs. The story shows that while the nature of learning differed for mother and daughter, we both acknowledged a profound qualitative and quantitative learning experience that was facilitated by a wise and caring professor who perhaps can be compared to Garrison's (1997) description of philosopher-teachers: "[They] are lovers of wisdom; that is what they passionately desire. This means that they love to learn well and teach logically, and they realize that the two activities must occur together" (p. xx). For me, is was a privilege to have been shown this path.

The next two narratives, *Reading Beyond the Signs* and *Ignoring Teaching Roadmaps*, describe tensions in teaching experience and explore apparent contradictions between personal beliefs and teaching behaviours. Both suggest linear problem-solving approaches to teaching dilemmas, then look beyond the merits of pure reasoning or logic to answer complex questions. By linking elements of teaching, logic, and caring, we might see that practical reasoning in the daily life of instructors is contingent on social constructions of reality which consider the uniqueness of people and situations to inform our practice. As Garrison (1997) indicates, there is no certainty in the practices of good teachers, only intelligent logical reasoning combined with creative imagination and passion which helps students actualize their highest potential.

This section explores paths to learning to teach, or ways to improve teaching, by cultivating wisdom in our practice. The three narratives offer paths toward recognizing paradoxes and dealing with tensions through processes of logical yet imaginative problem solving based on balance, satisfaction, unique needs, and beliefs. The analysis sections argue for the intimate teaching connection between caring and logic to guide practical

reasoning in our teaching practice. The words of Dr. Shirley Stinson, veteran nursing professor at the University of Alberta and advocate of alternative forms of medical therapies that she feels complement rather than contradict traditional approaches, perhaps best describe such a connection: "We need both the art and the heart of [teaching] practice and not only the science" (Holubitsky, 1999, p. F1).

CHAPTER VIII

A PLACE CALLED TEACHING

The same day, same time, in Wasaychigan Hill, Marie-Adele Starblanket is standing alone outside her house, in her yard, by her 14-post white picket fence. Her house is down the hill from Pelajia Patchnose's, close to the lake. A seagull watches her from a distance away. He is the dancer in white feathers... Only she and Zhaboonigan Peterson can see the spirit inside the bird and can sort of (though not quite) recognize him for who he is...

from The Rez Sisters
by Tomson Highway (1988)

CHAPTER VII
A PLACE CALLED TEACHING

This is why the entire guidance area here at Wishbone is pink -- CIL 490 Interior latex eggshell blended with one-half mix 2477-7 to be exact. This winning combination of colour design gives quite an amount of warmth to an area, especially since the area seems to be viewed through rose-coloured glasses. Next year, should a yellow or gray or a green be on the scene, I trust you'll be prepared.

from A Wishbone Epistolary
by Neil Child (1985)

Invisible Boundaries on the Teaching Landscape:
Complex Roles of the Professoriate

People ask me what I do, and I say I teach. They ask me where, and I say at the university. They ask me what I teach, and I tell them the names of courses. They say that sounds interesting, and I smile. It surely is, I think, in more ways than I can tell them.

How do professors answer these questions? Most people who ask appreciate that teaching involves holding expertise in a subject area, being able to organize material, preparing and delivering lessons, devising evaluation systems and, in the end, reporting to students and administrators about the teaching and learning. And as important and consuming as these functions are, they only scratch the surface in terms of the energy required and the commitment demanded to teach here.

From our earliest teaching, professors learn quickly that teaching at the university includes other stories--ones relating to conducting research and publishing, to administration, and to community service, both within and outside of the university. Adding this information, however, is often not useful when people ask, perhaps because I don't yet know how to tell it.

My stories, however, include issues of administration, public relations, supervision, professional development, student support, and a host of other activities. While mine are those of a novice professor, I expect other novices share many of them,

and that more experienced colleagues have even more parts to their stories. Nevertheless,

they are not the stories that I often share, and I'm not sure why. Perhaps it is because they

are difficult to articulate--a seemingly disconnected and unrelated collage of odds and ends

that, of course, in my telling, dims their collective significance.

My journals are brimming with these other stories--ones that don't seem to fit in

tidy categories. This is an early one from a cold snowy Friday evening in January as I

collapsed in front of the TV with my husband, our dog, a large pizza, and my journal to try

to tidy up the week past and collect my thoughts about the one ahead.

> *...Meetings--how many?*
> *1. Department Council on Tuesday - even added an agenda item*
> *2. TAs - Wednesday 8 AM - good ideas, group still high, went well ...*
> *3. [Another] - Wednesday PM - a refreshing break to be a student. Good*
> *prof--made me second guess my decision not to pursue English as a major.*
> *Also next week (other than lectures):*
> *Exam to prepare, photocopy;*
> *25 papers to mark; exams to mark;*
> *Poster - Research Revelations next Saturday;*
> *First portfolios due; monitor TAs; deal with over-anxious students; hoping*
> *for one-week marking turnaround;*
> *Oh yea! appeal by a student from last semester--prepare a written defence.*
> *(Luckily I have one, and he's missed his bases, but the TIME! Why?*
> *Sometimes the democratic process is a pain.)*
> *And my life! Mom's hurting so much [after her December stroke]; I went*
> *out [to her farm] twice last weekend; the family is so stressed. At home,*
> *we're having a toilet replaced, carpet cleaned, snow to shovel, groceries to*
> *buy, laundry--but now we will veg in front of the TV. Ahhh! (Journal,*
> *January 30, 1998)*

Lists are often deceiving in that each item appears the same size, usually small, and

does not reflect the amount of time and energy for planning and execution. And lest I

imagine these loose ends represented month-end record keeping entries in my journal, two

weeks later under a heading, "Positives this week," I sketched another list:

> *Recruited by YWCA President to serve on Board of Directors. Yes!*
> *Helped [TA #1] to get a dossier started and nominated her for a Graduate*
> *Student Teaching Award;*
> *Presented the dossier to [TA #2] and encouraged her to start for next year;*
> *Got my own dossier semi-ready for Graduate Student Awards--not perfect,*
> *but OK (fun work);*
> *My [daughter and undergraduate at another university] presented a paper*
> *this weekend and we went to hear her. What an accomplishment for her!*
> *I'm still married (and sometimes wonder if I deserve to be--[husband] has*
> *been so neglected);*

> *[Other daughter], also neglected, still phones and comes over--Surprise!*
> *(Journal, February 12, 1998)*

Again, the brief entries did not convey the weight of so many divergent

commitments. I found it interesting, however, that the seemingly disconnected parts of my

teaching continued to appear as lists or sketches over an extended period of journaling.

Approximately one year later, the hum of many activities, some similar to the year prior but

some new, reverberated again as brief notations in the flurry of daily activities.

> *Last week was nuts for everyone [TAs]. I coached [TA] through a poster presentation, and we did Research Revelations. An easy way for a publication credit, made hard by training a novice. However, it's done! Wednesday evening was our [professional association] meeting, and as a member of the program committee, was scooting around for door prizes, taking RSVPs, xeroxing evaluation sheets, then playing Suzy Hostess at the meeting. Now it's write-ups for the local and provincial newsletters, then finishing off with our fourth (and final!) event in early spring. Saturday morning was the [Volunteer Conference] where I co-facilitated a communication workshop--thankfully culminating the search for material for our workbook, meetings with my partner to sort out roles, and the telephone tag we've played for about six weeks.*

> *My calendar for next week has a meeting on Tuesday, [another] meeting on Thursday evening, Reading Week to catch my breath, then finish preps for the Ottawa Conference the first weekend in March. I'm doing a slide presentation on portfolios--should be fun--hope I can get the paper done! [Husband] is taking a few days off to come with me and I'm so looking forward to this treat. (Journal, February 9, 1999)*

Looking over these lists of so many activities that seemed peripheral to teaching, I

was reminded of a comment made in jest at a farewell luncheon for one of our staff. The

fellow had been with us on an administrative exchange for several months and was

returning to his previous position. As he opened his gift, he spoke sentimentally, "Gee, I

was just discovering all the pieces to this job, and now I have to leave..." To this, our

[Administrator] responded with a grin, "Hey, same as the rest of us, involved in too many

things to ever get really good at any of them."

We all laughed, but later as I reflected on that casual comment, I began to wonder if

even experienced professionals, subconsciously or otherwise, shared my feeling of

amazement at the complexity of professorial roles. While I regard these responsibilities as

part of my overall professorial role, I struggle to connect them to teaching in my

conversations. So when I am asked, I say simply, I teach.

<div align="center">* * *</div>

Can we say exactly what it is that professors do? Certainly, teaching is a major

role. But with so many other parts, how do we separate the teaching so that we can focus

on making it better?

Teaching is said to involve a requisite content knowledge, an understanding of

pedagogy, and training in psychological underpinnings that facilitate a comprehension of

students' learning processes, various communication strategies, and establishing

appropriate environments for learning (Laurillard, 1993; Ramsden, 1992). In addition to

the content, pedagogical, and psychological knowledge demanded in our profession,

instructors are also said to possess certain characteristics that contribute to effective

teaching.

In 1991, the Smith Commission established that while technical ability was

important, respecting and accepting students as individuals, being available to them,

facilitating discussions, creating alternative learning environments, and incorporating

student experiences into learning materials were equally important. More recently,

Wilson (1993), in his taxonomy of educator qualities, includes 25 characteristics that

include positive self-esteem, concern for students, insights, empathic listening, tactfulness,

enthusiasm, and so on. Likewise, Zehm and Kottler (1993) emphasize the human

dimension as that which gives teachers our power as influencers, and they described

qualities such as charisma, compassion, egalitarianism, sense of humour, and passionate

commitment as significant contributors.

Other research suggests that the context of teaching is as important to the quality of

student learning as are the knowledge and characteristics of an instructor. The Smith

Commission (1991) points out the significance of teacher training and instructional

resources, class sizes, teaching responsibilities outside of classrooms, and changes in

student population as contextual variables that greatly influence university teaching. Similarly, Cranton (1998) indicates that many changes in higher education are driven by economic factors that include financial constraints, hiring freezes, pressures and intervention by governments and industry, less support for professional development, and institutional restructuring. She adds, however, there are other contextual factors that include an "exponential increase in available information, technical developments, new communication patterns, greater diversity in student populations, shifting political structures, and the expanding role of business and industry in education" (p. 23).

Bennett, Foreman, Peck, and Higgins (1996) also support the importance of contextual factors. They indicate that college and university teaching cannot be absolute or static because of the dynamic social and political contexts in which it occurs. They suggest that to create morally and educationally justifiable strategies to improve, instructors must engage in reflective practice that demands that we question our deepest beliefs. They invite instructors to question the status quo, to compare our actions to our values, and possibly abandon cherished beliefs or practices which no longer fit with particular courses, teaching methods, student characteristics, or institutional cultures.

It follows that because there are so many factors that influence teaching in both direct and indirect ways, that research would also suggest there is no one best way to teach, and that educators are excellent for different reasons (Bennett, Foreman, Peck & Higgins, 1996; Ramsden, 1992; Wilson, 1993). Wilson (1993) proposes that because the nature of teaching is more complex and more profound than other professions, that models of good teaching cannot adequately or accurately portray the holistic nature of our professional activities.

Teaching, in whatever context, is complex activity. The *Invisible Boundaries* narrative suggests that because of our involvement in a great diversity of activities, teaching as part of the professorial role may be even more complex. A number of researchers have explored the relationship of teaching to other faculty responsibilities of research and service

(Bateson, 1989; Cole & Knowles, 1995; Cranton, 1998; Guilfoyle, Hamilton, Pinnegar & Placier, 1995; Russell, 1995) and acknowledge certain tensions. Smith (1991), in his study of university teaching responsibilities, sounded an alarm regarding the diminishing priority of teaching among the various faculty responsibilities. In response, his Commission presented a number of recommendations relating to funding, curricula, staffing and other concerns to reflect an appropriate valuation of teaching as a core aspect of university activity. Significant budget cuts in many of the Canadian universities in the years that followed, however, did not support these recommendations and, in fact, resulted in program closures, organizational restructuring, and in many cases, increased teaching loads and larger class sizes of an increasingly diverse student population (Emberley, 1996; Moysa, 1996).

Cranton (1998) summarizes teaching in higher education this way: "The more we come to understand teaching and learning, however, the more we realize that it is neither entirely under our control nor subject to established principles. Perhaps becoming a scholar of teaching starts with this understanding" (p. 14). Perhaps it is this understanding that makes the stories awkward for me to tell.

* * *

These other parts of being a university professor that I intuitively understood as vital components of my work, but about which others rarely asked and I rarely spoke, consumed much ink and paper in my teaching journals because they consumed much time and energy in my working days. In the *Invisible Boundaries* narrative, I list many responsibilities that extended beyond usual understandings of our teaching function. I began the analysis by asking what it is that teachers do and then explored possibilities based on what it is we need to know. I pointed out the importance of theoretical knowledge in areas of content, pedagogy, and psychology, but determined that personal characteristics also affect what instructors do and how we do it. I then examined contextual variables as another critical landmark on the teaching landscape. Finally, I

concluded that while there are no replicable models or definitive maps, teachers are excellent for different reasons.

In reflecting on the *Invisible Boundaries* narrative, I determined that a university instructor's duties were difficult to name and delineate and that teaching was only one component in a complex set of interrelated roles. Research, supervision, administration, and community service are also key elements of the profession and, according to Smith (1991), these other elements often receive a higher priority. This suggests that professional roles of university professors may not always be complementary, and may in fact be competing for limited time, energy, and other resources. Further, this competition may create tensions within individual instructors, within faculty units, and within institutions as we attempt to balance the various responsibilities.

Multiple professorial roles in changing social and political contexts pose even deeper questions. If instructors are to improve, we must understand exactly what it is we do. We must be able to articulate the level and type of knowledge we require, the personal characteristics which support effective learning, and the social and political context in which we attempt to engage learners. We must then measure ourselves against particular benchmarks and embark on journeys toward maximizing the learning experiences of both our students and ourselves. Strategies for improvement in this one area of responsibility, our teaching, are therefore difficult to determine and perhaps even more difficult to assess, particularly if we are to balance them with other responsibilities that may be seen as separate from teaching and, on occasion, more important.

Wilson (1993) responds to this dilemma by suggesting we must determine the driving forces behind change, whether they be personal, political, economic, or cultural, and whether they be related to individual instructors, courses, departments, faculties, the institution, or the larger social context. Cranton (1998), however, asserts that there are no specific sets of special skills or characteristics that one can acquire to become a good teacher and that there are no definitive rules to follow or predictable outcomes to the

strategies we use. "Instead we become good teachers by remaining committed to our discipline, learning more about our subject, thinking about our teaching, caring about our students, gaining experience, and continually challenging ourselves to improve" (p. 191). It is this observation—broad, in that it includes theoretical knowledge, personal characteristics, and contextual factors, yet specific in its demand for instructors' action—which once again supports a call for continual and refined attempts at reflective practice as university instructors navigate an always-complex and ever-changing teaching terrain.

A PLACE CALLED TEACHING

...I'm knocking at
the door but nobody
answers. I mutter *Lenin*
Karl Marx, Walt Whitman
Chaucer, Hopkins, even
Archibald Lampman, but
nobody comes, I don't

know the password...

from *"Looking for Strawberries in June"*
by *Mariam Waddington (1968)*

Collaborative Map Reading: Learning to Teach Teachers

During my undergraduate training in secondary education, I had come to agree with

the adage, "The best way to learn something is to teach it." Instructors had offered it as a

kind of encouragement as students prepared for our first field experiences, and I came to

appreciate their wisdom as I learned to teach in areas where I had little content knowledge--

areas such as law, religious studies, and accounting. But would the simple maxim apply

to teaching laboratory assistants to teach university students?

Mine may be a unique story in that I was responsible for 25 Teaching Assistants

(TAs) during my first two years of teaching. A majority, averaging six per semester, was

for one large course I taught for four consecutive semesters during that initial two-year

period. The course included a laboratory component which I considered critical for two

reasons: 1) the content area demanded hands-on practice, and 2) a large class size of 175

students required a more intimate environment to facilitate hands-on participation.

Recruiting, motivating, and training assistants to teach these lab sessions, however, was a

role I came to realize was as demanding as my other responsibilities of teaching, research,

administration, and community service in the university environment.

My first task was to recruit qualified assistants. Initially the TAs comprised graduate students at the Master's level, that in this faculty usually meant they would complete their program in two years or less. This, in turn, meant they would not be long-term assistants and for most, it was their first teaching experience. Recruiting TAs became recruiting industrious, amiable students who demonstrated competence in our content area, but who had no pedagogical training and little understanding of teaching beyond their own schooling experiences, and who had limited time in which to learn and refine this knowledge in our 13-week semesters.

Beginning in mid-summer meant that a number of potential TAs had already obtained assignments, and so my choice was limited; however, those who applied were enthusiastic and eager to learn to become good teachers. Our teaching duties were complicated by the fact that all students in the course were graded as one unit and not as smaller laboratory groups and this meant instruction had to be standardized with a goal of equal learning opportunities for all students across multiple lab sections. The large numbers of assistants we required, and their lack of teaching experience combined with the diversity of their backgrounds, made this type of training and supervision unlike any other in my business or teaching experience.

The next task was to prepare. I organized weekly lab activities based on theoretical concepts presented in lecture. I coordinated these activities across multiple labs by preparing lesson plans for the TAs which included teaching ideas to support lecture content, but allowed options based on TA preferences and personal strengths and encouraged teaching innovations. We collectively developed marking sheets for each assignment and reviewed criteria and scoring in advance. We met weekly and I encouraged electronic and personal contact in between to share ideas, offer support, and strengthen consistency across the lab sections.

I deemed training and support of assistants as critical to short-term teaching successes throughout each semester as well as long-term credibility for a course that had

suffered in the past for a number of reasons, both real and imagined. But a lack of experience--mine and theirs--was seriously impinging teaching effectiveness in some of the lab sections. At the end of the first semester, I wrote of my new learning:

> *...a group of 175 students makes life complex, plus a couple of TAs who make me crazy--erratic marking, unprofessional conduct with students, casual attitudes [about teaching], and priorities which include their own courses and personal lives, with TA'ing coming in a distant third. (Journal, December 15, 1997)*

To address this dilemma, I changed my hiring strategy during the second semester to include several undergraduate assistants who had completed the course with me as their instructor and therefore were familiar with the content as well as my teaching values. They had been among the top performers in the class, and I hoped their eagerness and ability, combined with adequate training and ongoing support, would translate into long-term teaching potential that, if they stayed with the course, would in fact reduce training and supervision over the longer period. Despite raised eyebrows of some faculty, I felt confident in the decision to hire these top-notch undergraduate students who offered such possibilities.

I expected the training of undergraduates to offer new challenges, and it did. In an effort to build connections between graduate-level and undergraduate assistants, I devoted extra time during meetings for socializing and tried to facilitate teaching connections. At the beginning of the semester, because I anticipated that undergraduate TAs teaching undergraduate peers would present unique challenges, I provided a memo that outlined roles and responsibilities of TAs and focused on political pressures and ethical responsibilities. I made time for TAs to tell their personal teaching stories, both in meetings and whenever else it was convenient for them. We experimented with peer reviews of marking at Saturday morning group sessions rather than learning individually. My goal was to improve teaching, ensure consistency across lab sections, and build team spirit, and I hoped these efforts would reap benefits in two areas--improved laboratory experiences for TAs and students, and less supervision by me.

The following term, however, similar issues reappeared.

I'm so concerned about my TAs... I was hoping a detailed marking sheet and suggestions for comments would help, but [the one] who needs the most help either doesn't understand them or ignores them and instead does just what we're asking students NOT to do--wordy comments, colloquial expressions, shorthand feedback to students, and errors in her own technical writing.

So, I've set up a meeting for today, and I've been thinking all night how to help her understand writing and how to mark it. If she's not a logical-linear, maybe a diagram, maybe some metaphors... After the meeting, just as I expected, she was smiling and cooperative, but I'm not sure if I made any inroads. I had sketched a mobile for her, talked about weights, balance, interest, and organization, and how these things made the whole mobile work. Then I applied the metaphor to writing. Smile, nod!

She did pay attention when I suggested that these [GPA] 8s and 9s she was giving out were her competition for jobs in the future, and asked how she would she feel about working with or for them. That wrinkled her brow. Rigor seemed something too complex for a 19 year old undergrad who is placed in the uncomfortable position of evaluating fellow undergrads and possibly close friends. (Journal, September 24, 1998)

The very next week, and only four weeks into the semester, frustration was really setting in regarding this undergraduate TA.

My 11 AM lecture was firm [to students] about assignments and I took the same line with TAs about marking... Unfortunately the one who needs the direction the most probably didn't even register the urgency. She had spilled yoghurt on a bundle of assignments and fidgeted the whole 45 minutes. I felt so frustrated and disappointed. Her lab did worse than others I've seen so far, and I'm already working on her marking skills. What to do? It's attitude, teaching skills, technical writing skills--so many issues all balled up... (Journal, September 29, 1998)

By mid-October, after marking two sets of assignments, a hard decision was formulating.

...I think I've made a decision not to renew contracts with the undergrads to teach next semester. Either the workload seems too much or they're less organized, but it's too stressful for me to pick up the slack. I ended up marking two labs, had our Marking Assistant do two others, and we're behind schedule. So my organization was undone, and that hurts too much. Two strikes is enough, unless there's some good reasons and light on the horizon. Commitment and a high calibre of work are givens, and if they're not there, I can't see another option. (Journal, October 19, 1998)

It was a difficult decision, particularly since I sincerely liked--truly enjoyed--these bright, lively, funny students. They had so much in common with my own children, also

undergraduate students. My own, however, had been exposed to the adult world of work since junior high school and these had not. These TAs had not learned the political art of "wearing more than one hat". Their ability and enthusiasm, my roles and responsibilities discussion, the coaching and modelling had not been enough. They needed to learn by themselves, and it seemed each had to recognize the need, then determine their own good timing. As the instructor, I began to wonder if the concept of undergraduate Teaching Assistants presented more problems than it solved.

I was able to arrange minor research assignments for two of the undergraduate TAs for the following semester, but regarding a third, I wrote,

> *[He] was not invited back--it was a tough conversation to have, but much needed. His performance deteriorated...how did this happen to someone motivated and eager last semester? Hopefully this will allow some time to look around and see a bigger picture than being liked by "his guys".*
> *(Journal, January 5, 1999)*

I had to acknowledge that the long-term benefits I envisioned in hiring and training undergraduate assistants had not materialized, and in the final semester I reassessed my strategy and looked to the more conventional pool of graduate students for TA positions. I also resolved to continue to develop both quality and quantity of training regardless of the anticipated short-term commitment by graduate students.

I had learned so much about a new way of teaching which moved beyond the complexities of the usual instructor-student relationships to include an intricate network of teaching intermediaries in a course where economics dictated large classes but where subject matter demanded almost tutorial instruction and feedback. In my journal, I reflected on this new learning:

> *I never dreamed how taxing the supervisory role is--time, energy, motivational skill, order, respect, modelling, tough calls, encouragement, rewards--all squeezed into my and their schedules. Crazy and very different from other supervision I've done! (Journal, October 19, 1998)*

I had discovered a complex pattern of contemplating, planning, telling, showing, waiting, checking, revising, learning, and hoping. I was beginning to sense that what I had expected to be a small stream on the landscape of university teaching had turned out to

be a mighty river, exciting but scary with its pounding waves and swirling pools, treacherous banks, hidden boulders, and unexpected tributaries that were unannounced on the map. I wondered if they could be mapped; perhaps they could only be discovered by willing adventurers in this teacher travel.

* * *

EPILOGUE

Over the next four semesters, I continued to journal exciting challenges and new learning in my role as a trainer/supervisor of TAs. Recruitment efforts were expanded and soon graduate students, including those from doctoral programs, were applying from our own as well as other faculties. This diversity, while not without new challenges, offered inspiration and unexpected learning for the TA group, for me, and I expect for students as well. However, an unexpected applicant, another undergraduate, but confident and competent, convinced me of her potential and we welcomed her enthusiastic contribution to the group. We now had TAs from all levels, from within as well as external to our Faculty, men and women whose ages ranged from early 20s to early 50s, who worked together to present standardized teaching to this large class.

The recruitment and supervision of TAs continued to take on directions and dimensions which often puzzled and frustrated me. However, these experiences were outnumbered by others that were tremendously rewarding. Among my stories of TA supervision are the team meetings which inspired me, teaching ideas which amazed me, occasional student comments which reaffirmed our efforts, and graduate student teaching awards which fired our spirits.

* * *

My training and experience in the business community had provided a base for supervisory roles so I had come to teaching with a sense of administrative functioning and power brokering which balanced sensitivity with responsibility. The context and dynamics of university teaching, however, presented much new learning.

First, it involved supervision that was critical not only to the assistants for their own learning, but was also pivotal to my own teaching success. I could not be an effective instructor without the effectiveness of this group of assistants. My perceived competence as an instructor depended as much on TA performance as it did on my own professional expertise and personal suitability for the profession.

Second, the nature of recruiting TAs in the university context often precludes requirements for technical knowledge in pedagogical and psychological areas. Graduate students are equipped with particular content knowledge bases, but this expertise is not often accompanied or supported with teaching skills or experience.

A third consideration related to the short-term nature of teaching assignments which impinged on personal goal setting related to teaching. In addition to placements that ran a mere 13 weeks, TAs were also students, and this often dictated a primary focus on academic studies over pedagogic development. As well, graduate student programs that averaged two years often meant that just as TAs were building the expertise and confidence that supported effective learning in lab settings, they completed their own study and moved to employment outside the university.

A central issue which challenged my coaching of TAs related to packaging learning across multiple labs in an effort to promote consistency and equal opportunities for 175 students each semester. I struggled to balance the need for long-term deeper learning of pedagogy skills with immediate goals related to student learning. My teaching philosophy involved experiential and discovery learning, but 13 week semesters and tenures that averaged two years or often much less, demanded more immediate results. My beliefs in treating both TAs and students as individuals was clouded by a mandate to treat all students as one homogenous group of learners who would be competing against each other for grades in a relative ranking system. The content area demanded small class sizes and individualized attention, yet I was supporting a teaching context which did not support these beliefs and, furthermore, I was encouraging a group of TAs to also support it.

The supervision of a group of TAs was a significant administrative function which not just supported my teaching role, but often directed it. Unlike my previous business experience, this responsibility reflected different needs and restrictions relating to participants whose motivation and maturity, learning and training, and primary interests and long-term objectives were often significantly different than those in other professional environments. My role as a teaching supervisor was one of continually reassessing processes, people, and situations, as well as examining my own values and systems of intrinsic reward (and punishment) in daily decisions.

Schon (1987) speaks to dilemmas faced by instructors as we teach teachers to teach, suggesting a problematic situation often presents itself as a unique case which falls outside existing theory. It therefore cannot be solved by applying rules and must be dealt with as a "kind of improvisation, inventing and testing in the situation strategies of her own devising" (p. 5). The process of recruiting, training, and supervising TAs did not fit with my earlier experience, and I had little training, direction, or support to guide me in this role. Therefore, each experience became a unique case to be dealt with based on limited experience in this context. Assumptions were made and tested, and practices were adjusted to account for each piece of learning. This learning involved, in Russell's (1995) words, "attend[ing] to reality as well as theory" (p. 97).

Schon (1987) states further, "in situations of value conflict, there are no clear and self-consistent ends to guide the technical selection of means" (p. 6). I acknowledge such a value conflict in presenting this content to large classes of very dissimilar students from the many departments in our faculty. Schon goes on to say, "Professionals themselves argue that it is impossible to meet heightened societal expectations for their performance in an environment that combines increasing turbulence with increasing regulation of professional activity. They emphasize their lack of control over the larger systems for which they are unfairly held responsible" (p. 7). His words rang true for me.

Other researchers have also addressed this issue. Zeichner (1995) acknowledges the dilemma between personal values and institutional restrictions, suggesting that teachers who teach teachers experience tensions between a commitment to their students and a commitment to the broader university community. He feels that teachers can only confront the gaps between espoused theory and our teaching reality, and that such a process is never-ending with tensions can never be fully resolved.

Whitehead (1995) deals with value conflicts in teaching through what he calls a living contradiction. This explanation, he says, offers instructors "powerful appeal because it corresponds to your experience when you recognize you hold certain values whilst at the same time you experience their denial or negation in your practice" (p. 117). The earlier research of Schon (1987), over a decade before my own experience, and more recent works of Zeichner (1995) and Whitehead (1995), aptly summarize my feelings about my own struggle to find solutions to teaching problems that often presented value conflicts and occurred in university contexts over which I had little control.

The *Collaborative Map Reading* narrative traces gaps between teaching theory and classroom reality, personal values and teaching practice, to a problematic concept of teaching competence in complex and uncertain university environments. What is it then that teaching coaches need to know about this role as we attempt to motivate and guide assistants in their teaching? Schon (1987) suggests that skilful teaching, like designing and other forms of artistry learning, is a holistic skill which is "learnable, coachable, but not teachable" (p. 158). Skilful teaching, he says, depends on the teacher's ability to recognize and appreciate desirable or undesirable teaching qualities. This, for me, was a difficult task as the former hiring models based on education, experience, personal qualities, and long-term potential were not useful in this setting. Only through the experience of dialogue, action, and continual evaluation, has this task become less formidable (although fail-proof models have yet to surface).

Schon's (1987) theory holds that "human beings, in their interactions with one another, design their behavior and hold theories for doing so. These theories of action... include the values, strategies, and underlying assumptions that inform individuals' patterns of interpersonal behavior" (p. 255). He goes on to differentiate between two levels at which the theories operate: espoused theories used to explain our behaviour, and theories-in-use reflected in our spontaneous behaviour with others.

Collaborative Map Reading contains a number of theories of action that guided my teaching practice but also demonstrates conflicts between espoused theories and theories-in-use. For example, my journal indicates that my three main objectives for TA teaching were to improve teaching, maintain consistency across labs, and build team spirit. To improve their teaching, I coached TAs by telling, demonstrating, modelling, evaluating, and providing feedback—processes frequently described in theory (for example, Cranton, 1998; Schon, 1987; Wilson, 1993). Yet the individualized experiential learning model that I advocated (and presumed to model for their later imitation to students in the labs) was short-circuited by the urgency of a 13-week time frame as well as by our aim of consistency across lab sections. In this way, decisions were made based on a combination of factors which included justice for all students based on the university system of competitive grades and standardized learning outcomes that superseded the goal of maximizing learning outcomes for individual and unique instructors.

From situations likely similar to my own, Schon (1987) develops an "incompleteness theorem" (p. 272) that suggests instructors should not try to be complete or perfect, and that acknowledging unknowns or incomplete meanings can guide instructors as we develop "a repertoire of ways of framing and responding to situations" (p. 271) that facilitate the freedom to listen and to develop new strategies. Again, the experience of dialogue, action, and continual evaluation has been a powerful teacher as I learn to teach teachers. It is these responsibilities, perhaps considered peripheral to

teaching, which often shape what I do, and perhaps even more importantly, shape who I am as a professor.

Summary: A Place Called Teaching

The two narratives in this section deal with diverse roles of the university professoriate. The first, *Invisible Boundaries*, speaks to the role of teaching. The word "Boundaries" in the title conjures images of edges or limits which, in travel, may include geographical or physical landmarks such as rivers or roadways. Alternatively, the word may pose more intangible or even abstract concepts such as national boundaries, political regions, and cultural divisions. Teaching boundaries in university contexts resemble the latter. Divisions are said to exist, yet they are difficult to define. Crossings are frequent and inevitable, and it is in exploring these crossings that teachers can find out who we are.

The second narrative, *Collaborative Map Reading*, deals specifically with a crossing into the area of teaching groups of TAs to teach. Again, boundaries are blurred by personal and institutional factors that make the experiences unique to university settings. From both perspectives, new instructors find ourselves navigating with limited training, experience, or tools, and relying on knowledge based on personal experience in unique situations. In the words of Munby and Russell (1995), "experience cannot be taught; it must be had" (p. 175). It is this understanding that can guide us as we strive to develop repertoires of technical and intuitive skills that improve our teaching and enable us to coach and inspire other beginner teachers.

CHAPTER IX

A TIME FOR TEACHING

That night on the piazza, where the hammock hangs in the shadow of the
Virginia creeper, he did it. By sheer good luck the judge had gone indoors
to the library, and by a piece of rare good fortune Mrs. Pepperleigh had
gone indoors to the sewing room, and by a happy trick of coincidence the
servant was out and the dog was tied up—in fact, no such chain of circumstances
was ever offered in favour of mortal man before.

from Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town
by Stephen Leacock (1912)

CHAPTER IX
A TIME FOR TEACHING

> Brave men have lived since as well as before Agamemnon, and those
> who know the present society of London may not unreasonably ask
> whether...the Art of Conversation is really extinct. Are the talkers of
> to-day in truth so immeasurably inferior to the great men who preceded them?
> Before we can answer these questions, even tentatively, we must try to define
> our idea of good conversation, and this can best be done by rigidly ruling out
> what is bad.
>
> *from: Ch. XIV, "Conversations"*
> *in Collections and Recollections,*
> *by G. W. E. Russell (1903)*

Learning About Students: No Bad Conversations

Knock, knock, loud impatient knock. It was early morning before classes, the first day back after the Christmas break. The halls were empty just a few minutes ago as I entered the building. I looked to the window, a bit surprised. I smiled and waved, and he opened the door, "Hi, we got engaged!"

Pete was exuberant. His round cheeks were flushed, and he talked fast, non-stop. He'd had a great holiday; he stayed in Edmonton; his exams went well; he was looking forward to moving east in a few months. And he was getting married! Could I believe that, he asks. Bridal fairs, marriage classes, married forever! His words seemed to be surprising him, and he tested them several times through a smile so large his fresh face could hardly contain it.

Yes, he was finishing his degree in April and he had landed that first job with an environmental firm in Toronto and he was happy, happy, happy. And so was I. Pete had become a friend, and my friend was getting married.

We first met when he was a student in my course, a whole year ago. We were working on resumes, and he had been troubled. He summoned the courage to come by one afternoon, and after we had exchanged pleasantries, he hesitantly proceeded with the

business of his visit. He talked, and I listened; then I talked, and he listened; and again it went. He seemed appreciative of the help, and I appreciated someone appreciating it.

But then the conversation turned. His rosy cheeks glowed crimson, and his voice quivered as he told me about his dilemma regarding references for his resume. He had been fired from his last job, fired from his only job, fired from his all-through-high-school-and-university-job. Fired--not terminated, not laid off, not discharged--fired! He said it over and over, unbelieving. Graduation was looming and he would have to prepare for his first professional position, and he was scared.

What should he do with his resume? How would he handle an interview? Should he pretend he had no work experience and avoid talking about it altogether? Should he refer to his many years there and use the names of people who would vouch for him and hope the termination would not come up? Or should he lay the whole complicated mess out for them to judge? There were pros and cons to each, he said. He seemed to be thinking out loud. Then the real issue surfaced. My journal describes it best:

> ... Anyway the real issue is not his resume... it's his family. His dad has told him, in no uncertain terms it seems, he's a lump of poop, that he made the wrong political decision with a big employer, and it will haunt him for years to come. His mom, however, has reassured him he's only a young kid, that the employer is an immoral low-life, and that this is one small blip in his life. And Pete is asking me, who is right? (Journal, April 4, 1998)

Pete and I talked for a long time that afternoon. He seemed the "insecure child" and I became the "knowing adult", trying to assure him that both parents had his best interest at heart but that they probably had different experiences that would influence their comments. I encouraged him to try to understand both of them, then to believe in himself and put the trauma behind him. We ran through some options for his resume, then tackled some job interview scenarios. Finally we had talked ourselves out. After a pause, he looked down, then collected his papers, straightened and carefully placed them in his pack. We said goodbye and he left. I sat still; a strange quiet enveloping me.

We had connected on some mysterious level that afternoon and it was a good feeling, for both of us I think. In the weeks that followed, we acknowledged each other

whenever we met, and I found myself watching for Pete in the large lecture theatre. He stopped by occasionally, under some pretence or other, sometimes posing minor questions but more often sharing some humorous story or joke. It was always small talk, and it was always a delight to talk with him.

Toward the end of the semester, he came by, cheeks blazing once more, with a lab issue this time. Several students had disagreed with a procedure the TA had implemented, and Pete had come to me to present their case. I suspected the students were right, but I knew I would have to defend the TA in his absence. Pete chose his words carefully as he reminded me of my advice to believe in himself and said that was why he had come forward on the students' behalf. Then he must have remembered the part about seeing both sides because, after a pause, he suggested an option which would allow the TA to save face. We talked a bit more, I agreed to his suggestion, and he returned to the lab with his win-win solution. I was pleased.

But a bigger reward for having come to know Pete awaited me. As a final course project, students were required to deliver a formal oral presentation on a communication issue of their choice. The diverse topics always amazed and delighted me--from horse whispering, to music messages, to patient counselling, to forecasting weather, to training dogs--and I was curious to know what Pete's topic might be.

On his scheduled day, it was obvious Pete was anxiously awaiting his turn, and when it finally arrived he set up his material, adjusted his equipment, cleared his throat, made eye contact with several observers including myself, and then smiled broadly. I watched Pete's cheeks darken from pink to fuchsia, and I listened carefully to his calm and confident voice begin. The audience loved it; they understood his examples, applauded his slides, and the presentation was a great success. In my journal I wrote,

> ... Pete did his oral presentation today, and guess what his topic was--the importance of communication at [his former workplace] and what the effects of different types of "noise" might be. He had slides which supported every angle of the noise he referred to. He had gone back to take these slides. What a guy! The dragon is slain. (Journal, April 4, 1998)

Pete had not mentioned the issue of his termination to me a second time, and I felt it best to follow his lead. We had many exchanges over the weeks that followed, but obviously he had other thoughts than those he shared with me. He must have intended to surprise me, and it had worked. I knew Pete had been a special teaching moment in my career, and it felt good to end the semester with such a feeling.

Because students come and go in instructors' lives with the cycle of courses and semesters, I hadn't expected to see Pete much after that. However, I had not seen the last of him for he returned over the summer to tell me about a career position he had heard about. He was a year away from graduating, but this was the perfect job and he was the perfect candidate. He said he wished he had made better notes because he now needed the research information about resumes we had covered in class. I smiled. Of course I would help, and we developed a list of resources that he would need. He returned every day with news to share and, by the end of the week, Pete had a large folder of information on the Toronto employer--names and addresses, mission statement, financial data, project reports, and more. We were ready to begin his resume and letter. Another week and three drafts, and finally the package was complete. Mail it off, wait two weeks, follow up with a telephone call, and let me know, I told him.

In mid-September, Pete burst in one afternoon. The message was obvious: They liked his application. He had taken my advice about the telephone follow-up and prepared questions and answers. When they said they may have something suitable in the future, he asked if he might come for an interview. Surprised, they said sure, if he was in the area he should drop by.

Again he was asking me what to do. I asked if he could afford a flight to Toronto. He thought so. I asked if he owned interview clothes. He thought it wouldn't be a problem. I suggested that he check seat sale schedules, compare them with his university work, come up with two or three potential dates in the next few weeks, then call them back

to set something up while they still remembered him. Magic. He had an appointment. Two weeks later, he had an interview. Two weeks after that, he had a job offer!

Pete dropped by again just before Christmas. It was a quiet day after exams, students had left campus for their holiday break, and I was preparing materials for the next semester. He had a little gift--an elegantly wrapped box of truffles. He was nervous as he thanked me and I was nervous as I thanked him, each for different (but probably the same) thing--friendship and honouring each other by taking the time to talk.

A hectic winter semester passed and soon another round of final exams began and ended. The halls were vacated as I worked quietly in my office on an April morning. There was a little knock, a very quiet one. I looked up to see Pete's face, smiling through the window. He entered when I waved and quietly announced that it was his last day here, that he would be leaving for Toronto on the weekend and would begin his new job on the first of May. He would be back in August of course, for the wedding. But he wanted to say good bye and thanks for all the help. There was nothing more to say.

Good luck in your new job, Pete. Good luck in your new city, Pete. Good luck in your married life, Pete. I think you'll do just fine. Because, for a fellow who has so many questions, you gave me a lot of answers. Thanks Pete for the conversations--the ones in which you spoke, but also the ones you didn't know about.

* * *

Teachers often say that if they can help just one person's life to be better, then what they are doing is worthwhile. The overuse and generalized nature of such clichés, however, diminishes their potential to serve as any kind of beacon for beginning professors. For how are we to really know any one student? Then, how are we to judge if what we have offered truly helps them? Finally, how can we possibly assume we have helped them to the extent that their lives are better?

In institutions where the "qualitative dimensions of university life and professional practice are given lesser value... [where] issues related to the quality of teaching, quality of

students' learning experience, and quality of instructional life for faculty and students in general are not often given much overt attention" (Cole & Knowles, 1995, p. 147), instructors must negotiate what Pinnegar (1995) calls a theory-practice divide to discover balance in responding to institutional needs as well as personal needs of students, all the while abiding by our own values, beliefs, and principles. As a beginning professor, truly effective teaching takes significant time as I attempt to address these issues. Not only are personal connections with students important to effective teaching and learning relationships, but I value them as rewarding parts of my work. The time required to teach this way, however, becomes onerous, particularly when other things appear more valued, or at least more measured, by the academic community.

The benefits and rewards of personalized attention do not come without uncertainty and doubt as instructors search for appropriate balance and trade-offs in our teaching lives. Featherstone, Munby, and Russell (1997) respond to this dilemma: "The heart of teaching is taking risks to get to places when you really don't know where you are going" (p. 43). This notion of risk taking is important in teaching since "problems of practice do not come to us labelled, either theoretically or practically" (Pinnegar, 1997, p. 58). Instructors, Pinnegar says, must recognize opportunities and respond quickly because of "simultaneity, multidimensionality, history, and publicness" (1997, p. 59) of these interactions.

From my experience, spontaneous reaction to chance circumstances is only a first step. Instructors must also be sensitive to a student's perspective and respond in a student's best interest regardless of competing pressures. It would seem others share this understanding:

> Teaching will test every part of you: your knowledge, organization, patience and imagination. But these things aren't enough. To truly help someone in their quest to become, you must open your mind to see things the way they do and, more importantly, you must possess the passion to bring those kids to see that they matter in the grand scheme of things, that they can be much more than they thought they could. That the world is still full of opportunity and wonder. (Featherstone, Munby & Russell, 1997, p. 47)

Finally, the conviction of the instructor will either cement or negate a meaningful connection. "Teachers need to exhibit confidence so that students can trust and then risk doing their best" (Pinnegar, 1997, p. 66).

Pete, my student in *Learning About Students*, was one of 175 in this class. In classes of this size, it is difficult to personally connect with many of the students, let alone know if their lives might be changed by our brief relationships with them. The context of my relationship with Pete, therefore, is perhaps what made this particular connection one that is truly unique and rewarding for both of us, for surely it was serendipity that each of us trusted, acted, and reacted in ways that encouraged and supported the other.

Even as it was occurring, I knew this connection with Pete was a honour. Staying connected was even more wondrous in view of both of our busy schedules. This type of sustained and rewarding association with a student, although rare in my brief teaching experience, is among the most memorable. "Teaching's most satisfying moments tend to be those when a teacher 'connects' with a student and makes a difference to that individual" (Featherstone, Munby & Russell, 1997, p. 8). We had made a difference, each to the other, and it remains one of the most satisfying of my teaching experiences.

* * *

A TIME FOR TEACHING

The elephants have taught me their language. Much of it
I cannot hear but I've filled in the spaces with invention,
which is how most people listen to language anyway.

From Elephant Winter
by Kim Echlin (1997)

Gambling Games and Grievous Acts: Learning about Wrong Turns

Plagiarism. The word reverberates with dark and evil, unscrupulous and conniving, high risk and severe penalties. But as a student, I encountered the word with only casual curiosity. Its occasional appearance in a course syllabus or cursory mention at the start of a semester suggested a common-sense understanding that required little explanation. During graduate studies the word took on more importance as instructors cautioned us as we began research projects.

It is a term, however, that took on significant meaning for me in my early days of teaching. In front of a large class of 175 undergraduate students, and as required by university policy, I addressed plagiarism, breezing through a definition and summary of penalties. Of course there were no questions when I asked. Of course everyone understood its meaning and its implications. Of course I had fulfilled my teaching duty.

The day, a Wednesday in February, that a Teaching Assistant presented identical student assignments jolted me. I checked to be sure. They were so identical that both contained the same misspelled words and print errors. They were duplicate copies alright.

I wanted to believe this was an innocent error. It must be; who would do this? It was only a 5% assignment. I really couldn't imagine someone risking this for such little potential gain. Further, both students were from the same lab. Surely they would expect to get caught if it was foul play. I didn't want to blame or criticize the students without knowing more, and I certainly didn't want to jump to conclusions with a TA who was also

a student and who I was, in fact, training to teach. I searched for plausible explanations for this implausible coincidence but none seemed convincing. The TA looked at me with scepticism as I rattled on, but she took my cue and also refrained from judgmental comments. I thanked her for bringing the papers to my attention and she prepared to leave, most assuredly wondering about my sense of reality. I was beginning to wonder about it myself and hastily confessed that I was not sure how to handle such situations, but that I would appreciate her keeping it confidential for the time being and that I would keep her informed.

I sank into my chair, perplexed, wondering how two intelligent university students could sign their names to identical assignments--and not even particularly well-done ones! Never mind the reason just now, I thought. What must I do? I pulled out my memo on plagiarism and began to read carefully through the fine print. The consequences were stiff, the process was complex, and worst, it started with the instructor. I must interview the two students.

I advised administration and set appointments with the students for that Friday. I hoped the mystery would be solved quickly and quietly. The meeting would be in my office, well away from offices of administrators and clerical staff, and I had prepared my strategy. By the meeting time, my head ached with tension.

Janis arrived, listened calmly, and agreed the material looked identical. Yes, it was her signature and her work, but no, she had not shared it. She did offer an explanation, however, of printer errors in the university lab which may have, unbeknownst to her, spit out extra copies of her work. But most definitely she had originated the assignment and most definitely she had not knowingly shared it. As proof, she offered her disc. The explanation seemed reasonable.

Thirty minutes later, I remained optimistic this would be settled quickly, but Jack's was an almost identical replay of what Janis had said. He too agreed the work looked identical, he confirmed that it bore his signature, he offered a similar printer explanation,

and he swore it was his original work. He did not think to offer a disc, and I did not ask. My outward calm surprised me as I quickly ended the meeting, advising him of the next steps. I needed him to think of the disc.

Reading Week followed and most students were away from campus, but Jack had left a telephone message requesting a second meeting. Because he hadn't offered the disc, I could only hope he was planning to confess and apologize for the misunderstanding and, in so doing, ease his penalty and both of our minds.

On the following Monday as Jack and I met and he denied any wrongdoing, my heart pleaded with him not to make the situation more complex, not to test a bureaucracy on policy that imposed stiff penalties, and not to subject himself to what I thought would be a humiliating experience if the matter went to a hearing. But he could not read my heart and heard only my quiet voice and, in response, repeated his innocence. Almost as an afterthought, he said he could bring a disc--not that day, unfortunately, but maybe by tomorrow, if he could find it. He readied to leave, and I made no attempt to press the conversation further.

I was truly baffled, by his behaviour as well as my own. Obviously he had thought of the disc, so why didn't he bring it? Further, why was I stalling in dealing with Jack? Was I complicating the issue? In whose favour or defence? I could not condone the act I suspected, but I was truly reluctant to be the judge. I was also reluctant to refer him to administration for them to judge. I wanted Jack to do whatever it took; he was the one, after all, who must live with the outcome.

I tried to sort my feelings. If Jack was not aware that representing someone else's work as one's own violated policy, he was clearly aware now. If he was not aware of the consequences at the outset, he was surely aware now. If he thought the first meeting was merely a formality, he must know better by now. He must see this situation was not disappearing, so if he had the evidence, why not bring it, and if he didn't have it, why suggest otherwise? Why not end this, sooner rather than later, with me, rather than them?

I had tried so hard to create the environment, yet had failed to inspire Jack to grasp the opportunity. I didn't want to stall but I also didn't want to take the next step of either forcing Jack's story or referring him to administration. But I knew we were running out of time and reasons, and I racked my brain for the rest of that day. Finally, inspiration! One last try! I would prepare a new lecture for the following class, one that dealt with the ethics of electronic communication, a topic appropriate for the course and only slightly out of order. I would make explicit connections between moral obligation and legal responsibility when using others' information and have students pair up to discuss their experiences with WWW information. I had stumbled on a humorous "Big Brother Watching" article which would lighten the tone of the presentation. As I moved through the lesson the following day, I scanned the two-storey lecture theatre for Jack. He was there and our eyes connected for just one, but very critical, moment. I hoped.

The next morning, administration telephoned. Jack had come in late the previous afternoon and confessed to finding another copy of the assignment that he thought looked better than his own. He picked it from the computer tray, signed it, and handed it in. I sank in my chair and listened. The penalty of an automatic fail grade was what I had expected, but at least he had spared himself a formal hearing, and at least administration had viewed expulsion as too severe in view of it being a first offence and his coming forward to confess. Should I feel good? I realized I didn't feel anything just then. I was numb. In my journal that day I wrote:

> *I agree with the outcome, but my heart breaks a little for Jack. I'm not sure*
> *he can survive this pressure. It turns out it's his second strike. Low marks*
> *forced him to leave for two years and come back with 20 credits from*
> *another institution. That must speak to his dedication... I'm crossing my*
> *fingers for him. (Journal, March 7, 1998)*

* * *

Erickson and MacKinnon (1991) suggest that the capacity to see a situation is largely determined by the interpretative, cognitive frames that are available to us.

Gambling Games and Grievous Acts describes student behaviour which I, the instructor, interpreted as unacceptable, indefensible, and unethical.

Crites (1975) indicates that narratives invite interpretation and further suggests interpretations are commentary, secondary sources that lure new interpretations, none of which can completely explain the events. Erickson and MacKinnon (1991) suggest that "accomplishing significant shifts in our personal and institutional perspective will require individuals who are prepared to take personal and professional risks" (p. 34). Certainly this episode introduces risk on a number of levels.

Gambling Games tells a story of a student who knowingly submitting another's assignment, expecting, but not knowing for sure, that it would produce a higher mark than his own. In doing so, he also risked being discovered. If he was discovered, he risked dealing with another administrative process, knowing the serious results of an earlier experience. Finally, he risked a range of possible outcomes that included a failing grade, possible expulsion, and a permanent mark on his record.

These were all external risks, however, and the risks to Jack's integrity and self-esteem are perhaps even more significant and more complex. Jack implicated another student, and as a result of the plagiarism being discovered, risked the respect of this student, other peers, professors, and administration.

I can only guess at the reasons for such risk. I can imagine Jack panicked at a deadline for which he was not fully prepared. While his attendance at the computer lab where he "found" the other student's assignment suggested his own good intentions to complete his work, I can speculate that as a student struggling in a second attempt to succeed in a university system where students compete for relative grades, that the possibility of a higher mark overshadowed other risks. He may have speculated that with five instructors marking 175 assignments, there would be minimal chance that the same marker would review these two assignments. He may have rationalized that, even if the duplication was discovered, he could explain it as a misunderstanding or minor

carelessness. He may also have counted on the TA, me, or administration to ignore the issue, for whatever reason.

On the other hand, his attitude may have been one of complete disregard or disrespect for the university and its policies, and his intent may have been purely to deceive. Perhaps he even hoped he would be discovered and that he could then test a system that had tested him. In view of my general beliefs about students' actions (however naive), and students' motives (however callow), and my intuition about this situation (however tenuous), I chose not to consider this as a possibility.

While I could not rationalize or condone this behaviour and therefore could not ignore it, I questioned the issues which may have influenced my own response. There is no question I dreaded confrontation, and dealing with plagiarism offered such possibility. I also wanted to avoid a process that I envisioned as painful to the student, and probably others, especially when it seemed to offer minimal opportunities for growth or learning for any of the parties. On another level, I also wondered if by understanding this student, his behaviour, this process, and whatever outcomes, I might be better equipped to deal proactively with potential situations in the future.

My reflections, it turns out, are multi-levelled and still muddled. However, I have sorted a number of considerations that have helped me to think about this experience. I have thought about students as they make transitions to a university, I have looked at structures within a university that may influence students' risk behaviours, and I have wondered about proactive strategies to deal with ethical issues such as plagiarism so that students like Jack might have other experiences.

Newberg (1991), based on his study of students as they progress through various educational institutions, argues that social, emotional, and academic transitions are often abrupt and awkward for students, but that dynamically conservative institutions are resistant to change and expend great energy to stay the same. In fact, he adds, change within educational institutions is often mandated rather than evolutionary. Certainly I could

imagine this student may experience awkward social, emotional, and academic transitions. He appeared older than many of the students in this second-year course, his physical appearance was that of a minority group, he was returning to an institution where he had experienced academic difficulties, and this forced withdrawal may have left him with emotional baggage that had not been sorted.

The dichotomy that Newberg (1991) presents made me wonder about the magnitude of difference as students come to a university, often participating in classes much larger, and therefore more impersonal, than those of their earlier education. I considered the alienation many students must experience and wondered whether instructors (or others) could somehow bridge the gaps to ease the transition.

It seems my wonderings may also be those of other researchers. For example, a number of studies suggest that socio-economic shifts have altered educational expectations as institutions struggle to balance past and present with future, individual and local with global, and economics and material resources with human potential processes (Emberley, 1996; Russell & Korthagen, 1995; Zeichner, 1995). These issues seemed ones I was dealing with, so perhaps socio-economic factors also played a role.

Attitudes, I thought, also influence ethical behaviours. Kleiner and Lord (1999) found that 84% of college students believe they need to cheat to get ahead in the world and that 90% believe that cheaters never pay the price. Students often see other professionals lying on their resumes and massaging earnings numbers, and even academics have been charged with providing improper tutorial assistance to students to keep them in good standing so they could play on university teams ("Report Says," 1999). Whatever the reason, however, Ramsden (1992) points out that the heavy assessment burden leads students to adopt coping strategies to get through courses and programs, and that their concern regarding assessment often overrides other considerations.

I wondered about the effect of evaluation systems in my classrooms. I questioned the effect of a system that ranked students relative to each other but was not equipped to

identify start points in their learning nor establish levels of progression throughout a term, only general readiness for the next university level.

I also questioned the effect of technology on students and whether education on its ethical use might address the seduction of simple convenience and newfound possibility that can lead to its abuse. I acknowledged that I had not given ethical issues more than passing mention in my classrooms but I had insisted on computer technology for our assignments and encouraged students to utilize university facilities in this regard. I had not elaborated on the various forms of plagiarism so that when students were faced with whatever sort of temptation, they might be reminded of the risks. Also, would the amount of time I allocated to discussing ethics suggest to students it might be a trivial issue? Perhaps by error of omission, I had somehow failed my students. Certainly I had not helped Jack to make a better decision, and if not me, then who?

Russell and Munby (1991) suggest that such puzzles of practice give rise to reflecting and reframing or "learning to see data in new ways" (p. 165). Perhaps Newberg's (1991) process to address such contradictions can guide us. He suggests three steps: a) recognizing and addressing dissonant issues; b) reframing them as pervasive ones that require systems thinking in which we try to see the system through the eyes of others and search jointly for solutions; and c) redesign systems which influence physical, logistic, and cultural aspects. His proposal offers interesting possibilities about recognizing and addressing plagiarism, and indeed other issues, as we search for understandings of systems issues relating to students and teaching. Is plagiarism related to coping strategies of alienated students who face difficult transitions? Do we recognize plagiarism as a pervasive issue? What forms does it assume? What teaching strategies and systems change might influence attitudes and behaviours relating to plagiarism and other unethical practices?

Bateson (1994) offers this reflection on redesigning systems: "Because we live in a world of change and diversity, we are privileged to enter, if only peripherally, into a

diversity of visions, and beyond that to include them in the range of responsible caring" (p. 12). Educators must ask, are we engaged in "imagining, living, and telling new competing stories that question the plot line of the sacred story" (Clandinin, 1995, p. 31) as we grapple with complex ethical issues?

Issues presented in this narrative suggest a number of educational challenges. Bateson (1989) emphasizes the importance of appropriate responses to these challenges: "Unless teachers can hold up a model of lifelong learning and adaptation, graduates are likely to find themselves trapped into obsolescence as the world changes around them" (p. 14). Instructors must be encouraged to consider what Erickson and MacKinnon (1991) identify as personal and professional risks, not just to see and reframe the issues, but to act on them.

Gambling Games and Grievous Acts speaks of risks: It describes one student's risk-taking behaviour and one instructor's risk-taking response. It suggests there may be risks in dealing inappropriately with controversial issues and other risks in treating them casually or even ignoring them. The analysis links Newberg's theory of institutional reluctance toward change to bridging transitions as students enter university, to understanding contextual influences on plagiarism, to reframing risk behaviour using his theoretical proposal for educational change.

Perhaps educators and institutions are not resistant to change at all. Perhaps the difficulty is sharing our individual and various attempts so that others might come to new understandings of students and innovative ways of teaching ethical behaviours, to provide what Newberg (1991) calls models for adaptation. Perhaps by sharing our reframing strategies, we can uncover new possibilities as institutions plan, manage, and adapt to complex types of change. Surely our learning cultures demand such risk.

A TIME FOR TEACHING

This school globe is a parcel of my past,
A basket of pluperfect things.
And here I stand with it
Sometime in the summertime
All alone in an empty schoolroom
Where about me stand
Old maps, an abacus, pictures,
Blackboards, empty desks.
If I raise my hand
No tall teacher will demand
What I want.
But if someone in authority
Were here, I'd say
Give me this old world back ...

from "The School Globe"
by James Reaney (1949)

Stopping to Reflect: Lessons in Life-long Learning

"Some recover; they learn to walk and talk and feed and dress themselves; they manage in their kitchens and bathrooms; some even learn to drive again." My tired frame slumps heavily in the plastic chair a half dozen rows from the podium. "The loss of mobility and memory means they must relearn old familiar things like cooking a meal or tying their shoelaces. And since they may not regain their earlier abilities, they must be encouraged to try new ways of doing things and develop new interests." I twist at a button on my bulky winter coat now encroaching on the lap of my unknown neighbour, so near and yet so far, in that small auditorium. "They all become tired and frustrated, and some become despondent and depressed and require medication to help cope with their loss." Tears sting my cheeks and I dab them with my damp and ragged tissue. "They may be in hospital from six weeks to six months, but many leave greatly improved and often continue to recover for months and even years afterward." My head hurts but my mind feels numb as I find my notebook and mechanically begin to record the possibilities for "recovery" in the rehabilitation hospital.

Mom has suffered a stroke. Not a traumatic seizure or dramatic fall, not even a specific dizzy spell or throbbing headache. Just a gradual weakness over twenty-four hours that prompted her to summon my youngest sister, her baby, to her farm and be persuaded to return to their home in town for an overnight stay. And from that mid-November sleep-over, to be persuaded to drive into the city hospital for a check-up the next day. By which time, she was really weak--too weak to walk alone, too weak to remove her own winter coat and boots, too weak to protest her baby helping her--and too scared to talk about it.

We celebrated her 75th birthday just last August. Mom was radiant in a sleek gold pantsuit with patent pumps and handbag. Trim auburn hair (she had not yet conceded to grey) was professionally groomed as usual, as were gleaming fingernails. Smiling eyes beamed as she kissed brothers and sisters and in-laws and aunts and uncles and cousins and grandchildren and great-grandchildren and friends and neighbours at the rural-school-turned-meeting hall, decorated for her special day. She flitted from one fold-out table to the next, thanking her farm neighbours for coming out and feigning great surprise to see ones who had travelled. She accepted cards and flowers, she posed for photos, she passed cake, and she made a little speech to the grand gathering. She hadn't enjoyed so many official duties since their 50th wedding anniversary some years before when Dad was still with us, and while she never spoke of it, we all knew she missed that support especially at social gatherings like this.

When the last guests had rounded the corner from the old school yard, we set about sorting the aftermath with Mom helping to remove streamers and flowers, finding containers for left-over squares and cakes, and washing coffee cups and trays. After declaring the hall sufficiently restored to order, she led twenty-plus extended family members home to the family farm and we picnicked and played until the evening chill and exhausted youngsters meant it was time to call it a day. It had been a glorious day, by any standard. And it was only three short months ago.

Tonight she sits in a bleak hospital room, struggling with a chafing leg brace and a wheelchair that won't cooperate in bathrooms and doorways. Her wardrobe comprises loose sweat suits and flannel pyjamas that she can manage with her one responsive hand and, ever so faintly, she runs unpolished nails through wiry flat hair. She has traded the patent pumps for velcro runners, and even they take forever to get on and off. Bathroom visits have become an impossible juggling act that demands help with even the simplest task of ripping toilet paper. At mealtimes, she suffers a huge bib which the attendant fastens without her permission. They bring soup that is too cold and water that is too warm, and they scold her in front of us. We look at each other in dismay as she growls her disapproval at them and at the world.

It is as if we have walked into a movie--a heart-wrenching, sobbing-sad movie--in which our mother has been forced to surrender control of her active, satisfying, and self-sufficient retirement life. Unbelievably quickly and without warning, she is at the mercy of others--others who assume she surrendered her dignity when she lost her mobility; others who assume she traded pride when she traded footwear. They don't know who she was three months ago, and they don't know who she is today.

But Mom has made progress. Her speech is slowly returning, and she is remembering names of kitchen gadgets and places she has visited. She remembers where she places her purse and pills and who telephoned yesterday. Luckily she has always remembered us, and luckily she wants us near. Luckily, too, she has learned to cry (ever so softly) in front of us.

She is crying, ever so softly, as I enter her room after the briefing in the hospital auditorium. I have been assigned to attend to the medical presentation on behalf of the sisters, to bring back the news while the others stay near her. Afterward I join my sisters crowding around Mom on her narrow hospital bed, soothing her and each other, until we take her for one final bathroom visit before saying goodnight, well beyond the posted visiting hours.

We sisters do not talk of the "recovery" information un:.l we are alone in the quiet of the parkade hallway. And then we speak in low whispers, partly bet.~use this is a hospital, partly because of the late hour, but mostly because we are afraid to sp..ɔk such things out loud. I brief them from my small tear-stained notebook but it seems too m.. ˜h to consider at this midnight hour and so we don't say much. Eventually the sisters—her daughters—quietly head to various parts of the parkade to locate vehicles which will take us home where we will lie awake through the night, also crying softly while trying to imagine the future.

The days stretch into weeks as we try to balance work and family with treks to the hospital to comfort, coach, and cheer Mom. Eventually she is deemed well enough to return home, and on a bright Saturday morning in January, armed with medical supports and optimism, we say goodbye to the familiar hospital corridors, games rooms, and cafeteria that have become her unwanted home.

We were not out of the woods yet, however. Something we had always cherished now became a burden: the privacy of farm life had become isolation with its inherent physical and emotional risks. Another major decision loomed, and when spring arrived we prepared to move Mom from her overstuffed farm home of 50-plus years to a compact two-bedroom condominium in town. The decision to sell the family farm (Figure 10) was a difficult one that required so much thought and then unwavering action, tremendous patience and delicacy, and remarkable fellowship among a mother and her daughters and our families.

These tough decisions provided many new learning experiences, and our family became a model of life-long learning that summer. Mom traded her tranquil farm life with acres of yard and garden for a few flower pots on a condominium balcony within whispering distance of people above and below her. While she plucked the courage to renew her driver's license when she was well enough, she has yet to take to the roads and instead has learned to accept offers from others and even to summon the local handi-bus.

She learned how to operate her security system, program her cellular telephone, and shop for frozen dinners. She learned how to do whatever was necessary, not always with a smile but always with mental grit, to make changes in her daily living. Best of all, she has learned to laugh (and to cry softly) about 75 years of good times. Truly this is life-long learning that comes from tremendous discipline and diligent practice.

Figure 10: New Beginnings: Family Farm "Sold". Photograph from collection of Kay McFadyen (1998).

I remember weeping at those brief words, "Some recover." But now I understand them differently. Now I have an appreciation for the wisdom and care with which they were spoken. Now I understand that while they were intended to be hopeful words for everyone in that audience, they mean so many different things to different people at different times. Now I see how much learning is required in all the stages in our lives, including our senior years when we may expect life to be less challenging, and now more than ever, I appreciate the importance of cultivating a mind-set that allows us to keep on learning when we are least able. Thank you, my Mother, my Teacher.

* * *

Clandinin (1995) speaks of awakenings as we learn by telling stories and of transformations which change our lives as we relive them in our stories. My mother's stroke, like many unexpected events in my life, served as an awakening for me. The transformations that followed took many forms over the following months, and many of them related to my teaching.

The teaching semester had been a hectic one, even before Mom's stroke in November. A number of journal reflections capture the frenzied pace of teaching three undergraduate courses in two faculties during that fall semester.

> *Friday was such a hectic day I thought I wouldn't even be able to drive home. It started with an errand across campus before my early meeting with TAs... After the meeting I was inspired to prepare a mid-term evaluation for my 11 AM class (political decision--great session on Wednesday, students feeling good on a Friday, Halloween Friday no less, and timing was right with labs nearly finished)... Then for two hours after class, students lined up at my door. No dilemmas or crabbing, just wanting information or reassurance. The volume of traffic boggles my mind and exhausts my body. They line up two and three at a time. At 3 PM, I had to leave to go to [another building] to mark projects in the quiet of a distant lab. How bad is that? (Journal, November 2, 1997)*

This tone continued in my writing throughout the following week.

> *I had such an exhausting day yesterday, I'm desperate to try a new strategy of scheduling time OUT of my office to get work done. I taught until Noon, had at least a dozen students stay to ask "quick" questions, so didn't get away until nearly 12:30, then returned to my office and had students already lined up, and it didn't stop until 5 PM... No lunch, no bathroom, nothing checked off my list. It was nuts! (Journal, November 4, 1997)*

Several days later, it continued.

> *This is probably not a good time to write--I'm so flippin' tired I can't stand it. I marked until 11 last night and had a productive day (until 7:30 PM) today. But the really tiring part is what I'm not in charge of--what others (TAs) do (or rather, what they don't do)... Stop this insanity! Today I'd like to quit this craziness--to smile my nicest smile, and say thanks but no thanks. What colour is burnout? (Journal, November 6, 1997)*

These journal entries remind me of Guilfoyle's experience as a female, untenured, beginning professor as she writes of the stress, of not wanting to go back, of the nightmare of her initial year, and of feeling off-balanced and harried (Guilfoyle, Hamilton, Pinnegar

& Placier, 1995). Other researchers echo sentiments of first-year "turmoil and exhaustion" and "intense, often chaotic, experiences" (Russell, 1995, p. 95, 107), and "the first year of teaching [being] universally exhausting and demanding" (Featherstone, Munby & Russell, 1997, p. 3). Cranton remembers it as "probably the worst year of her life...[with] the teaching she faced every day that dominated her nightmares" (1998, p. 194). I was not alone, it seems, in my frustrations with first-year teaching.

However, while I wrote at length about its overwhelming pressures, I realized later that my journal revealed little of the turmoil resulting from our mother's medical situation. In fact, despite daily journal entries, my first mention of the squall that we were living through appeared several days after Mom's hospitalization:

> *[following a lengthy entry that dealt with a number of teaching issues]...*
> *PS: Did I mention Mom had a stroke last week and that I'm now spending*
> *3-4 hours each day at the hospital? Poor dear soul, what a horror to be*
> *dancing one day and paralyzed the next! (Journal, December 4, 1997)*

Perhaps like a tourist taking refuge during a storm, I shielded my inner self from the storm I had not seen coming. Perhaps the teaching commitments blocked out the unknown and provided some sense of control, or at least familiarity, during the chaos. And so what seemed already gale-force winds in the new teaching landscape grew to a tornado frenzy when a family crisis was added.

January presented another heavy teaching semester (and I felt obliged to continue since I had already committed the previous summer), but to my surprise, the next four months seemed almost calm as I worked through successive weeks by compartmentalizing my life, priorizing tasks in teaching three courses while continuing with my doctoral research, doing a share of caring for our mother, and reacquainting myself with my own immediate family.

This structure, it seems, along with the improved condition of our Mother, provided some order and balance in the various parts of my life and, to my later amazement, by mid-February my journal seemed brimming with optimism.

*Reading Week was wonderful, refreshing, revitalizing-- read three books,
watched movies, picked up my needlepoint, did my hair and nails.
Whoopta! But I never really put teaching out of my mind either it seems. I
wonder how many weeks it would take. Ah, perspective, got reacquainted
with [husband] once again--it took awhile to get a conversational rhythm,
but it came--the price of single-minded work, work, work, sprinkled with
worry. (Journal, February 23, 1998)*

Russell (1995) indicates that the initial turmoil of university teaching does get much

better very quickly, and my journal seemed to reflected this experience. I was learning

about teaching and its demands and stresses, but I was also learning about what Whitehead

(1995) describes as a living contradiction as I considered the gap between my personal

values and my professional practice. I was denying my philosophy on balanced living as I

coped with overwhelming teaching responsibilities, coupled with the emergency of caring

for an ageing parent in medical distress, that precluded exercise, relaxation, and social time

with family and friends. The following journal entry confirms this tension.

*...G'nite; my dog needs a walk, my head needs fresh air, I need to call [my
daughter]. God, these are the really important things. I must not let work
control me--physically, intellectually, and emotionally. It will chew me up
and spit me out. The things that are really important will last much beyond
this tiny phase in my life. Tomorrow's a new day! (Journal, November 7,
1997)*

The transformation of which Clandinin (1995) speaks surfaced in my journal as I

began to carve time for self and family alongside teaching and researching efforts. I

consciously began reconnecting with family, more often and at their convenience, and I put

aside worn excuses and resumed a physical exercise program. I resolved to attend to what

Cole and Knowles (1995) refer to as the tension between duty to self and duty to others

that had been a part of the "turmoil and exhaustion" (Russell, 1995, p. 95) of my first year

of teaching.

By retelling the story of our mother's stroke and reflecting on journal accounts of

the transformations within my teaching and personal life, I also became aware of other

changes in my thinking about teaching that were not recorded in my journals. Over the

summer, I had re-evaluated my priorities and determined that I would lighten my teaching

load to allow me to attend more to my research. I did not renew two of the three sessional

teaching contracts for the following year, and I began reading and writing with a renewed passion likely fuelled by the shock of our mother no longer having the ability, or even the desire, for things she so passionately embraced prior to her stroke.

At about mid-point of the following fall semester, the words and tone in my journal writing suggest there had been significant physical and emotional transformation:

> ...so what else am I feeling as my teaching is reduced to one course (albeit the course from hell)? Mostly, less exhausted. I come in around 8:30 AM and work until 5:30 or 6 PM, then usually an hour or two at night, but at least it's at home--about 2/3 of the load of last year. I still take weekend work, but not nearly as much. Lessons feel more relaxed; I've built up files of teaching material and am feeling more comfortable in the big theatre (could be from more experience, could be from less stress). I'm spending more time with TAs, especially right after their labs, to hear their teaching stories... Overall, I'm feeling more balance in my life. Teaching fewer courses has allowed me to stretch other parts of my life which is good and long overdue. (Journal, October 23, 1998)

Similar sentiments continue the following semester.

> It feels good to have established a pattern of sorts for the semester. I have committed to fitness once again and am running 3-4 times each week... More good news--word from [professional association] that my proposal for March conference has been accepted... Lecture went well today... Plus congrats to our first published student. TAs are also keen with some neat teaching ideas... A nice way to begin a course, with keeners and congrats... (Journal, January 20, 1999)

I had learned a number of things--about myself, about my values and beliefs, and about my teaching practice--and this learning helped me to understand Whitehead's (1995) contradiction theory and Clandinin's (1995) notion of awakening based on retelling and reflecting. I was forced to acknowledge that I had limitations--mental, physical, and emotional--regarding the kinds and quality of activities and relationships that I could effectively pursue or maintain, especially in times of crisis. I realized that each of these activities and relationships affected other parts of my life in significant ways. I acknowledged that because crisis does not occur when we have time for it, that I needed to build more flexibility into both my personal and professional life. I also discovered that, like my mother, I had a resilience to deal with unexpected storms on my journey.

The most significant awakening, perhaps, came in realizing how important it is to remain open, to continue to learn new things as we face tensions and contradictions, and to constantly reflect on that learning as our lives continue to change. In Russell's (1995) words, "Education for 'lifelong professional learning' needs... the perspective of 'reflective practice' and recognition of the authority of experience in relation to other authorities..." (p. 107). Bateson (1989) supports the importance of this type of learning, not just as a guide to instructional practice but as a model for students' learning: "Unless teachers can hold up a model of lifelong learning and adaptation, graduates are likely to find themselves trapped into obsolescence as the world changes around them" (p. 14).

Just as learning experiences affect more than students, so too do learning processes extend beyond classrooms. Telling stories of our experiences, both within and outside of classrooms, allows instructors to learn from them. It is this kind of reflection that facilitates the awakenings and prompts the transformations that perhaps define real lifelong learning. Mom taught me that.

<p style="text-align:center">* * *</p>

Each of the narratives in this section deals with particular teaching issues. *Learning About Students* is the story about a chance encounter with a student that unfolds into a trusting and caring relationship that continues over several semesters. *Gambling Games* describes a different type of teaching experience that required immediate and difficult decisions, but which left many unanswered questions. The third narrative, *Stopping to Reflect,* tells of awakenings and transformations that constitute life-long learning as instructors attempt to balance personal values and professional practice. The title of this Chapter, therefore, became *A Time for Teaching* to reflect the temporal dimensions of complex teaching activities explored in each of the narratives.

Crites (1975) says narrative "aesthetically reproduces the temporal tensions of experience, a moving present tensed between and every moment embracing a memory of what has gone before and an activity projected, underway" (p. 26). He explains that

narrative reflects lived time by reproducing it in a story line as well as by projecting it in its characters whose actions are infused with past memory and future anticipation. In this way, narrative is not only a process by which to attain particular teaching ends, but can be seen as a metaphor for the complex and often indescribable learning process.

Carr (1986) suggests that narratives enhance reality so that we might satisfy coherence. In this way, he feels narratives may not represent the world as such, but project human reality where there is no tangible, physical evidence. For Carr, narrative includes an understanding, as opposed to an explanation, of human action. This understanding, he states, does not attempt to uncover causes, but instead suggests what justified the action. Narrative then involves complex understandings of often intangible thoughts and processes from various temporal perspectives that give them a sense of order.

Each of the narratives in this chapter is intended to "aesthetically reproduce the pulse and density of personal life time" (Crites, 1975, p. 29) as it explores abstract learning processes--my own and those of others. Through these narratives, I have attempted to present what Crites terms an honest verbal imagery that registers more than can be accommodated in theories. It is my hope that they have served the two practical functions of narratives to which Carr (1986) refers. First, "...we often need to tell such a story even to ourselves, in order to become clear on what we are about" (p. 61). Second, narratives move individual experience into the realm of social existence by accommodating membership or participation in family, institutional, and community groups where the temporality of actions and experiences can be presented to create meaning for others. In this way, narratives such as these may be beginnings for other instructors to explore various temporal orders of learning in their own contexts.

Summary: A Time for Teaching

This chapter explores the temporal dimensions of various forms of teaching outside traditional boundaries of university classrooms. The three narratives are similar in that

each episode begins with a single event which demands immediate response and each results in reciprocal learning by both the students and the instructor.

Their similarity, however, may end there as each of the narratives presents instructors and learners as individuals in unique relationships and in unique teaching contexts. While some teaching occurs naturally and without prompts, at other times it is deliberate and methodical. Some unfolds slowly and continually based on the parties' needs or receptivity, while other teaching is forced and urgent when particular situations demand that kind of attention. Always there are circumstances that contribute to or distract from actions and processes that change the timing of teaching by hastening, slowing, regulating, prompting, and sometimes even arresting the learning.

These narratives are offered as potential awakenings for instructors as we attempt to recognize and create opportunities for learning. They are intended to spark ideas and dialogue regarding how dissonant issues can be reframed in our efforts to better understand how teaching occurs, particularly in unexpected circumstances, and how we might develop life-long learning models that guide our own professional development as well as serve as examples for our students.

CHAPTER X

TEACHING AWAKENINGS

No one understands the world
Only how it evolves without us
All we can do is imagine
the world continues while we sleep
Though we don't believe it

from "Sleep Under My Shoulder"
by Sid Marty (1973)

CHAPTER X
TEACHING AWAKENINGS

> Sometimes I awake in the middle of the night and there is an instant when a dream or just the residue of all the images my memory has churned up during the day makes me imagine that I'm back in some moment in the past... There is always the effort my mind makes then to hold the illusion ... as if it is the mind's job not so much to see things as they really are but simply to make some sort of sense of them, to fit them into whatever general order it has already arranged for itself. In its way, the time I have spent here now writing these words has seemed this same hovering between waking and dream, this effort to hold intact an illusion; except in memory there is no final awakening to the actual truth of things, only the dream, only the little room the mind makes for itself with no doorway to the outside.
>
> *from Where She Has Gone*
> *by Nino Ricci (1997)*

Roadmaps, Mindmaps, and Dreams:
Imagining Better Teaching

<u>Saturday, June 20</u>
I dream most nights. That is, I remember what I dream most nights. And most of my dreams are what I'd term "sensible" as compared to others' fantastical wild and crazy tales... But last night I had a weird one...

* * *

A group of mean boys were taunting and threatening and teasing and harassing some people, me included I guess. They were in a dugout-kinda shelter, like the baseball diamond at our country school. I'm not positive they were all boys, but they were nasty, and I was scared.

Then I was apart from the big crowd, maybe in the outdoor biffy at the ball diamond, on a bit of a hill, like the one at the school before they moved the toilets down the hill. So I could see the crowd and I could see the guys on the other side of the crowd tucked in the dugout. And I was with someone, I don't know who. Suddenly we were aware the boys were going to do something really scary and we would be hurt despite our biffy shelter on the hill.

Then this grenade or huge firecracker thing came sizzling through the air past the crowd, right toward us. We froze for a second, then ran out of the shelter (the outhouse) and the line of fire. We crouched down, waiting... then I jumped up and grabbed the fuse and threw it, far and deep into the bushes beyond the field.

* * *

We were safe. At least that's the feeling I had as I awoke to the early sun poking through the blinds, and as I lay in bed on that Saturday morning in June I knew Rob had been among those boys in the baseball dugout. And the connection puzzled and frustrated me, for almost three months had passed since Rob had published his article and my life had settled after the semester ended. Most students were away for the summer, and the pace had shifted for most everyone. I was busy with research and writing and enjoyed the occasional conversations with colleagues that seemed impossible during the regular teaching semesters.

Nothing much further had come of the incident with Rob. I was surprised when he did not immediately appeal his final grade and I waited, rather anxiously, for what I felt must certainly be coming in September when students returned to campus. So too, it seems, were administrators surprised, for every so often a passing comment was made. They brought up his name many times over the summer, but it seemed their information was just as sketchy as my own as I tried to make sense of his actions.

One day, for example, I was told Rob had volunteered to serve as a student representative on the General Faculty Council, but later I learned that he would not be serving. I wasn't sure why, but they had also said that a student challenge might change his serving. Of course, Rob might also have changed his mind and voluntarily withdrawn. I never did learn the reason, but I do know he did not serve on this committee in the fall.

Also, I (and other faculty members) had braced for Rob's grade appeal as September approached. Then I was told not to worry; it didn't look like Rob would be returning. There were problems with Registry, I was told, likely related to outstanding accounts, they thought. Again, I never learned more than that. But I do know he was back in September, and I also know he did not pursue an appeal against his grade in my course.

What really happened with Rob over that summer I never knew. Administrators did not offer more, and I did not ask. I also don't know if administration learned of Rob's behaviour in my class, and if they did, what they must have thought about it, or about my

handling of it. All I knew was that I was relieved not to have to deal further with him, and that relief outweighed my curiosity. I also knew I was beginning to heal, and that the slow comfort of a closing wound was incentive enough for me not to want to probe and explore and risk ripping apart, and that is how I left it. For me, there was "no final awakening to the actual truth of things", only the unfinished dream, only the little room in my mind, "with no doorway to the outside" (Ricci, 1997, p. 318).

* * *

My initial response to Rob's public attack in the campus newspaper and then to administrators' response to the episode had been an acute sense of failure. Payne (1989) suggests these feelings of inadequacy are common when people have goals and invest themselves in actions to attain these goals that sometimes do not produce the anticipated effect.

Payne (1989) constructs a web of theory regarding feelings of failure that offers order in the face of disorder by attempting to explain unbalanced or inappropriate relationships between social or natural events. He suggests, "a failure is only significant for individuals if it intrudes upon a context of events and relations that is significant for the individual" (p. 85). In other words, when a person experiences a sense of failure, its significance is measured relative to the individual's identity within that particular context.

A part of this context is the individual's perception of time and how some event interrupts relationships or processes that would otherwise be continuous and ongoing. When a sequence of events is interrupted by something that has gone wrong, the person might construct a new continuity, one that transcends the interruption. Payne sees this as a playing out of two kinds of time which we use to weigh experience, the first being linear time or the ordinary flow of successive events. The second, however, he describes as "tradition--providing a sense of being that selects, names, preserves, and values that which stands beyond or above the experienced linear flow of time, [a kind that] allows discovery and identification of self with forces outside or beyond the self as it exists in ordinary time"

(p. 106). From these experiences, patterns of success can emerge in the form of growth or new learning.

Clandinin (1995) describes similar kinds of analysis and change in educational contexts as awakenings that occur when we retell stories and as transformation as we later relive them. Carr (1986) also deals with awakenings and transformations through an exploration of temporal unfolding in our stories. He writes, "Sometimes I do have the sense of observing myself act or experience as if I were observing another person, and as if I did not understand what that person was doing and thus needed to be told" (p. 63). He calls this process an interior narration in which the narrator "calls for myself to make sense of the experience, in which I (narrator) tell myself (audience) what I (character) am doing" (p. 63). This type of narrative, he says, is an "activity of self-explication or self-clarification [that can represent] an interiorization of the real social situation in which I find myself" (p. 63).

Perhaps my dream represents the beginning of something akin to interior narration in that I awoke with a sense of calm, possibly related to a transformation from beleaguered teacher to caring leader, despite the vantage point from which few would choose to be observed. As the morning light had interrupted my dream, so had the episode with Rob interrupted my teaching goals and values. My awakening, however, comes not as knowledge which I might share with other new instructors, but as an altered sense of understanding of what it means to be a university instructor, often working through issues and illusions with only our own inexperience to dimly light the way, where roadmaps, if they are available, are not offered, or if they are not available, this information too is not shared with us.

Cranton (1998), however, reminds us that knowing about teaching is very rarely a form of instrumental knowledge that allows us to manipulate and control our environment. She adds that while it is natural that we seek such knowledge, "the more we come to understand teaching and learning... the more we realize that it is neither entirely under our

under our control nor subject to established principles" (p. 14). I have learned the path from experience to awakening and then to transformation can be unpredictable. It may become narrow and then obliterated; it may creep along steep inclines; it may turn to slippery grease under my feet. Surprises always await me. This particular path became what Payne (1989) terms a "pivotal human experience" (p. 11) as I came to new understandings about the importance of understanding students so that I can make sense of teaching experience, my own professional identity, my relationships with colleagues, and the struggle to find my way where storm clouds open over unfamiliar paths. Cranton (1998) suggests the more we understand about teaching and learning, the more we realize how unpredictable the paths can be. "Perhaps becoming a scholar of teaching starts with this understanding," she says (p. 14). Perhaps, then, I am becoming a scholar of teaching.

CHAPTER XI

CONNECTING THE TEACHING STORIES

...My life with that woman has been packed with the unusual. Unusual circumstances, she calls them. Any time she's ever gone out anywhere without me, whether for a day or an hour or for five minutes, she's come back with whopping good stories about what she's seen and heard and what's happened to her. She's come back with reports on these unusual circumstances, these little adventures in which so many people have done so many extraordinary things or behaved in such fabulous or foolish ways...

from A Bolt of White Cloth
by Leon Rooke (1984)

CHAPTER XI
CONNECTING THE TEACHING STORIES

The stories in this thesis speak to many issues that influence the life and teaching of beginning professors. They are about learning in a complex and changing landscape as we attempt to understand our students, our teaching colleagues and administrators, and ourselves--who we are, how we practice, and how we might improve. The stories include reminders of the powerful influences of social, political, and economic forces that often shape our daily teaching practice and longer-term improvement. They address moral and ethical issues in our profession; they portray the many roles we assume, both within the profession as well as in our personal lives; and they invite us to consider the interplay between the two.

The narratives are intended to represent what Greene (1991) terms a "binding together of disparate events" (p. ix) as I attempt to make sense of human thought and behaviour in teaching relationships and situations. The experienced voices from my Advisor and my Response Group over many months and years suggest there is an openness about the texts that invites readers to consider other ways of thinking about teaching and learning. Readers will find their own issues--understanding students, teaching strategies, caring relationships, institutional constraints, moral practice, ethical concerns, professorial roles, and so on--but all the stories are intended to spark thinking and conversations as we search for ways to develop and improve our teaching practice.

Two central themes emerge from these stories. The first relates to the nature and quality of university teaching life and includes issues such as personal attributes of professors, teacher education, and experiences of professional practice. The second theme encompasses the notion of how instructors approach learning--our own and that of our students--to meet challenges of social and political transformation in our institutions.

Cornerstones of Teaching

The quality of professional life in university environments is influenced by a number of individual and institutional factors. Some of these factors are nameable and quantifiable, others are less tangible and more qualitative in nature, and delineating them is difficult. I have chosen, therefore, to call them connections. In this way, I will attempt to uncover some of their complex facets--qualitative and quantitative aspects, physical and emotional dimensions, and momentary and longer-term temporal natures. The term connection implies, for me, a force that binds complex pieces to form the whole.

The Caring Connection

The teaching stories in this thesis are shared for the purpose of uncovering meanings and discovering hidden paths in the lives of beginning professors. Many of the stories focus on empathy and caring. It is a theme explored by a number of philosophers and educational researchers (for example, Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule, 1986; Noddings, 1984; Witherell & Noddings, 1991) based on a belief that to uncover the meaning of individual lives is to understand the importance of caring relations as we connect with other individuals. In other words, our understanding of self is given meaning in the context of relationships with others.

Examples of the caring theme are found in a number of narratives. *First Class, First Impressions* illustrates how caring instructors establish trust with diverse students from the moment of our initial classroom meeting, and *Learning Styles as Signs* demonstrates how such relational caring manifests over eight months of student-instructor interactions. *Learning About Students* describes an evolving relational trust that first surfaces during a teaching relationship, but continues over several semesters as the student readies for professional employment, marriage, and relocation across the country. *Voices of Student Diversity* presents a caring scenario between a student and her instructor as the student copes with personal crisis, and *Ignoring Teaching Roadmaps* presents the importance of caring at times of cyclical stress in the lives of university students. Other

students in *Names, Numbers, and Stories* also voice a need for caring relationships and express appreciation for simple connectors such as instructors knowing their names. All of these stories uncover a significant element of relational caring between students and instructors from my earliest teaching experiences.

Other stories reflect a caring that is not immediately perceived as reciprocal. For example, *Gambling Games* outlines a learning situation in which the student was perhaps unaware of the caring that was extended to him as he worked through an ethical issue of plagiarism. This story invites instructors to consider the changes for students as they leave high schools or employment situations to enter university. It begs an examination of the heavy assessment burden placed on students that leads them to adopt short-term and often ill-fated coping strategies to survive in competitive environments. It illuminates the problems of large classes related to perceptions of student anonymity that counters the development of relational caring. It challenges a blind adoption of technology without appropriate teaching to help students with moral judgements regarding its use. It suggests instructors must address diverse value systems as we teach and model acceptable behaviours for our students.

One story that describes a caring relationship brings question to the meaning of caring as it relates to behaviours that reach beyond our usual understanding. In *Learning Styles as Signs*, we see a mother-daughter relationship in a university classroom that prompts us to consider multiple levels of meaning for this term. Our understanding of caring then assumes connotations that range from arms-length obligations, to particular attachments, to compelling forms of nurturing and protection. Educators must then consider possibilities of exclusivity in the various forms of caring, progressive steps in its development, or the interconnectedness of various levels of caring between individuals, groups, communities, cultures and an emerging global caring.

A final type of story related to caring presents a failed effort at caring that could not be repaired or reconciled. It is the narrative series which begins with *Tell Me Why* as a

student publicly challenges my teaching. The story unfolds further in *Lonely Paths and Blind Turns* when I reveal deep hurt, broken trust, and what turns out to be irreversible separation from the student. The episode culminates in *Roadmaps, Mindmaps, and Dreams* where I attempt to make sense of chaos and uncover learning from adversity. These narratives speak to the limits of caring as instructors attempt to reconcile caring for particular individuals when such caring impinges on our caring for others and caring for self.

How is it then that instructors bring caring to a learning context? Certainly the writings of influential philosophers who have sparked our thinking about caring and its theoretic applications in teaching contexts have contributed to our understanding. However, we see in *Introduction: The Road to Teaching* a notion of caring from early childhood, long before the theory was known to me or could assume meaning. We see the portrait of a caring landscape established in early youth where my parents nurtured the attitude and behaviour and supported its development over many years. The caring later transferred to my own children as I experienced parenthood and continues for half a century where in *Stopping to Reflect*, I explore familial role reversals while caring—physically as well as emotionally—for my dear mother as she adjusts her life yet another time.

It is this cycle of caring, from earliest memory through parenting stages and then in later life, that has served as a springboard for much caring in my classrooms. It is a type of life-long learning that has fostered what Witherell and Noddings (1991) describe as a capacity to listen to self at the same time as listening to others, while also attending to that which is not said but which is intuitively felt, as a part of the power of relationships that extend beyond words. It is this caring, learned both inside and outside the classroom and cultivated over a long period of practice and reflection, that facilitates connections within it. It is this caring that binds me to students and to their learning.

The Diversity Connection

How do instructors discover the strangers in our classrooms? How do we develop sensitive, caring relationships with those who may feel different? As Shabatay (1991) suggests, we choose options in forming our attitudes toward those we do not know: aloofness, caution, scepticism, or inclusion, openness, and welcome.

First Class, First Impressions describes a student's perspective of diversity in a graduate session of 18 students where meaningful connections are established on the first day and grow throughout the course. We see faces fresh from undergraduate programs alongside retirees embarking on new journeys; we see fidgety new parents and calm assured grandparents; we see rural and urban, local and international neighbours; we see medical, business, and social work professionals among various types of educational specialists. In summary, we see men and women of all ages, from many vocations, at various stages in their careers and life cycles, encompassing diverse social and cultural perspectives, all sitting together around one table preparing to embark on a learning journey that will be personally satisfying and educationally productive because of the communal spirit of trust and caring in that room.

We might extrapolate from this example to imagine the magnitude of diversity in larger classes, often at the undergraduate level where students who have even less in common by virtue of their brief university experience. This, however, is the reality of my teaching *(Tell Me Why)* where although connections are rare, fortunate exceptions do reward the effort. One special case is described in *Voices of Student Diversity* when Nora seeks special permission regarding an assignment. Pete's is another special case *(Learning About Students)*, sparked from a visit to my office to seek counsel on a project. Both special cases resulted in long-lasting connections and mutual satisfactions.

These narratives point to the importance of discovering differences among diverse students and then stretching our understandings to include new ways of acknowledging and appreciating the diversity. My experiences suggest efforts expended in this dimension

of teaching support optimized learning opportunities for students as they begin to trust and connect in deeper ways. As well, these attitudes and behaviours supporting inclusion may serve as models as we help students to develop their own multiple representations of the world as we move toward global understandings.

It is worth noting, however, that in the cases of both Nora and Pete, the contacts occurred out-of-classroom. Further, any hesitancy from either party might have thwarted the chance relationship. This observation begs the question: how many others could not or would not make the time or summon the courage to knock on an instructor's door? It would seem business views of opportunity cost might serve as a basis for discussion as we attempt to balance the merits of connection against the institutional barriers that may inhibit it. For example, how do we rationalize class sizes such as those described in *Tell Me Why* that make students anonymous and may serve to alienate them, particularly at early stages of their integration into university life? Are we also alienating instructors by asking them to compensate in other ways for needs of inclusion and appreciation as we saw in *Names, Numbers, and Stories*, the account of student voices embracing individualized caring?

How can instructors physically and psychologically reach the Jacks in the large classes, or even small classes for that matter, who may fall into *Gambling Games*? How can we know their backgrounds, appreciate their learning issues, understand their motives and influencers, and help them to make ethical decisions as they struggle to compete in large and often impersonal settings? From a microphoned podium stand on the stage of a two-storey lecture theatre, this is a daunting question.

How do we better prepare beginner teachers to recognize opportunities and develop strategies that extend the caring relation to emulate those in the first day teaching described in *First Class, First Impressions* and those enduring over longer periods that are illustrated in *Learning Styles as Signs* and *Learning About Students*? Can we adapt those caring and connecting strategies to fit into other teaching realities of large classes and busy schedules?

How do we balance institutional constricts which may serve as barriers to student learning with needs for instructor and student satisfaction through relational caring?

These are important cultural issues with which we must reckon. They are issues for classroom instructors as we attempt to understand learning processes of large groups of diverse students. They are also important for institutions as we target foreign markets for student enrolments and espouse theories of global interdependency and cooperation. They are especially important as we attempt to foster caring communities as models for life beyond the university halls.

The Temporal Connection

Travel time is often thought to be linear as we prepare, arrive, tour, and then depart. While particular travels have specific start and stop points, the memories of those travels linger as travellers share photographs and tell stories later. When travellers accumulate a series of experiences, their concept of time assumes a more cyclical understanding as they come to know more of the generic processes of basic language acquisition, money conversion, various eating customs, and familiarity with local rhythms that they no longer expect to match those from home.

Clandinin and Connelly (1991) challenge teachers to consider our understandings of time as continual, rhymthical, or cyclical. The narratives in this thesis invite educators to compare their temporal qualities: Particular incidents are described as momentary while others endure for months or years. But are any of the stories ever complete? Certainly, in my mind, all experiences have ripple effects that, when combined with other experiences, reinforce the importance of caring connections, no matter what the time frame.

Events which occur over longer periods, however, tend to assume patterns. The narrative description of parents who support a child who, many years later, is challenged to support them is just one illustration. It is a story of cyclical caring that is transferred between generations through role modelling where patterns of life-long learning serve both generations as each faces new challenges. Similarly, our approaches to continual and life-

long learning are critical for insights and transformations as we expand repertoires of teaching skills. Learnings from particular situations naturally shift across time and, quite often, shifting meanings carry potential for unexpected learning.

The narrative series which includes *Tell Me Why, Lonely Paths and Blind Turns,* and *Roadmaps, Mindmaps, and Dreams* offers several examples where meanings shifted over time and resulted in unexpected learning. For example, the application of failure theory provided insights about changes in understanding as I attempt to understand Rob's behaviour and later that of administrators. Examining the theory reminded me of tools to separate self from incident that did not occur immediately, but took many weeks and months as I considered other possibilities that simply did not fit.

Similarly, my understanding of the behaviours of administrators changed as I examined theoretical explanations for their responses. New possibilities, combined with an emerging ability to see the incident more broadly and less personally, allowed me see there may have been reasons for their behaviour that I had not originally considered. This too did not occur immediately, but crystalized many months later after a dream that provided a backdrop for my inner explanation to self.

Seeing individual incidents or episodes as part of a bigger series of events is perhaps a way to convert linear time to other forms such as rhythmetical passages or cyclical turns. These temporal patterns can provide new learnings as time and other events separate, yet illuminate, subsequent occurrences. This new learning becomes part of the repertoire of skills that professionals develop as we continue in our practice. It is also the hope--the inspiration--for instructors as we move through particular incidents, positive or painful, and begin to uncover patterns in our professional learning.

The Interpretative Connection

Teaching is not a field of application of theoretical concepts. There are no models or concise explanations. Theory repeatedly tells us this (for example, Cranton, 1998;

Pinnegar, 1995; Wilson, 1993; Zeichner & Liston, 1996), and *Invisible Boundaries*

suggests my experience coincides with these views.

Teaching theory does, however, provide a guide through which instructors can

explore feelings and observations and then frame descriptions and analysis of our own

learning and teaching practice. The teaching stories explored within this thesis suggest a

number of uses for teaching theory: First, theory served to guide me in daily practice;

second, it illuminated what I knew intuitively; third, it provided a mirror through which to

view and review my teaching terrain that, in hindsight, was novel and unexpected. In

these ways, theory contributed to the building of my repertoire of teaching skills.

A number of the narratives demonstrate theory served as a guide in my daily

practice. For example, Greene's (1994) work on cultural diversity alerted me to the

magnitude of difference in our classrooms and the "challenges of plurality and multiplicity"

(p. 11) that go with it. This theoretical background helped me to be aware of seemingly

insignificant comments regarding a family gender issue that served to alert me to difference

in my own classroom *(Voices of Student Diversity)*. Greene (1994) also tells us,

"Certainly it can never be identical for everyone, no matter how 'normal' particular

descriptions appear to be to the majority..." (p. 14). What Nora revealed to me about her

own brother and the care of their ailing mother confirms that within this one particular

ethnic group, this one family in fact, there exists major differences in values and

understandings of roles. Theory, in this example, helped sensitize me to cultural issues in

my own daily teaching practice.

In other situations, theory clarified what I already knew, perhaps intuitively.

McPhee (1997) reports that correspondence uncovered insightful ideas and feelings of high

school students in ways that other forms of communication had not. I suppose my own

daughter, at a very young age, must have sensed this as she tucked away notes and cards

(Letters and Lessons) for reasons I doubt even she imagined. Likewise, from my earliest

teaching, and certainly before I became aware of McPhee's research, I saved

correspondence from my students, perhaps knowing the ideas and emotions could only be captured in their original format. Theory, in this context, added credence to something neither my daughter nor I had considered in a theoretical sense; we just knew.

A third function of theory for me related to its potential to re-examine past events and spark new understandings. *Lonely Paths and Blind Turns* offers an example of this function. The narrative describes a series of events which shattered my vision of myself as a competent and caring instructor and disillusioned me about the support of colleagues. Examining Payne's (1989) failure theory several months later helped point me to new ways of seeing the situation as I tried to reflect on it and reconstruct my teaching identity. In this case, new theoretical learning, combined with the passage of time of course, kindled a sense of hopeful regeneration that helped me to learn and move forward rather than dwell on negative feelings and unhappy events that would cloud my teaching development.

While theory served a number of functions in my teaching, a caution is also extended, especially for novice instructors. Because those of us with less experience have not developed the intuitive familiarity or judgement with which to apply many strategies, we often carry unrealistic expectations about such rules, or worse, misuse them (Putnam, 1991). My experience in a Learning to Teach class *(Beyond the Signs)* supports Putnam's theory. Obviously the novice teacher posing the question about giving marking grids to students had doubts; obviously the instructor could not have a fail-proof theoretical answer that would cover all situations; obviously many teaching questions require more information and, even then, there are no pat answers. My own intentions in attending the course to collect answers to questions I had not resolved after several semesters of teaching, and my own feelings of frustration afterward, tell us to be careful about our expectations and use of theory.

Well-intentioned learners, therefore, should be cautioned in the search for theoretical rules and recipes, especially early in our careers. We must develop deep understandings of our own values, behaviours, intentions, and choices as we consider

educational theory. We must exercise flexibility as the context adjusts and our own skill develops. We must also cultivate keener insights regarding the larger frame for our teaching if we are to make appropriate decisions regarding the use of theory in our practice.

The Risk Connection

Schon's (1991) work with various professionals, as well as that of Featherstone, Munby and Russell (1997) in educational contexts, suggests that to accomplish significant shifts in our personal and institutional perspectives, we require individuals who are prepared to take personal and professional risks. A number of the narratives in this writing tease out the notion of risk-taking behaviour.

In *Ignoring Teaching Roadmaps*, I describe a situation in which a student misses a final exam and is granted special permission to write it at a later date. This action surprises my colleagues; it surprises my own university-student children; it even surprises my student who asks. In the analysis of this narrative, I describe how a similar interaction with another student not just surprised a more-experienced professor, but truly annoyed and alarmed him. I was challenged to defend my decision on that occasion, and being forced to do so confirmed for me who I was as an instructor, and that this behaviour was not naively-conceived nor professionally irresponsible. It was, I determined, compassionately conceived and entirely responsible, and translating this intuition into a formal written response made me see it more clearly.

A similar risk behaviour is described in *Collaborative Map Reading* where I describe the response of particular faculty members toward the hiring of undergraduate students as TAs. After some unfortunate experiences, however, I came to understand their hesitancy and appreciate their concern about problems inherent in lesser-experienced students teaching other students. I analyzed the difficulties and determined that what made more sense for me was not the level of experience related to their own program, but their ability to manage particular learning situations. It was my screening process that needed to be fine-tuned.

From these narratives, we can see that change also demands enabling conditions in our institutional structures. Instructors must have conversations about the issues, and conversations require opportunities. We must make and take opportunities to talk teaching, particularly as we welcome diverse students into our institutions and manage increased teaching loads that we juggle with a myriad of other responsibilities. Teaching issues must become mainstream research issues in our particular disciplines and must receive appropriate attention in our regular meetings and research conferences. Teaching demands a special place on university agendas, one that is not subservient to research or administration priorities, but is equal to them, with instructors given career time to engage in teaching research and improvement on a regular basis, uninterrupted by other interests.

Establishing teaching mentorships is another way of enabling such conversations, particularly in light of the limited training for teaching in university classrooms. By pairing beginners with those more experienced, benefits can be two-fold: Less experienced faculty can benefit from the experiences of more senior members, and more experienced members may be inspired to new understandings of teaching and learning processes in a changing environment. Such partnerships, however, must be recognized by institutions as research endeavours that contribute to institutional improvement and not merely be added to a long list of professorial responsibilities for which there is little incentive or reward.

Taking risks, however, is not just about changing personal and institutional perspectives. It is also about modelling behaviours that empower students to find voice, to take action, to seek untrodden paths. It is about helping them to see imperfect human beings in an imperfect world who learn from wrong paths and move forward, more aware and better informed. It is a way to support conversations about teaching with our students as we encourage students to think deeply, analyze critically, and dare to improve their lives and the world in which we live together.

Conversations as Learning Connections

The second major theme of the narratives in this thesis relates to how instructors approach learning--our own as well as those of our students. As I earlier explored the quality of teaching life through a series of complex connections, I will use conversation as both a metaphor and method of examining teacher learning.

The conversation connection is perhaps that which encompasses other aspects of a quality teaching environment. It is a connection that holds the promise of linking inexperience to experience, theory to intuition and both to practice, teaching to other parts of the profession, and past to future.

Each of the quality connections I describe--caring, diversity, temporal, interpretative understanding, and risk taking--represents a particular dimension of teaching. Because a discussion of dimension, in whatever context, invites speculation about opposite properties, these dimensions of university teaching invite conversations about alternative understandings and approaches. As instructors, we must learn about these continuums and understand that no two individuals or situations can be identical. Each instructor must then find a balance point where institutional objectives meet our individual teaching values and our students' learning needs.

Pinpointing this balance is not easy learning. Institutional objectives are not always obvious. Since Smith's (1991) national report, Canadian universities have said they value teaching, but this has not translated to research resources or time away from other responsibilities to manage that development. As well, individual values are not always known. Sometimes we must act or speak before we truly discover who we are as instructors or what is best practice for our students and institutions, and this takes personal courage and support from our colleagues and institutions as we try--sometimes succeeding and sometimes not.

The conversation connection is about linking people. It is about instructors who care deeply about teaching and about diverse students. It is about teachers learning about

ourselves and our practice, and about changing and relearning over time as we build our teaching repertoires. It is about how we continually build knowledge--our own based on personal experience, our observations of the world around us, and other forms of learning including that of others available through oral and written conversations. The conversation connection is about discovering teaching and making it better as we live it.

Stories as Connecting Conversations

Education is about learning and change, for students as well as for teachers. Telling and writing stories is educative as instructors attempt to make meaning of our practice and to connect theory and practice through experience. "Storytellers are influenced by the telling of their own stories. Active construction and telling of a story is educative: The storyteller learns through the act of storytelling" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995, p. 156). Stories are, as Schon (1992) suggests, the lens through which teachers might look at the past and the future and then relive experience. It is this desire to know, he says, that is the source of education.

Certainly this has been my experience as I learn to teach. Writing the stories has been a form of reliving the experience, of linking emotion to action, of connecting theory and practice, of combining past events to gain insights for the future. Stories have served as a foundation upon which to better understand my own values and behaviours and to consider those of others. In this way, my stories are a conversational connection with a developing teaching philosophy as I learn to navigate the university terrain.

Stories are educative for teachers, but also for others. Stories uncover possibilities that are important in an educative way because the meaning of the story is reshaped in the telling and so, too, is the meaning of the world to which the story refers. Clandinin and Connelly (1995) say stories in university settings are particularly appropriate if we see our institutions as "receptive, fertile ground for the cultivation of social initiatives" (p. 162) in areas of ethical practice and cultural value systems. In this way, stories can serve as our

bridges between conservative institutions that may be resistant to reform and those that are dynamic and embrace concepts of continual change.

These narratives deal with issues of reality and issues of perception. They celebrate successes and expose vulnerabilities. They dig for past understandings, deal with the here and now of teaching, and also speculate on possibilities for the future. If the stories serve to inspire conversations in others--with themselves as a form of introspective reflection, or with colleagues in the form other types of conversations--they have been educative.

Stories as Hopeful Connections

The conclusions arising from this summary of my teaching stories are signs of hopeful inspiration. They suggest that effective instructors are those who draw on predispositions toward caring relationships and continual learning and possess the determination to continually reassess the context in which they work. This is critical to address changing circumstances as they draw on an innate ability to scan environments and respond to both routine and surprising events in ways that demonstrate creativity as well as a breadth of theoretical underpinnings. The stories celebrate teaching that considers broader contexts of student diversity, institutional parameters, and societal well-being as it seeks paths toward continual adjustment and improvement. Without this, there is the danger of stagnant thinking, ill-informed practice, and approaches to teaching and learning that fail to value the human potential of ourselves and our students.

Teaching stories offer hope for instructors, students, and institutions by describing the landscape. They compel a rethinking of the ways in which individuals relate to one another and create new connecting stories about what constitutes effective teaching, what influences it, how we approach dilemmas, and how teaching paradoxes might be resolved. Telling our stories invites responses, in thinking and action, by others. Whether it be through lunch room conversations, research projects and developing theory, adjustments to administrative practice or policy reform, teaching stories are a collaborative process that offers promise to spark educational change.

CHAPTER XII

TOWARD IMPROVED TEACHING

The fortunes of [this] book ... are extremely interesting to me. The book brought me many friends. One story, at any rate, elicited the gracious laughter of Queen Victoria. A pauper who had known better days wrote to thank me for enlivening the monotony of a workhouse infirmary. Literary clerks plied me with questions about the sources of my quotations. A Scotch doctor demurred to the prayer -"Water that spark"- on the ground that water would put the spark out. Elderly clergymen in country parsonages revived the rollicking memories of their undergraduate days, and sent me academic quips of the forties and fifties. From the most various quarters I received suggestions, corrections, and enrichments.

from Preface,
Collections and Recollections,
by G. W. E. Russell (1903)

CHAPTER XII
TOWARD IMPROVED TEACHING

Teaching Beyond

To be a teacher who believes beyond...
   One who excels in research, but is sustained by teaching;
   One who doesn't see teaching as imparting, but as mutual empowerment;
   One whose students aren't numbers, but individual goals and aspirations;
   One who believes that real teaching is more; it is about inspiring possible futures.

To be a teacher who practices beyond...
   One who professes ethical behaviour, and lives it;
   One who proclaims human integrity, and inspirits it;
   One who asserts professional attitudes, and models them;
   One who values balance in work and play and family, and lives it.

To be a teacher who sees beyond...
   One who doesn't see green hair and purple skin, but colourful expressions of hope;
   One who doesn't see through her eyes alone, but through the eyes of students;
   One who looks with and for, up and down, back and ahead; within and around;
   One who sees not frustration and defeat, but struggles that earn fresh beginnings.

To be a teacher who manages beyond...
   One who doesn't teach for assignments, but for the pursuit of knowledge;
   One who doesn't deal in grades, but in the reality of growth and discovery;
   One who doesn't measure by budgets, but by people and personal services;
   One who doesn't trade time and energy, but manages justice for all.

To be a teacher who travels beyond ...
   One who addresses groups, but teaches individuals;
   One who instructs classes, but teaches for the world;
   One who sees that yesterday isn't today, and that today soon becomes yesterday;
   One who isn't changing to fit the future, but looking to create it.

To be a teacher who creates beyond...
   One who looks behind, then plans ahead;
   One who plans ahead, but changes her mind;
   One who listens, then changes it again; now, tomorrow, forevermore;
   One who hasn't become, but who constantly reinvents herself again.

To be a teacher who dreams beyond...
   One who dreams about what teachers believe, and how we practice;
   One who dreams about how teachers see, and how we manage;
   One who dreams about how teachers travel, and how we create, our practice;
   One who dreams endless imaginings;

And beyond.

Dreaming Beyond

I began this thesis by saying that I was not born a teacher, that perhaps I had some attributes that predisposed me toward a teaching vocation, but that very early in my teaching career it was obvious I was not born with the skills necessary to be an effective teacher. The stories throughout the thesis demonstrate that these skills are developing from a combination of hard work, embarrassing mistakes, optimism, determination and resiliency, as well as occasional touches of serendipity and vast quantities of support from others.

I have tried to illustrate the ways in which the telling and retelling, writing and rewriting, of my stories as a beginning university instructor led to what Connelly and Clandinin (1994) call awakenings and transformations as I attempt to improve my professional practice. It is not just processes of telling and writing, however, that have led to changes. It is also the process of thinking deeply, examining critically, and revising endlessly as I attempt to understand personal, professional, and environmental factors that influence my decisions and development.

The stories demonstrate ways in which I have attempted to deal with tensions through both imaginative problem solving and research investigation in a search for balance and satisfaction. I have attempted to use everyday teaching experiences to better understand my values, my students' values, and those of the university in which I teach. By writing the stories, first in my daily journals and later in this thesis, I have attempted to better understand my experiences in order that I might cultivate improvements in my teaching practice. The processes of thinking about the stories as I write and rewrite them are the essence of my introduction to reflective practice.

Reflection is demanding: It requires disciplined attention and consumes already scarce time; it exposes personal frailties and uncovers particular biases; it forces occasions and actions that might otherwise remain hidden. In all of these ways, reflection involves risk.

On the other hand, reflection invites reward: It uncovers the rhythms of loss and recovery as instructors attempt to grow in our professional roles; it reveals inner strengths and resiliency as we attempt to situate our experiences in a broader context of time, place, and circumstance; it empowers us to stretch our thoughts and actions, and it frees us from imagined boundaries. In all these ways, reflection counters risk.

This reflective journey through and to teaching, although personally enlightening and richly rewarding, is not an easy one. It is my hope, however, that through the sharing of my stories that other instructors will begin to share theirs and to voice their responses in order that we might all imagine new journeys and new destinations. It is this kind of collaboration that I feel offers possibility for all instructors to transform our professional practice so that accounts of excellent teaching are more than historical recountings, student opinions, or weightings of institutional criteria. Perhaps excellent teaching can also be more than a measure of learning outcomes, administrators' satisfaction, or teacher self-actualization. Perhaps, in our own time and in the individual and unexpected circumstances we face, it can be a connection of all these processes and contexts.

This type of transformation, however, involves a change in values in university communities that presently advocate personal development and achievement over social commitment. In institutions that purportedly instruct and model ethnic pluralism and global cooperation, we find ourselves measuring students against each other in classes where large numbers of students confound individual connection and cultural understanding. We must ensure beginner teachers travel to these new destinations with the best possible maps, with appropriate check stops and support systems, and most importantly, with a sense of how to translate personal identities and ideals into teaching and learning models that best serve diverse students, bureaucratic institutions, and ourselves as maturing professionals.

Beginning professors need a collective image that promotes and preserves individualities, yet meshes with values of a broader community of learners and the pragmatic realities of the institutions in which we serve. The dream of translating tolerance

to understanding and competition to collaboration and cooperative is perhaps the collective symbol that can address the pluralism of university communities as a collection of individual, inner dreams.

Improved teaching which results in improved learning, both aimed at improving life, is based on assumptions of changeable and changing self identities. Payne (1989) suggests that changing identities are the result of exchanged communication, and that as a consequence, individuals can be motivated to change our actions by changing our identities and that the results will benefit self and society. He goes on to say that because motivation must come from the inside, it is ultimately the individual who must undertake to improve the self.

The stories in this thesis support the notion that improved teaching demands an understanding of self, others, content, teaching pedagogy, and institutions, and that these understandings are enhanced by various forms of experience and conversation. They suggest individual instructors must find voice and make opportunities to sustain social concern and where necessary, challenge sacred stories that are not our lived experience nor those of our students and institutions. We must individually work toward collective goals of changing these stories to more accurately address the current realities as we engage in teaching journeys that meet future needs in our communities.

While the motivation toward many of these improvements is obviously intrinsic, transformation of this magnitude cannot be accomplished solely from the inside. It requires changes in outer influences such as training, extrinsic reward systems, and an open-mindedness by others toward the sacred stories of university teaching. It is by sharing our stories of ourselves as instructors, of the students we serve, and of the communities in which we live and work that we are best able to dream future prospects. It is this metamorphosis that can guide us to grasping the importance of connections among individuals and between us and our social systems, to exposing connections between theory and intuition in our practice, to uncovering gaps in our ethical reasoning, and to

exposing paradoxes in our teaching. It is through these journeys of discovery that we
might balance our orientation between individual identity and our collective social well-
being. Teaching stories offer the inspiration to explore and carve the paths to connect past
experiences, present practice, and future possibilities for teachers and learners everywhere.
It is these teaching stories that empower educators to reach out to become the teachers of
our childhood dreams.

And slowly as we heard you, day by day,
The stillness of enchanted reveries
Bound brain and spirit and half-closed eyes,
In some divine sweet wonder-dream astray;
To us no sorrow or upreared dismay
Nor any discord came, but evermore
The voices of mankind, the outer roar,
Grew strange and murmurous, faint and far away.

Morning and noon and midnight exquisitely,
Rapt with your voices, this alone we knew,
Cities might change and fall, and men might die,
Secure were we, content to dream with you
That change and pain are shadows faint and fleet,
And dreams are real, and life is only sweet.

from "The Frogs"
by Archibald Lampman (1888)

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ACADEMIC CREDENTIALS:

1996 -2000	PhD, Educational Policy Studies, University of Alberta
1996 -1999	UTS Teaching Certification - Course work in Curriculum, Evaluation, Self-improvement, Instruction, Management; Series of · Peer Observations and Evaluations; and completion of a formal Teaching Dossier.
1993 - 1996	MSc (Human Ecology), University of Alberta
1990 - 1993	BEd (with distinction), Secondary Education, University of Alberta
	* Teacher Certification 183368S (June, 1993)
1982 - 1985	Personnel Administration (Certificate Program), University of Alberta

ACADEMIC INSTRUCTION AND LEADERSHIP:
Faculty of Agriculture, Forestry, and Home Economics
- and - Faculty of Education, University of Alberta
(Supervision of Teaching Assistants also indicated)

2000 (W-Term II)	Communication Theory & Practice (6 TAs)
1999 (F-Term I)	Communication Theory & Practice (6 TAs)
1999 (W-Term II)	Communication Theory & Practice (8 TAs)
1998 (F-Term I)	Communication Theory & Practice (6 TAs)
1998 (W-Term II)	Communication Theory & Practice (6 TAs)
	Consumer Studies (1 TA)
	Educational Policy Studies
1997 (F-Term I)	Communication Theory & Practice (5 TAs)
	Apparel Design* (1 TA)
	Educational Policy Studies
1997 (W-Term II)	Consumer Studies
1996 (F-Term I)	Apparel Design & Technology (1 TA)
1996 (W-Term II)	Consumer Studies*
	Total Students - 1,200; Total Teaching Assistants - 40

* Graduate Student Teaching Awards based on these courses.

CURRICULUM VITAE SUMMARY: K. McFadyen - p. 2

TEACHING AND RESEARCH AWARDS (During Doctoral Program):

1999, July	Scholarship to International Conference on Thinking by Chieftain International based on teaching research in progress
1998, March	GSA (Graduate Student) Teaching Award
1998, March	University Teaching Services (Graduate Student) Teaching Award
1998, March	Faculty of Agriculture, Forestry, and Home Economics (Graduate Student) Teaching Award
1997, September	Department of Educational Policy Studies, U of A, Doctoral Scholarship
1997, March	GSA (Graduate Student) Teaching Award
1997, April	University Teaching Services (Graduate Student) Teaching Award
1997, November	Faculty of Agriculture, Forestry, and Home Economics (Graduate Student) Teaching Award
1997, September	Canadian Home Economics Association - Silver Jubilee Award for Doctoral Studies.

SUPERVISORY   Supervising 40 Teaching Assistants has allowed me to serve as a mentor, and this role has been most gratifying. Nominations for Graduate Teaching Awards within Faculty, University, and Graduate Students Association have been successful at senior levels for three consecutive years:

1998	Pamela Bailey, Graduate Student Teaching Award
1999	Jody McKenzie, Graduate Student Teaching Award
2000	Line Pinsent, Graduate Student Teaching Award

PUBLICATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS (Masters & Doctoral)

Refereed Journals and Exhibits - 6; Non-refereed Journals and Professional Newsletters - 16; Professional Conferences - 8 (abstracts published); Professional Workshops and Seminars - 8 with publishing; Teaching Workbooks and Manuals - 4 with 7 revised editions; Other Scholarly Writing - Master's and Doctoral Research.

COMMUNITY SERVICE (current):

1999 - present	General Faculty Council
1999 - present	GFC Campus Law Review Committee
1998 - present	Board of Directors, YWCA, Edmonton (Currently Vice-Chair)
1998 - present	Program Chair, Alberta Home Economics Association, Edmonton Branch
1995 - present	Volunteer Teaching Assistant, Mayfield & Elmwood Elementary Early Childhood Special Education Programs