

Reflecting on My Pedagogy: An Accidental Story

by

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submitted by Gina Buchanan in partial fulfillment of the requirements for

the degree of Doctor of Education

In Educational Leadership & Policy

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Abstract

This dissertation is a narrative autobiographical story of my lived experience as an educator, and the ideas that have emerged to inform my pedagogical passions, philosophy, and practice. Beginning with the early years of my life, and moving through to the present day, I have attempted to uncover how it is I came to be the educator I am, or perhaps, aspire to be.

This dissertation is a weaving of poetry, prose, artwork, short stories, and acknowledgments of others whose ideas have enriched my teaching. It is organized into six parts. Part One, The Forward, provides an overview and explores the writing of this dissertation, my methodology, and authors of significance to my inquiry. Part Two, Family and Schooling: In Search of Belonging, briefly describes the story of my childhood, and segues to stories of my elementary and high-school experiences. Part Three, The Later Years: Education, offers select recollections, and reflections from my post-secondary education, and illuminates connections to my current educational philosophy, and practice. Part Four, Just One Day, is a detailed narration of one day in my life as an educator, and highlights the influence of other educators, scholars, and writers on my practice. Part Five, A Legacy of Love: Foundations of Instruction, contains the curriculum that was developed for a faculty workshop in hopes of inspiring faculty to create welcoming, respectful, inclusive, and caring spaces of possibility for learning. Part Six: Pausing, includes reflections on the journey of writing this dissertation, thoughts for others considering a similar methodology, and finally, considerations for future inquiries.

Evident from narrating my personal journey of family, schooling, higher education and my varied roles as an educator are sensitivities and sensibilities of significance to me, and my teaching including creating welcoming, inclusive and caring classrooms.

It is my hope that sharing this work will serve to encourage others in their journeys to understanding themselves as educators. And that this body of work joins, and strengthens the voices of all educators seeking to focus on the humanity, care, and love involved in the sacred profession of teaching.

Lay Summary

This work represents my journey to an understanding of myself as an educator. Through story, poetry, images, reflections, and with reference to literature, I explore my experiences as a student, and later as a teacher, deriving precious insights as to why it is, I am who I am, and what I do in my classroom. From the findings of this inquiry, a professional development workshop for new/newer faculty was created in hopes of sharing what I have come to believe is important if we as educators hope to serve our students, and their learning well. Finally, although not without some trepidation, I hope that by openly sharing my journey to understanding me as an educator, others will be inspired or emboldened to share theirs, so that together we can learn about what it is to teach.

Preface

This dissertation is original, unpublished, independent work by the author, G. M. Buchanan. With the exception of Gail Sexsmith, Rhonda Margolis, Carl Leggo, Deb Bartlette, and Shauna Butterwick who have given permission to be identified in this dissertation, I have anonymized the educators I have written about. I have also anonymized the educational institutions I attended.

No BREB review was completed. The *Tri-Council Policy Statement* (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, & Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, 2018) does not require the institutional review for retrospective reflections on one's own life when there are no research intended interactions, such as interviews, between the researcher and individuals portrayed in the past reflection.

For those visible in the photograph of my EdD cohort, I have received permission. I have obscured the identification of those from whom I did not receive permission.

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Dedication

For Shauna. An extraordinary educator.

For Hope and Kera. My beautiful daughters. You are my inspiration. May you too hold tight to your dreams.

PART ONE: The Foreward

1.1 A Few Words

To have written your version is an honorable thing to have done. Against all odds you have put it down on paper so that it won't be lost. And who knows? Maybe what you have written will help others, will be a small part of the solution. You don't even have to know how or in what way, but if you are writing the clearest, truest words you can find and doing the best you can to understand and communicate, this will shine on paper like its own little lighthouse. (Lamott, 1994, p. 236)

Yes, against all odds I have waged war, to borrow a phrase, with 'the itty bitty shitty committee' that regularly convenes in my head. Although sometimes only a murmur, too often the committee's critical voices cry loudly that who I am is nothing, and what I do, or have done, or want to do, is for naught. This is the refrain that has often reverberated in my head, a cacophony of criticisms. But it is declining over time. Initially, my only defense, was that of Shauna, my dissertation advisor, who leaning in with wide eyes and a defiant wave of her hand in the air admonishes me that if my inquiry matters to me then it matters. And now find myself cautiously, hesitantly agreeing.

Yes.

It matters.

The Mirror

Who are you I see?

Bright blue eyes,

Paua treasures,

inky black lashes,

The woman in the window.

Stories written,

on wrinkles,

tell of laughter,

and of fear.

A mother's worry,
precious love,
and pain,
written on her heart.

Lipstick bleeds,
on lips,
whose softness calms a child,
and stirs a lover.

Her cheeks faintly freckled,
her nose, Frank's legacy, too wide.

She sighs to the window,
a silent witness.

A woman who sees,
but does not know,
the beauty she beholds,
the love of her heart,
the kindness of her hand,
the sharpness of her mind,
the truth of her tongue,
the strength of her spirit.

1.2 For the Reader: The Way

I find it takes just one person to have the courage to begin a conversation.
It only takes one because everyone else is eager for the chance to talk.
They're just waiting for someone else to begin it.
They aren't quite as brave as you. (Wheatley, 2002, p. 24)

It is challenging to begin to describe the journey. From where I began, to where it is that I am now. I return to the letter of intent I prepared for my Doctor of Education (EDD) application.

My application to the Department of Educational Studies for a Doctorate of Education, Leadership and Policy is inspired by a triumvirate of intentions: to again engage in scholarly discourse with a cohort of similarly engaged colleagues to enable me to continue to critically reflect on, evaluate and enhance my praxis; to research the practices of post-secondary institutions that inhibit and prohibit the participation and engagement of mature adult learners, both first generation and returning, with the intention of contributing to the scholarship on post-secondary education and effecting change in the policies and practices at post-secondary institutions with which I am affiliated; to assume a senior leadership position in a post-secondary institution which will allow me enhance the access, participation, engagement and success of those mature members of our communities who aspire to higher education. However, my interest in continuing my studies and pursuing my doctorate is less about what I learned and more about what I did not, what I want to learn about, and what I don't yet know I don't know.

There it is. The beginning of this dissertation as an intention, written on my application, nearly ten years ago now, "to continue to critically reflect on, evaluate, and enhance my praxis." That was the intention that came to fruition on these pages: to understand how the experiences of my life, and more specifically, my experiences of schooling, and of education, have informed who I am as a teacher, and how I teach. This dissertation does not follow a common structure often seen in the academy which includes chapters denoting a research question, the literature review, methodology, findings, implications and recommendations (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Rather, this dissertation, through a weaving of prose, poetry, figures, and art, reflects on what Leggo (2012) described as "research as searching" (p.10). The writing follows the trajectory of my journey in education, beginning with my beginnings as a wee one in New Zealand, and winding forward to the present day, and my role as an administrator in higher education. Of course, it is neither feasible, desirable, nor necessary, to elucidate the entirety of my more than 50 years on these pages thus, what is observed on the following pages is selections of events, some of those from a very long time ago indeed, and yet, all of which connect, some tightly, others more tenuously, to my praxis.

The dissertation is organized into six parts which I list briefly here and explain further below. Part One: The Foreward, provides the reader with an overview, and explores how I

found my way to the writing of this dissertation, a discussion of my methodology, and the authors whose ideas have significantly informed my inquiry. Part Two: Family and Schooling: In Search of Belonging, describes a little bit about the story of my childhood, and segues to stories of my elementary and high school experiences. Part Three: The Later Years: Education, is comprised of select recollections, and reflections, from my post secondary education, and illuminates' connections to my current educational philosophy, and practice. Part Four: Just One Day, provides a detailed account of one day in my life as an educator, and highlights the influence of other educators, scholars, and writers on my practice. Part Five: A Legacy of Love, offers a culmination of the preceding parts which contains the curriculum that was developed for a faculty workshop in hopes of inspiring faculty to create welcoming, respectful, inclusive, caring spaces of possibility for learning. Part Six: The Pause, concludes the dissertation with reflections on the journey of writing this dissertation, including thoughts for others considering a similar methodology, and finally, considerations for future inquiries.

Finding the writer within The Continental Conversation

*I want to find a way, the way, anyway, to write this thing!
I have absolutely no idea how I am supposed to do this.
The red headed sage who so fiercely assures me I can, has me believing in the moment. But then we part, and she takes my courage with her.*

And I am left behind.

Shrivelled, I sit in Café Continental with doubts, insecurities, unknowingness, uncertainties, seated at my table. I try to tell them they are not welcome here. They are interfering with my intention. But they peer haughtily at me over the rim of their cups, and cackle. I despair. Soon it engulfs me and I wonder what exactly I am supposed to do.

*Just do.
Read. Think. Write. Repeat.
What?
WHAT?
Read. Think. Write. Repeat.
Go*

where
your
heart
leads.

*It will take you to where it matters.
Matters how, you do not need to know.
How it matters will be told in time.
And if it doesn't matter now,
so what?!
It may matter to another, and now you know, what mattered to them.
I want to believe I can. Do. This.*

*I can do this. I can do this. I can do this. I can do this. I can do this. I can.
I tell myself sternly, convincingly.
I can do this!
Better.
And it is for me to decide that I can.
Me, my keyboard, pens, and paper. Sometimes a pencil, sometimes a
marker, but always, me.
Wherever you go there you are (Kabat-Zinn, 2005)
Isn't that what he wrote?
Wherever I go, my story lives in me,
waiting to be told.
I'm telling.*

1.3 Writing as a Form of Inquiry

There is no doubt that the form of this dissertation as it appears before you is influenced by, or perhaps indebted to, Carl Leggo, and Shauna Butterwick. Additionally, the writing and wisdom of several others including Emi Garzitto (2003), Natalie Goldberg (1990, 2004, 2005, 2013), Julia Cameron (1998, 2002), Annie Dillard (1989), Anne Lamott (1994), Brené Brown (2012, 2015, 2017), Glennon Doyle Melton (2016), Billy Streaan (2017), Godfrey (2003), and Parker Palmer (2007), also provided previous inspiration. However, it is my friend, and EdD cohort colleague, Virginia Rego (2017) to whom I am particularly indebted. Virginia's dissertation, *You are my mirror; One teacher's autobiographical narrative inquiry into mental illness* (2017), was a beacon in the darkness of my doubt. Her writing, her stories, served for me as a profoundly poignant, insightful, and instructive elucidation of her experience as an educator, and as an educator with a mental illness. But, it was not only the telling and re-telling of her stories that moved me, but the meaning that

emerged for her from sharing her stories, and the consequences for her as an educator, and other educators fortunate enough to discover her writing.

Initially, I considered structuring my inquiry as an action research project (Carr & Kemmis, 1986). I now know the allure of action research was borne from familiarity. I had employed this method previously in my Master's Program, and could pull threads from the fabric of my thesis to begin to stitch anew. But that was not to be. To fulfill the requirements of the program, following the conclusion of the requisite series of courses, and the comprehensive exam, we were to complete two electives. Following, dare I say the direction, or more gently, the guidance of my supervisor, Shauna Butterwick, a directed study with Dr. Carl Leggo was arranged. Carl was a professor in the Department of Language and Literacy Education, at the University of British Columbia. That is what he was. But that is not who he was. Who he was, was a poet, "all my emotions and experiences, all my hopes and desires, are steeped in poetry. I live in poetry, and poetry lives in me" (Leggo, 2019c).

I remember still our first meeting, and every meeting, most at a small café in Steveston. I wish I knew then how brief my time with him would be. I didn't. No one did.

Our first meeting. Each with coffee cup in hand, we settled into our seats at a table by the window to get acquainted. I sit across from Carl. A long ponytail hung down his back, the glint of gold at his ear, unlined skin, sparkling blue eyes, a beatific countenance. A barely discernable lilt softens each word. The words dance. His utterances poetic. I lean in, wanting to catch, and hold every word. He is a beautiful man.

We stayed there a long while. Trading stories. Talking to know one another, each of us trying, I think, to lessen the distance between us. His words reached out, and wrapped themselves around me, hugging me to him. And I hugged him back. Or tried to. I am not as

courageous, nor as confident, nor as comfortable. He seemed very comfortable with who he was or had become. He was at peace. Me, not so much.

During our meeting, Carl mentions several writers he wants me to read. These are writers who write about writing. Natalie Goldberg (1990, 2004, 2005, 2013), and Julia Cameron (1998, 2002) are the two whose works I am to begin with, along with any others that I am inclined to read. Natalie and Julia each have several works that I am to read. Each of them, I quickly discover, call the reader to recognize, and honour, the writer within. Uniquely, each beckons the reader to the page, and to write.

Me? I am to write?

Me?

Yes, me. I am to write.

I was taught to letter at an early age. Letter not write. There is a difference. Thank you, Julia Cameron (1998, 2002). I wonder when it was I learned to write? To write is more than lettering on a page. More than black on white, or perhaps you prefer to letter in blue? Or red? To write, is about arranging the letters. Arranging the lettering in a meaningful way. Meaningful to the writer, and perhaps, if the writer is fortunate, to the reader too. Lettering is not the same as writing is it? One is from my head to yours, the other from my heart to yours. And again, I return to wonder where it was, how it was, that I learned to write? And what is writing anyway?

“When you write you lay out a line of words, you wield it, and it digs a path you follow. Soon you find yourself deep in new territory” (Dillard, 1989, p. 3). It is evocative, provocative, instructive, illustrative, informative, imaginative. Any, and all of those, and more. I wonder then when, and how, I learned to write? In the last two years, I have learned that

words will write themselves if you allow them to. That is the hard part. Allowing the words that want to be, to be. As they are. To allow the words in your, correction, in my, head, and heart, to be freed onto the page through my hand. To be outed. Naked on the page.

Natalie Goldberg (1990) tells me to write because I am a writer. Julia Cameron (1998, 2002) tells me to write because I “have the right to write.” Carl tells me to write because writing is the way, the way to recognizing, reckoning, understanding, and peace. Shauna tells me to write. Period. Write. Me, I just write because my hand seeks a page to put a pen to, so the thoughts can be set free in ink.

As I watch the words appear on the screen, I pause every so often, marveling at the mere possibility that my experiences are worthy of writing, and my voice worthy, of asking to be heard. Perhaps? Perhaps. But worthy of being read, is different from worthy of being written, is it not? Shauna tersely tells me, with a shake of her head, and a wave of her hand, her eyes shining, she leans toward me, “If it matters to you. It matters. Do not write to be read. Write knowing that it matters to you, and that is all that matters. Do not write to be read. Not now.” She is strong, and fierce, and sure. I lean toward her, wanting some of her strength, and sureness. I lean on her, and her words, when I get weary. Her strength, and sureness, sustain me, and so, I continue.

But I must stop pulling at this thread now, and pick up the other, it is dangling somewhere nearby, almost out of reach. With a tug I draw it near, and alight again on the path of writing, writing, about writing. About what it is I learned, about writing and how it is I came to write, Why, oh why has the act of writing itself assumed such significance in this endeavour? Attending to the writing has illuminated, shadows and secrets, experiences, and encounters, mistakes, and memories, hitherto hidden. Known to me then, but lost, and forgotten, in the passages of time. Lying dormant, until writing wrested them from where

they lay, and placed them on the page, for me, and you too, to ponder, and peer at, poke, and puzzle about. From pieces in responses to prompts from unfamiliar others, I began to write in response to prompts from Carl, and Shauna too. Curiously, and entirely unexpectedly, emboldened perhaps by both Shauna, and Carl's proclivity for creativity, I parlayed passages into pages, and pages to stories. It was not only prose that I penned, but poetry too. I had never written a poem, but encouraged by Carl I penned my first piece of poetry, a collection of six words poems. Soon, I was writing poems of different sorts and many sprawled over multiple pages. Writing poetry provided me with unexpected pleasure and a surprisingly productive aperture for exploring and expressing affective experiences.

It was as though the words had been waiting for a very long time for me to allow them to be written. To be birthed from me, onto the page. I had a lot of words wanting writing.

1.4 Storytelling

Whether through poetry, prose, or art I sought understanding through the telling of stories; stories of my childhood, of my adolescence, of me as a youth worker, consultant, student and instructor. Storytelling served as the vehicle for my journey of inquiry because I believe "more than any other method, storytelling is how we communicate who we are, how we feel, what's important to us, and what we need from others" (Brown, 2007, p. 156). Huber et al. (2013) echo Brown's (2013) writing when stating, "Human beings have and continue to draw on stories as a way to share, and to understand, who we are, who we have been and who we are becoming" (p. 213). For Clandinin and Connelly (1994), "people live stories and in the telling of them reaffirm them, modify them, and create new ones" (p. 415). Certainly, our very identities as people and as teachers are inextricably linked to the stories we tell of ourselves, and our students, both to ourselves and with one another (Huber et al., 2013).

I am a book. A story. Fifty-one chapters. Fifty- one years lived, and the fifty second chapter not yet begun. The pages are awaiting me. What will I write on them this year? What triumphs, and tragedies will be witnessed? What meanings, and memories will be made? What miracles, and mayhem will I observe? How will I hold onto hope, and happiness? Who will I hold just a

little tighter, and who will I have to let go? Who will I accompany me, and who will I leave behind? Where will I go? What will be done? What will be undone? What will I learn? What will I unlearn? What will I try to forget? Who will I have to forgive? Que sera sera.

The cover of my book is silky, soft, worn, black, leather. A study in contrasts. Strong, Soft. Worn, New. Bold, basic. Lined, it demands structure from me. But I struggle to stay in the lines. On the line. Under the line. Above the line. Across the line. I try to forget the lines where others have drawn them.

I prefer to make my own.

My book is pathetic. Painfully thin. Valiantly it wobbles refusing to fall. Tenacious. Persistent. Struggling. Resilient. A survivor.

While it was certainly reassuring to read the testaments to the power, and purpose of story in the literature, I have forever, and always, as far back as I can remember, sought out story to understand my own. I sought stories to meet others whose lives intersected with mine, stories of those who I had hoped could provide me with perspective on mine, and stories of those who had travelled a road I hoped to. Always stories. Reading through the list of resources that have been referenced in this inquiry, and peering over my desk to the book lined shelves of my office, the books stacked in front of me on my desk, at my feet, and on the credenza behind me my penchant for story as a way to know, and to understand is reflected in the titles. As I reflect on this realization I am reminded, once again, of how I, and so many other educators, have benefitted from the story, and stories of the luminous Parker Palmer (2007; see also Palmer & Zajonc, 2010). I do not mean to suggest that this writing, or I, could approach the acclaim of Palmer (2007), but I do wish to signal the potential of one story to illuminate the story of another, if only one other. “There are many truths and many ways of knowing. Each discovery contributes to our knowledge, and each way of knowing deepens our understanding and adds another dimension to our view of the world” (Hartman, 1990, p. 3). Twining the threads of stories of singular teachers whose “ordinary courage” calls them to the page to share their experiences can provide a richly textured

understanding of what it means to teach (Brown, 2010, p. 12). Getting inside the one of something affords access to understanding the possibilities of the many, “by exploring a particular life, I hope to understand a way of life” (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 737). “My greatest hope is that we will reach out across our differences and through our shame to share our stories” (Brown, 2007, p. xxvii).

Although inarguably I must affirm the methodology of this dissertation emerged from, rather than prescribed, the structure of this inquiry, it is nevertheless important to affirm it as a narrative autobiography. How so? How is it I see this inquiry, and what you are now in the midst of reading as a narrative autobiography? What is the evidence to support this claim?

Collins dictionary defines autobiography as “an account of a person’s life written or otherwise recorded by that person” (“Autobiography,” n.d., para. 3). Godfrey (2003) posits the word autobiography as meaning “to write one’s own life” (p. 16). She extends this brief definition with reference to the more expansive elucidation of Leggo (1997) writing “autobiography is not only recording and reporting and repeating the lived story as known, and as written by the subject; autobiography is recoding, and restorying, and restoring the lived story as unknown” (Godfrey, 2003, p. 15). Independent of the particular definition applied, inarguably, this inquiry is certainly autobiographical in its attention to me, myself, and I. The field is the terrain of my lived experience and the notes will be of my rememberings, reflections and writings. I am convinced and I hope you too dear reader I have evidenced this inquiry is autobiographical in its methodology, but narrative? How, so?

As elucidated in the preceding paragraphs, and pages, and evidenced on the following pages, this inquiry is not simply a story or several stories, but rather a story about stories. It is a story twined from storied threads of poetry, prose, scholarship, and art of who I am, and what I do as an educator, and why. Choosing to not only share stories, but

construct story from those shared stories, is reflective of narrative as described by Connelly and Clandinin (1990),

It is equally correct to say “inquiry into narrative” as it is “narrative inquiry.” By this we mean that narrative is both phenomenon and method. Narrative names the structured quality of experience to be studied, and it names the pattern of inquiry for its study.... Thus we say that people by nature lead storied lives and tell stories of those lives, whereas narrative researchers describe such lives, collect and tell stories of them, and write narratives of experience. (p. 2)

More particularly they claim,

People shape their daily lives by stories of why they and others are and as they interpret their past in terms of these stories. Story in the current idiom, is a portal through which a person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful. Narrative inquiry, the study of experience as story, then, is first and foremost a way of thinking about experience. (Clandinin, 2006, p. 45)

1.5 Autobiography

Choosing to study, reflect, and write about my experience meant that not only was my inquiry methodology narrative, but autobiographical. “Although all narrative inquiry “locates the researcher in the inquiry ... when the research stays focused on the researcher, then the methodology is known as autobiographical narrative inquiry” (Rego, 2017, p. 6). As an autobiographical narrative inquiry, I have endeavored to understand my experiences as an educator through the stories lived, told, written, rewritten and retold, by me (Clandinin, 2006, p. 47). As a narrative autobiography I am both the participant, and the researcher. I am telling stories; as the participant, stories lived, and told, and as the researcher or inquirer, stories of the stories (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).

As testified to in the preceding the writing of this inquiry however included not only story but also poetry. Utilizing poetry in research is described in the literature as poetic inquiry (Prendergast, Leggo & Sameshima, 2009, Prendergast, 2004). According to Prendergast (2009), poetic inquiry engaging with researcher voiced poems, whether reflective, creative or

autobiographical would be effectively categorized as *vox autobiographia poetic inquiry*. Utilized in research, poetry is a “powerful way to access deep emotion” and “express the inexpressible” (Prendergast & Galvin, 2012, p. 7). But, “poetic inquiry is not any piece of writing with poetry in it” (Wu, 2019). Poetic inquiry “revisits the philosophical ideas of knowledge generation” (Galvin & Prendergast, 2016, p. xiv).

In poetry I am researching autobiography, and I am asking unsettling questions about the past, but I am mostly learning to dream again, to challenge the images that have, for a long time, shaped me and my perceptions, in order to imagine other possibilities. (Leggo, 2004, p. 35)

Adopting an autobiographical narrative inquiry methodology for this research requires me to muster more than the ordinary courage Brown refers to, but extraordinary courage (Brown, 2010, p. 12). Extraordinary courage as my words have laid me bare on the page to anyone who happens upon them, upon me. I am “on display” (Rego, 2017, p. ii). As you continue to wander, wade or whip through the words on these pages, know you hold my heart in your hand as you turn the page. There is little distance between us; between me, the subject, me the researcher and you, the reader. “Linger with the words ... be patient” (C. Leggo, personal communication, June 11, 2018), so says my perspicacious professor. Autobiography is not something to be rushed in reading, or in writing. And yet, at times, I wish I could have rushed through the writing. Autobiographical writing interrogates, and examines both the joy and pain of our lives and forces us to look at the myths, reality frames, worldviews, biases that motivate us consciously and unconsciously (Kolbensschlag, 1988; see also Godfrey, 2003).

“Choosing what to include in final research texts is one of the most subjective aspects of a narrative inquiry, but it is also one of the most important” (Shaw, 2017, p. 223). I wrote many more stories than were chosen for sharing on these pages. Common to narrative inquiry, the final text or dissertation contains “only a portion of the stories that were told and retold” (Shaw, 2017, p. 223 see also Clandinin & Huber, 2010). But even those

stories that were not shared, and thus are not known to you, are held in the softness between the hard edges of the text on the page. Some were discarded before they reached the end of their telling, some were written to be held only in my head and heart, others were deleted from these pages some seemingly willingly, others more reluctantly. Of those that remain, some retain much of their structure, and syntax from the first write, while others are only vaguely familiar bearing only a faint resemblance to the first write. Choosing the stories to be included resembled an archaeological dig; excavating the stories, sifting, sorting, and sweeping the texts of my living and learning, unearthing the stories of significance to my educational praxis. Choosing the stories to be included, and how those stories were told, was influenced by an awareness of their eventual publication, a need to attend to my ethical responsibilities as a researcher, and the wisdom of my committee.

It is also important to me you know I do not share this writing, and these stories about me, my life, and my work, without some trepidation. "Once a story is told, it cannot be called back. Once told, it is loose in the world so you have to be careful with the stories you tell" (King, 2003, p. 10). Publishing this piece is a rite of passage, or perhaps the price of admission to the academy. A contribution or cost, or perhaps both. I am uncertain. What I am certain of however is that King's admonishment to "be careful" is wise (King, 2003, p. 10).

Participants in narrative research are asked to share more personal and identity laden data than in traditional, nomothetic research. As a result, they incur particular kinds of risks. Participants might not always be the best judge of the potential consequences of their participation. (Smythe & Murray, 2000, p. 329)

What are the risks? What need I be careful of? Is it careful, or mindful, or maybe, both? And, I don't know what I don't know. I can see ahead, but not around the corner. There may be a caution, or even a calamity around a corner awaiting me. A consequence not yet seen, for letting these words loose in the world (King, 2003). But, straight ahead, I can see that stretch of the road, and what I might want to be careful of. Where to begin?

There is me. For me, I wonder what it might mean professionally? “I understand that my autobiographical writing will expose me, but I must take the risk if I am to truly understand how my lived experiences have contributed to my development as a teacher” (Godfrey, 2003, p. 15). What might the consequences be for me if a colleague in my institution, or another, reads this dissertation? What assumptions will be made about me from my story? What judgements? Will I be pitied, or scorned, or scoffed? I am preoccupied with the potential negative consequences of outing my story. Brown (2007) would remind me to see this as shame borne from being exposed, and the fear of being “ridiculed, diminished or seen as flawed,” and to talk back at the shame running rampant across this page (p. 20). Perhaps I will not be pitied, scorned or scoffed but praised? Praised if nothing more for having what Brown (2007) describes as “ordinary courage,” the courage to speak from the heart “honestly and openly about who we are and our experiences, good and bad” (p. xxiv).

Or perhaps, my story might, as Lamott (1994) and Wheatley (2002) submit, help another? Perhaps the letting loose will ignite conversations amongst colleagues, about the this or the that of teaching. For another, whose story intersects with mine in its telling, perhaps there will be reassurance? While the consequences for me professionally are as yet entirely unknown, the same can not be said for me personally. Personally, there have been consequences, both pleasant, and very unpleasant. The pleasant provided by my eldest daughter, my best friend, and a dear friend. Rather than try to paraphrase what was said after reading of the many drafts, I will simply share a few words from each of them:

H: “Wow! The part about Chris made me cry. It is very good. And I am very proud of you and at the same time so inspired by you.

K: “What an exquisite telling of your story. A beautiful piece of prose. A wonderful way to honour your story of becoming.”

R: “I can’t put it down! You and your beauty shine through all these words and paragraphs. Feeling very lucky to know you - and to have a sneak peek at this work of soul!”

Their effusive praise was both humbling, and inspiring. But not all of those who

reviewed my writing offered similar commendations. Yet, once more, dear reader, I am caught in a dilemma? To invite you to return with me to wander to, and through, the words of the critics and naysayers, risks exposure I can not conscionably condone. Who? What? When? Where? How? Why? To answer any of these, risks exposing the identity of the speaker, and that ethically I can not do. Not at least without their consent to do so. And I assure you dear reader consent would not to be had. So, what I am I to do? Ignorantly, innocently, or perhaps, arrogantly, initially I believed I was entitled to write the story as I wanted it told. My story. My telling. I don't believe this now. I have softened or perhaps, wizened to the reality of not only my responsibility as a researcher, but also my responsibility in relation to those that whose stories are entwined, or ensnared, in mine. I am attending to not only my wants to write my story, but understanding that I am also writing a story of another, of others. Smythe and Murray (2000) attend to this conflict, writing:

Thus, narrative researchers often are conflicted ethically about how to do justice both to their own and their participants very different understandings of their life experiences – indeed, how to maintain any balanced ethical perspective in the context of such an intrusive style of research. (p. 318)

I have sought and received permission from those who I have explicitly identified. For reasons that will be readily apparent in the reading, I have elected to anonymize the name of educators whose actions I am critical of or condemn. There are others I did not see as necessary to the story to name. As stated in the Preface, I have also elected to anonymize the names of the elementary and high schools I attended, as there was no virtue or value, and only concern, in doing so. By way of relation the members of my family (my parents and siblings) although not named, are known. Protected perhaps from being readily identified as we no longer share the same last name, but they are here and there in the stories. Traces of their identity are apparent in the text. I know this, as do they, save for my sister who is estranged from our family, and thus, does not. They are all implicated in the telling of my story. As Chase (1996) observed, "Research participants easily recognize themselves in our

texts and readers who know them may recognize them, too, even when pseudonyms and other forms of disguise are used” (p. 45). I have attended to the counsel to care for those implicated, included and encountered, in my story, some mere silhouettes but others easily seen. But caring is not the same as erasing, is it? Smythe and Murray (2000) sagely caution,

There is power in print, in the academic press as in the popular press. Researchers need to recognize that when they publish their research participants are invited to read what they have written about them. Hence, researchers must spend some time carefully thinking about the impact that their view of their participants, as portrayed by the researcher’s lens, will have on the participants. (p. 333)

And yet with all this and that with what has been said and is still unsaid between me and the words and the winds that will carry them away from me to others to do what they will with them, I will hold tight to the truth that I know is mine and be proud.

The generative capabilities of narrative inquiry were realized in this research through the stories I am now telling. From the stories of my experiences were generated stories I made of my stories, and now, too, new stories made. “Whether inquirers begin with telling stories or living stories, we enter in to the midst of stories” (Clandinin, 2006, p. 47). And as we live, tell, retell, and re-story we are reshaped, and so begins the story anew (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994). I have storied myself into a new way of thinking about myself, and my experience, about my scholarly, and practical knowledge of teaching, and learning, and about not only who I am as an educator and what I do, but why, it has allowed me to “rethink and reimagine” the way I practice (Clandinin, 2013, p. 51). Creating the curriculum for new/newer faculty at my institution (and elsewhere) has, and will continue to create opportunities for me to take this storied triumvirate off the page, and into my conversation with colleagues and classrooms at my institution. “The story is beautiful, because or therefore it unwinds like a thread. A long thread, for there is no end in sight. Or the end she

reaches leads literally to another end, another opening, another ‘residual deposit of duration’” (Trinh Minh-ha, as cited in Huber et al., 2013, p. 216).

Corbin and Strauss (2015, p. 349) state, “There is this mystique that ‘doing research’ is somehow the hallmark of an educated person. But some persons are better teachers or practitioners than they are researchers. And some persons are better researchers than teachers or practitioners.”

I do believe that I am more of a teacher and a practitioner, than a researcher, at least in relation to traditional approaches to conducting research. I also now believe, as a consequence of my journey through the doctoral program and this inquiry, I am also a writer, a story teller, and a poet. I am hopeful that choosing to fulfill my obligation to conduct research for my doctorate by investigating my teaching and choosing to construct this dissertation as I have done so confirms the possibilities of narrative inquiry as a methodology, offers an original contribution to the teaching and learning literature and affords reassurance and inspiration to my colleagues in higher education. Corbin and Strauss (2015) state quality research is research that is substantive, insightful, creative, sensitive, evocative, provocative and invites reflection. Moreover, it is research that will resonate with you, its reader. I hope it is and does.

1.6 Framing My Inquiry

If we want to grow as teachers – we must do something alien to academic culture: we must talk to each other about our inner lives – risky stuff in a profession that fears the personal and seeks safety in the technical, the distant, the abstract. (Palmer, 2007, p. 12)

The Journey

Atop a mountain, wounded by thorns, my love of learning, and words bled,
gathering clouds,
threatened the meagre light,
flickering within.
And grew,

a desire to make a difference,
and do right,
and care,
a lot.

From the place of Ology,
I learned how to learn.
Seedlings of hope, planted by caring instructors,
and, an educator,
who inspired new possibilities,
of teaching, of learning, of doing.
And this grew a branch,
on which I jumped,
and became an instructor.
who soon travelled,

To the place of Ollege,
where I met, and fell in love, with Andragogy,
and grew enduring affection,
for a coke bottle glassed ABD elder,
who talked of the brain, in a white walled room, with me and other folks,
and grew inspiration on air.

He encouraged me to follow Andragogy to Sericity,
where I met a witch, a warlock, a debutante, a smartie, a chauvinist, a Russian,
and a sage.
I joined a circle, that became a community,
and grew awareness, and understanding, from barrenness,
and made meaning from words, and voices, present, and past.

With light shone on shadows,
and the familiar, defamiliarized (Kaomea, 2003),
intention grew, where there was once accidental,
and a tourist,
became a resident.

Who despite the travails, and injustices, endured while visiting Sericity,
determinedly grew roots in the polluted soil,
and nourished the curiosity,
whose roots were now nestled deep in the humus,
and whose branches swayed in the storm,
bent by the bitch,
but steadfastly refusing,
to be pulled from the ground,
I had claimed,
as mine.

Unwilling to be satisfied,
curiosity, and passion,
grew together,
as the clock wound forward.
With the encouragement of many,

and the nod of a select, significant, few, elders,
who I unabashedly admired,
I arrived at the place of Umbia,
where wisdom waits,
to be retrieved, and remade,
by those who come to the sacred grounds.

Amid the trees,
in small, windowed, rooms,
I meet many,
who invite me to join them in their journey to understanding.
I am a willing companion.
They are patient, wise, warm, and generous,
with two exceptions,
who attend, but are not present.
The journey through Umbia is strenuous,
and I fall ill.
And on the wings of kindness,
I am carried, when I am no longer able to walk,
but only for a little while,
it is for me to find my way,
forge my own path.
It has been a long, lonely, tedious, journey,
but I am determined,

And her hand holds my head, and hope,
in hers.
And he brings me here, to this page,
where I am writing to you,
dear reader.
Sharing with you what I have learned, as I have journeyed here,
now,
to where I stand,
today,
as an educator.

Books are everywhere,
standing on shelves,
stacked in piles, on the floor,
strewn across the table tops,
amidst reams of paper.
Words on the page.
Scraps, and strips,
of paper,
bound in journals,
of varying covers,
carried with me,
to capture words,
that may be lost,
in the busy of the everyday,
as I assemble ideas,
of mine,

and others,
to find, and make meaning.

And I will not bore you, nor annoy you,
with some of the tiresome, treatise I have tread through,
nor the discombobulated discourse I endured,
or the thousand-dollar-word tomes,
or the flotsam, and jetsam,
of the words I read.
No, that I will not do.
But what I will do,
is invite you to meet, and linger,
with those,
whose ideas,
I wish to claim as mine,
if only for a moment.
Or a passage,
or a paper,
or this paper,
as I word my way to understanding,
for me,
and for you.

Some of those authors, I will invite to join us,
as we journey to understanding,
will be writers,
familiar,
and, expected,
and, if not expected,
certainly, not a surprise.
I met some of them, years ago now,
in my initial ventures through the academy,
at Ollege,
and,
Serisity.
Freire, Palmer, Noddings, Goleman, Margolis, Joseph, Cranton,
to name but a few,

And still so many more,
lay awaiting,
to be found.
And, find them I did,
as I was shepherded through,
the lands of Umbia,
by the hand of sagacious, and loquacious scholars,
whose wisdom I earnestly wove through mine.
In the company of other neophytes,
a way was made,
to Noddings, Cranton, Slavich and Zimbardo, Kaomea, hooks,
and more.
a company of scholars,
in whose wondrous words,

I found,
kindred souls.
on whose pages,
I learned, I was not alone,
and had more to learn,
so much more to learn.
And they too, sat patiently with me,
as I peered, and pondered the words on the page.
My soul sighed.

This journey, through the land,
of scholars and sages and charlatans too,
has taken me many years.

I have occasionally strayed from the path,
sown by the academy,
to wander through streams,
of the thoughts of others,
finding treasures hidden in the words of,
Anne, Annie, Natalie, Julia, Erin, Brené, and Glennon
whose scholarly credentials may be wanting,
but whose soul credentials,
are priceless.

Whose ideas,
have served me,
and, saved me,
and, inspired me,
to see.

Ideas, and inspiration, abound,
in places,
hitherto unseen.

You will come to know them as I have,
as I tell you the story of how I came to be,
who I am,
why I am,
what I do,
why I do, as I do,
as I am,
as an educator.

1.7 Collage: Wisdom in Words



Figure 1. Collage: Wisdom in words.

One day surrounded by stacks, and stacks, of books, and papers, articles, chapters and more, encountered in my education on education, and seemingly of potential for the development of this dissertation, I decided to separate those that I saw as significant and those of less or no significance. Those fifty- six books that emerged as significant were gathered, and a photo of the cover of each book taken. The image on this page represents the collage that was constructed from the collection of cover images. Each of the images was intentionally configured to be equal in size to the other. There is no inherent structure to the placement only that the final rendering would itself resemble the cover of a book. Thematically, the books could be generally categorized as those about writing, and those about education, both teaching and learning.

With the exception of Gloria Steinem's (1993) *Revolution from Within: A Book of Self Esteem*, all of the books seen here were purchased within the last 10 years as a doctoral student, some requisite reading, some recommendations of colleagues, and serendipitous acquisitions. There are some more scholarly, and others less traditionally described as scholarly, but influential in one way or another on my praxis. I elected for example to include Steinem's (1993) book in this collection because it was so influential in my healing journey, and it is one I have shared with, and gifted to so many of my students, in hopes of supporting their healing journey. The titles of the books are generally illuminative of their contents, revealing the territory of the literary landscape, both scholarly, and less traditionally scholarly, that have influenced me. The books I have selected for the collage are not the only ones I have read, but these are the books that I believe I am most beholden to, most appreciative of, and which most influenced the development of this dissertation, and the consequent curriculum shared in Part Five: Legacy of Love: Foundations of Instruction. The first book I purchased was *The Art of Teaching Adults: How to become an exceptional instructor, and facilitator* (Renner, 2005); however, the single most influential

book was *The Courage to Teach* (Palmer, 2007) followed by *Writing Down the Bones: Freeing the Writer Within* (Goldberg, 2005). The last book I acquired was *Connected Teaching: Relationship, Power and Mattering in Higher Education* (Schwartz, 2019). In both big, and small ways, from a single sentence, to entire ideas, or theories, the words, and wisdom, of each of the authors depicted in the collage live within me and my teaching. I am grateful for the gifts of each of these writers. There are however a select few, which I discuss below, that have served as particularly influential in the development of this dissertation and my practice namely Renner (2005), Bain (2004), Brookfield (2006), Palmer (2003, 2007), Brown (2007, 2010, 2012), hooks (1994, 2001, 2003), Freire (1970), Schoem (2017), and Schwartz (2019).

The initial appeal of *The Art of Teaching Adults: How to Become and Exceptional Instructor and Facilitator* (Renner, 2005) was admittedly its beguiling presentation and attention to the practical elements of teaching, the tools and techniques. Renner's (2005) attention is occupied with what I will describe as the more instrumental, albeit important, preparations of materials, supplies, and the arrangement of the space. The pages he devotes specifically to the significance of the first session, and the importance of considering context as you commence the class, "an exercise that works in one group may bomb in the next" (Renner, 2005, p. 15) were initially illuminating, and later confirming. Renner (2005) and I agree also on the importance of attending to co-creating group agreements, a detailing of the expectations of the learners for creating, and maintaining a beneficial learning environment, "you begin the course based on clearly understood expectations" (p. 20).

With the conclusion of nearly fifteen years of study, Bain's (2004) *What the best college teachers do*, provides a plethora of ideas, and insights, associated with exemplary university and college educators. As a person with a penchant for story, I revelled in his choice to include the stories from those that participated in his study. I encountered many a

kindred spirit, whose aspirations, frustrations, and experiences echoed and occasionally, inspired my own. The testimony of teachers furnished confirmation for my convictions of the importance of intention: “The most effective teachers generally thought more carefully, and extensively about their intentions” (Bain, 2004, p. 122) and specifically of their intentions in relation to their students and their experience of learning. I also read joyously of the testimonies of teachers who sought to embrace, and celebrate the unique capacity, contribution, and potential of each student entrusted to them, eloquently expressed in the words of a study participant:

Everybody can contribute and each contribution is unique ... I want each of my students to understand that no one else in the world will bring his or her particular set of experiences and body chemistry to the class. Everybody has something special to offer (Baker, 1977 as cited in Bain, 2004, p. 142).

I express similar sentiments in the first session of my class. Bain (2004) highlighted the responsibility of the teacher to intentionally solicit and support the engagement of each and every student: “They [teachers] pulled each person in the room into a dialogue, offering gestures and body language that conveyed their desire to reach out to each student” (p. 118). He also spoke of the imperative that teachers care for students: “Our teaching must communicate that we have an investment in the students and that we do what we do because we care about our students as people and as learners” (Bain, 2004, p. 118). I appreciate Bain’s splendid examples, and explicit acknowledgement of the need for each of us who choose to teach, to both look out the window, and in the mirror. To learn from others, who we choose to serve as exemplars, and to learn for ourselves what it means to teach, and to recognize that “part of being a good teacher (not all) is knowing that you always have something new to learn” (Bain, 2004, p. 174). Finally, I hold dear Bain’s (2004) fundamental contestations captured in the concluding comments; teaching is “anything we might do that helps and encourages students to learn” (p. 173) and “creating those conditions in which most—if not all—of our students will realize their potential to learn” (p. 175).

Brookfield (2006) opines similarly in his book *The Skillful Teacher: On Technique, Trust and Responsiveness in the Classroom*, “skillful teaching is whatever helps students to learn” (p. 17). While an admirable sentiment, Brookfield forever endeared himself to me on the first page of this book with his passionate profession or perhaps, confession, of teaching as a “glorious messy pursuit” (p. 1) and “our lives as teachers often boil down to our best attempts to ‘muddle through’ the complexity of our classrooms” (p. 1). Endearing, because he so artfully captured my own experience of the wondrous, complex, amorphous, messy, and unknown, as an educator, I encounter each time I enter my classroom. And there are so many unknowns; who are my students, what of the lives they have lived between our last encounter and this one, and that they are living today, what is their readiness to learn today, their receptiveness to my intentions for our day, and so much more. All of these unknowns for me mean that I am always learning. Learning to be comfortable with being uncomfortable, to expect the unexpected, and to trust that we, my students and I, will together find our way through the muddle, both us learning as we journey together. I found also in his book support for my own supposition of the importance of hearing student’s experiences of my teaching, well before the end of the term, when traditionally students complete the requisite evaluation form to be received by me many weeks later. These evaluations are received long after our course ended, and long after I could change anything to benefit them. Although my strategies are much simpler than those Brookfield describes, I do agree “to do good work as teachers [requires] a consistent awareness of how students are experiencing their learning” (Brookfield, 2006, p. 35). I have developed multiple means of soliciting such information, ranging from short evaluations of their experience of my instruction of a single session, to a longer essay of reflection of their learning.

There are a litany of reasons Brookfield’s (2006) writing continues to resonate with me, including his elucidation that credibility, and authenticity, are meritorious characteristics

for effective educators. This is consistent with my own conception of what I must attend to if I hope to be experienced as effective by my students. Although I think credibility, described by Brookfield (2006) as “the perception the teacher has something important to offer” (p.56) is essential, I have learned it is not something I should presume all students will assume. Some, if not most, will confer me credibility as a consequence of my position, but there will be others, sometimes one, and sometimes many more than one, who will need to be convinced. Brookfield’s definition of authenticity, “the perception that the teacher is being open and honest in her attempts to help students learn” (p. 56), is also useful. Brookfield argues, “Both these characteristics [are] kept in a stage of congenial tension” (p. 57). While I intermittently question my credibility or legitimacy, not only as an educator but with many of the varied roles I occupy, I rarely, if ever, doubt my authenticity. And for me this is important. That I am, and am experienced as, authentic. Brookfield’s writing afforded me an educators’ insight to authenticity in academia and confirmed its significance.

It was not Brookfield (2006) who was the first author to invite me to associate authenticity with effective teaching, but Palmer’s (2007) *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher’s Life*. Serendipitously plucked from the shelves of a campus bookstore one afternoon, his poetic, and passionate articulation of what it means to teach, mirrored my own. Although I could write endlessly of the profound influence of this book on my practice, it was in his words that I first experienced confirmation of my own conviction that who I was as an educator mattered as much, if not more, than what I did: “good teaching cannot be reduced to technique but is rooted in the identity, and integrity, of the teacher” (Palmer, 2007, p. 10). We teach who we are. To know myself well then, becomes as important to teaching, as it is to know my subject well, as it is to know my students well, “who is the self that teaches?” (Palmer, 2007, p. 7). His were the first words I read, outside of those of my own, heralding the wholeness of who we are, as important to

who we are as teachers: “identity and integrity have as much to do with our shadows and limits, our wounds and fears, as with our strengths and potentials” (Palmer, 2007, p. 13). Although artfully, and enchantingly articulate, it was his attention to what I characterize as angst, that forever endeared him to me. Alighting on his humble acknowledgement of his struggle to reconcile the incongruence between what he believed of himself, and what others believed of him, and his confessions of feelings of fraudulence echoed, and thus normalized, my own. I experienced immense relief knowing I was not alone in my distress. His words also emboldened me to share my doubts, and distress with others, allowing me to discover colleagues who similarly struggle. Although realized only later, Palmer’s (2007) proposition of the principal paradox, that is, how space is constructed by both boundedness and openness, open to both individual and group voices, and should honour the stories of both the students and the discipline, and its traditions, provide invaluable insights, and useful instructions for the inherent complexities of practice.

Another favoured author whose work I appreciate is that of Brown (2007, 2010, 2012, 2015, 2019). Although I could recite a litany of passages that I have found meaningful both personally and professionally, I will highlight only a select few here, ones perhaps most illustrative of the envisioned connection between her work on vulnerability, and mine as an educator. With her first book, *I Thought it was Just Me: But it Isn’t*, Brown (2007) thoughtfully explores shame, and its impacts. Characterized as “the silent epidemic” (Brown, 2007, p. 5), she describes shame as “the intensely painful feeling or experience of believing we are flawed and therefore unworthy of acceptance and belonging” (p. 5). Her sensitive, and insightful recounting of her own experiences of shame and that of her study participants, was reassuring, and personally enlightening. It provided perspective on other experiences of shame for many if not most of my students. Brown (2007) laments of consequences of shame for learning: “I believe shame is one of the greatest barriers to learning ...

[consequently] it is highly unlikely that we will risk admitting we don't understand or asking questions – both of which are essential to real knowledge building" (p. 116). Brown (2015) later reported, "85% of the men and women we interviewed for the shame research could recall a school incident from their childhood that was so shaming that it changed how they thought about themselves as learners" (p. 83). Because I know this to be true for me and many others (friends, family, colleagues) I endeavour to counter this narrative in my classroom by sharing personal experience of how shame silenced me and in so doing impoverished my learning. I acknowledge to my students the inherent disorientation, disruption and discomfort of learning with numerous invitations and opportunities to be curious and ask questions.

In the introduction in her book, *Daring Greatly: How the Courage to be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent and Lead*, Brown (2012) writes, "What we know matters, but who we are matters more. Being rather than knowing requires showing up and letting ourselves be seen. It requires us to dare greatly, to be vulnerable" [italics in original] (p. 16). But what is vulnerability and what does it mean for me to be vulnerable in relationship to my students? Brown (2012) defines vulnerability as "uncertainty, risk and emotional exposure" (p. 35). I agree with vulnerability as emotional exposure but do not agree with vulnerability as necessarily risky or uncertain. It is often risky, but not always. For me, vulnerability is all about emotional exposure, the "nakedness" (Brown, 2012, p. 39) she offers as an alternative. I do believe it is important for me to be willing to 'get naked' with my students to both embolden them to do so for themselves, and with one another. I believe too, as does Brown (2012), that it is only when we allow ourselves to be vulnerable that we allow for connection: "Connection is the energy that is created between people when they feel seen, heard, and valued" (p. 145). So, how am I vulnerable with my students? How do I get naked when fully clothed? For me, vulnerability as an educator wears many guises. It is

about sharing my uncertainties, my curiosities, my strengths, my limitations, imperfections, and foibles. It is asking for their help to resolve a dilemma, difficulty or disagreement that has arisen, it is about acknowledging, and apologizing for erroneous assumptions, and mistakes made. I do this because I too believe vulnerability begets connection, and in absence of connection, between myself, and my students, and my students with one another, there will be no learning. But this is not only about me, or for me. This is for my students also. I wish for my students also, an opportunity to allow themselves to be vulnerable. But I would be remiss, would I not, if I failed to recognize not only the opportunities but, perhaps, the risks to my students if they choose to “rumble?” How do I author the paradoxical space that is a classroom; the physical, emotional, cognitive and spiritual space? As Brown (2019) so eloquently opines:

Classrooms where all students can walk in and, for that day or hour, take off the crushing weight of their armour, hang it on a rack, and open their heart to truly being seen ... students deserve one place where they can rumble with vulnerability and their hearts can exhale.

Another writer whose work for me celebrates the heart in teaching is bell hooks (1994, 2001, 2003). Written many years apart, *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* (hooks, 1994), *All About Love* (hooks, 2001), and *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope* (hooks, 2003) illuminates hooks’ struggles as an educator who is insistent on embracing, and advancing education, as a place of possibility created by a commitment to progressive pedagogical practices. In *Teaching to Transgress*, hooks (1994) writes impassionedly of the importance for educators practicing vulnerability to both embolden, and enable students to be willing to be vulnerable: “In my classrooms, I do not expect students to take any risks that I would not take, to share in any way that I would not share” (p. 21). My own experience and that of my students have helped me to appreciate the benefits of “modelling the way” (Kouzes & Posner, 2003, p. 1). Of me, as the teacher

doing what it is I am asking my students to do, serving to example (as *an* example, not *the* example) what I am endeavoring to elicit.

Feminist hooks' (1994) commentary on the necessity of creating community in the classroom, and the challenges inherent in doing so in the context of diversity was educative, echoing my experiences, and confirming the importance for us as educators to educate our students how to engage with us, and one another. "In the transformed classroom there is often a much greater need to explain philosophy, strategy, intent, then in the norm setting" (hooks, 1994, p. 42). I concur, and would add to this the importance of learning from our students, of being educated by our students, about their expectations of engagement, with us and with one another. If I am sincere in my intention to not impose but create community in my classroom, in our classroom, must I not invite my co-creators to express their assumptions and expectations? I believe so. I also believe, like hooks (1994), "we must build 'community' in order to create a climate of openness and intellectual rigor" (p. 40). Like hooks (1994, 2003), in the community of my classroom, I endeavour to convey, and catalyze an enthusiasm, an enjoyment, an excitement for the learning journey we embark on with each encounter. I believe as she does, "that the classroom could be exciting but that this excitement could co-exist with, and even stimulate, serious intellectual and/or academic engagement" (hooks, 1994, p. 7). Over the years I have become accustomed to the chiding, and caustic comments of colleagues who are suspicious, or even dismissive, of the possibility that the energy emanating from my classroom was not empty of education, and academic rigor but rather, a consequence of it.

Writing subsequently in *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope*, hooks (2003) claims that to speak of love in relation to teaching is "taboo" (p. 127). Yet, she violates this taboo devoting an entire chapter to the discussion of love and teaching—Chapter 11 (Heart to heart: Teaching with love) writing that love is "the will to extend to one's self for the

purpose of nurturing one's own or another's spiritual growth ... love is an act of will-namely, both an intention and action" (hooks, 2001, p. 4). She argues vehemently for the need to not only know, and name, but nurture love, as crucial to the conditions for learning, both individually and collectively. "Love in the classroom prepares teachers and students to open our minds and hearts. It is the foundation on which every learning community can be created" (hooks, 2003, p. 137). She describes teaching with love as "combining care, commitment, knowledge, responsibility, respect and trust" (hooks, 2003, p. 134). Missing in this delineation however, is the feature of honesty, of being true to oneself that she includes in previous work. This is consistent with being an authentic instructor, inviting, and encouraging the same in students. She also counters dissenting narratives of critics who claim it is possible, perhaps even preferable, to refuse to acknowledge the role of emotions: "Refusing to make a place for emotional feelings in the classroom does not change the reality that their presence overdetermined the conditions where learning can occur" (hooks, 2003, p. 133). Our students enter, and engage, in our classrooms not as disembodied heads to be educated, but as whole people, sentient beings, with thoughts, and feelings, who are enjoying, or enduring learning as a part of who they are, and what they do. I believe to suggest feelings are not, or should not, be a part of the experience, of being a student, is to dehumanize our students and ourselves.

The writing of bell hooks (1994) is punctuated with frequent references to the profound influence of the writing, and wisdom of Paulo Freire (1970), and their shared insistence of education as a practice of freedom, of liberation, of hope. I too discovered Freire (1998, 2000) as a student (during my master's program), and I credit his writing in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and *Pedagogy of Freedom: Ethics Democracy and Civic Courage* with inciting a similar condemnation of education as "banking" and inspiring an inquiry and evolving commitment to a dialogic practice (2000, p. 72). Freire (2000) describes

the banking model of education as “an act of depositing, in which the students are depositories and the teacher is the depositor” (p. 72). In this conception of education, students are conceived of as the ignorant and incompetent receivers and beneficiaries of the teacher’s knowledge and competence. It serves knowingly, or unknowingly, to dehumanize both the student, and the educator.

In opposition to the banking conception of education, Freire (2000) makes an impassioned plea for what he describes as problem-posing education. Predicated on the rejection of education as banking, Freire’s (2000) problem-posing education is an approach that recognizes how,

People develop their power to perceive critically the way they exist in the world with which and in which they find themselves; they come to see the worlds not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation. (p. 83)

For Freire (2000), this critical consciousness, or conscientization, is achieved through dialogue, “dialogue is the encounter between men [*sic*], mediated by the world, in order to name the world” (p. 88). For Freire (2000), faith in the potential, and power of people, a profound love for people and the world, and humility are a priori requirements for dialogue (p. 91). His problem-posing pedagogy rejects the vertical hierarchy of the student-teacher relationship of traditional banking education (Freire, 1994, 2000). Thus, the teacher does not merely deposit, nor does the student merely receive; both students, and teachers, participate in the pursuit, and construction of knowledge, and both, are potentially transformed as a consequence.

Through dialogue, the teacher-of-the-students and the-students-of-the-teacher cease to exist and new term emerges: teacher-student with students-teachers. The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who himself is taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach. (Freire, 2000, p. 81)

Writing about the wholeness of students and the importance of teaching the whole student is the essence of *Teaching the Whole Student: Engaged Learning with Heart*,

Mind and Spirit (Schoem, 2017). As Schoem (2017) states, “Teaching the whole student involves an approach and mind-set that looks at students with heart, mind, and spirit, including but also extending beyond their intellectual abilities” (p. 1). Such an approach serves to recognize and affirm, as have several other scholars already mentioned, and with whom I agree, that seeing the humanity of our students and attending to their wholeness enriches the experience of both the educator and the students.

What I have come to understand is that I am at my best as a teacher, and my students are at their best as engaged learners when I enter as a whole person, just like my students, with not only an active mind but also a loving and soulful spirit. (Schoem, 2017, p. 79)

Teaching the whole student, Schoem (2017) argues, provides opportunities that may be otherwise unavailable to them in the classroom, opportunities, for example, to affirm the unique potential of each student, to allow for students to share their authentic selves, to assist students to make meaning from their experience and connect it to their lives, and to enable students to develop resourcefulness, resilience, and relationships that extend beyond the confines of the classroom (p. 2). Lamenting the loss of community, the separation of self, the penetration of technology, and the glorification of objectivism in higher education, Schoem adds his voice to others in the literature calling for a recognition, and revitalization of relationship, and community, in teaching, and learning. Specifically, Schoem promotes relational teaching, teaching which honours the integrity of the whole person, confirms community in the classroom, and employs engaged pedagogies as an antidote to these described woes. For me, it is his elucidation of not only the necessity of intention but of action, of desire and deliberate strategies, that is required to nurture community in a classroom that is noteworthy as is his recognition of the centrality of caring relationships between students and teachers to learning.

The importance of relationship in education and of teaching as a relational practice is also expounded on by Schwartz (2019) in *Connected Teaching: Relationship, Power, and Mattering in Higher Education*. Acknowledging the influence of several epochal educational scholars, including Stephen Brookfield (2006), bell hooks (1994, 2001, 2003), Paulo Freire (1970, 2000), and Parker Palmer (2003, 2007), Schwartz (2019) poetically writes, “I believe relationship are central to this work ... I believe relationship is the fulcrum and the spark, the valley and vista--the essential driver of teaching and learning” (p. 1). For Schwartz the primacy of relationship, of envisioning teaching as a relational practice is correlated with the contemporary classroom, and the accompanying evolution of teachers from transmitters to facilitators, from providers of information, to co-creators of experiences that facilitate learning. As she argues, “our authority as teachers is no longer rooted in having the information but rather, rooted in helping students learn how to learn and discern and in creating and managing (or holding) the learning space” (Schwartz, 2019, p. 75). Schwartz subsequently extols how we as educators can hold space for our students by creating and nurturing a learning environment that is “respectful, energized, challenging and supportive” (p. 79), but cautions educators from conflating notions of holding space, with safe space, while confirming the need for students to feel safe in the space as necessary for learning.

While Schwartz (2019) proclaims teaching as “an act of hope” (p. 130), her poignant writing about losing hope, losing her way, and of failing, although painful, were provocative and reassuring for me as an educator: “Teaching experiences that go so wrong can rock us to the core, bruising our sense of efficacy, identity, and purpose” (p. 117). Schwartz offers additional reassurance, illuminating preventive, or pre-emptive, measures to the failure that is an inevitable accompaniment to connected teaching. She offers five strategies including: caring for self and others (although she mainly attends to self-care), accepting our fallibility, creating a psychological contract, recognizing and resisting the urge to retreat, and building,

and nurturing relationships. For me, it is both accepting my fallibility, and remaining engaged, recognizing, and resisting my natural inclination to withdraw that have created the most challenges. Her confessional narrative of her struggle with failure resonates strongly with me: “Although I grew from the failure and felt cognitively ready to move on, the hurt lingered” (Schwartz, 2019, p. 126), and, “as I taught through pain, the downward spiral continued and the pain got more intense” (p. 127). Choosing to characterize and to visualize my failure as an injury, as Schwartz proposes, also affords me constructive insights, and opportunities. “Viewing the experience as an injury reminded me it would take time to heal, but that I would heal, and this gave me hope as I began the next semester” (Schwartz, 2019, p. 127).

1.8 Summary

Part One of this dissertation has provided a guide to the structure, an overview of my methodology and writing process, and a discussion of the contributions and influences of some particularly important authors whose writing and ideas have informed my praxis. In Part Two, I begin telling my story, specifically of family and experiences of schooling and post-secondary, highlighting the influence of these experiences on my philosophy, pedagogy, and practice of teaching.

PART TWO: Family and Schooling: In Search of Belonging

Wherever you are is the entry point.
(Kabir, as cited in Cameron, 1998, p. 4)

2.1 The Prelude

My journey to the threshold of the department of Educational Studies began, as every journey does, with a single step. A single, serendipitous step more than ten years ago when I answered a call from the Program Coordinator of Part-time and Continuing Studies in the School of Business, enquiring of my interest in returning to teach a course in a program from which I had recently graduated only a few months previously. Thus, began my journey into adult education. Would I be interested in instructing *a course*, Recruitment and Selection, HRMG 3505, beginning in September? A course? Teach? Me? The instructor? Yes!

For many years, I referenced myself as an accidental instructor, initially as faculty in the School of Business and later, by invitation, at another post secondary institution in the lower mainland. In the ensuing years, I practiced concurrently as faculty, and as a consultant developing and delivering adult education to small, large organizations, profit, and not-for-profit, private and public organizations.

Was it accidental? Perhaps inevitable is more apropos. I could fill many pages with the stories, and sorrows, of my childhood, and yet, neither you nor I, need be troubled with the details, and trivialities of my childhood and youth. Rather, in this second (and third) part of the dissertation, I share with you the stories that I now believe have shaped the evolution of who I am as an educator, what I believe about education, and how it is that I choose to educate. Text boxes include my reflections on the meaning I make of how these experiences have impacted my practice.

To Gin add an “a” – Introducing Gina

To begin then, where I am Sitting at my table.

Fingers splayed across the keyboard. Fingers resting as they were taught to by Ms.

Archibald. Left: FDSA. Right: JKL;.

Lightly weighted they are poised awaiting instruction.

Wherever you are.

Wherever?

I am on my couch. A couch, one of two, in my open space kitchen, family room, combination
in my house in Walnut Grove,

Langley,

B.C.,

Canada.

I am located,

I have learned,

In a place. From a place. Of a place

From the land of the long white cloud,

Aeoteoroa.

A white woman of New Zealand,

Pakeha.

One of four, born, in a family of six.

To gin, add ‘a.’

Too many houses, with many rooms and manicured lawns,
of too many places.

House-full.

Home-less.

Until, now.

White.

My daughters’ mother.

My mother’s daughter. One of two.

A partner to mine.

Friend, to my friends.

Loved.

Learned.

Schooled, by too many.

Educated, by too few.

Always, and still, a student.

A lover of story,

and of books,

And song.

Lettered, an alphabet soup follows my name,
and a title too.
There have been a few.

Supervisor of this,
coordinator of that,
manager of more,
board Member,
faculty,
principal,
associate Director,
and today,
senior Manager.

Prosperous.
Privileged.

A portrait of me,
from there to here,
to now.

2.2 The Family That Wasn't

It is very important to go home if you want your work to be whole ... you must claim where you came from and look deep into it. Come to honor and embrace or at the least, accept it. (Goldberg, 2005, p. 152)



Figure 2. Mom, Dad, and me.

I was born in Wellington, New Zealand. An unremarkable birth, or so I am told. Before I was two years old, we left New Zealand. We would return, years later, for brief visits, but never to stay. Leaving New Zealand whilst still a toddler would be, the first of many moves of my childhood. From Wellington, to Toronto, to Boston, to London (Ontario), to London (England) and still, we kept moving. Too many a house, but never a home. Not ever in my childhood.

I do have a very few hazy memories. Moments. But they are so few. So very few. I close my eyes, and search my memory, in hopes of seeing more, but I don't. I don't see for a long time, not until I am much older. We are living, hiding, in West Vancouver. I am maybe 12, 13? Four children, and two adults. My father was the patriarch of our family, and his words, our commands. He said, we did. Or so that was what was supposed to be, and expected. There were a lot of rules. A lot of rules. And even more shoulds, and should nots. I often liken my childhood to a play where my father was the playwright, and the director, and each of us, my mother, my siblings and I, the actors.

My childhood, and adolescence, were defined by fear, shame, and loneliness. Afraid of coming, and being at the place called home. Afraid of unexpected anger. Shamed, and ashamed, for what I was not and, who I was not. Few knew the truth of how we lived. How I lived. And, loneliness. I had few friends. I did not know then what was wrong with me, but I knew something was wrong. My father gave me lots of ideas, and over time, his ideas became my ideas. I too believed that I was fat, ugly, unlikeable, undeserving, untalented, unworthy, unlovable, unwanted. Un, there was a lot of "un's," a lot of them.

I wish I could better understand the how, and why, of what happened. I lived it as a child. I could not understand it as a child, and I can't understand it as an adult. I have only a very few pieces of the whole puzzle, from which I cannot make a picture. In the ensuing

years, I have vacillated between feelings, of ambivalence, resentment, hate, love, grief, rage, remorse, empathy, and despair. A jumble of emotions. Over the years I have struggled to find forgiveness, and peace, in the disquiet. Truthfully, I continue to search in hopes of finding a way to forgiveness, because the past as it is written, can not be erased. And while I would, if I could, erase the pain of these experiences and their legacy of hurt, I have come to believe that it is from these, or perhaps because of these, that I have evolved to be the person I am, the educator I am. Authentic, Compassionate. Curious. Caring. Encouraging.

2.3 In search of belonging: Stories of schooling

I do not remember the big picture of childhood, everything comes to me in small broken fragments. Even when I piece things together, the pieces never make a whole fragment. There is never a complete picture. (hooks, 1997, p. 17)

2.3.1 Elementary School



Figure 3. Gina's First Day of School.

The picture tells me I began school in Toronto, Ontario. I am not quite smiling. I wonder why? My Mother tells me my earlier years of schooling were strewn across several schools. Several schools, several homes, and more than one country. My memories are few, and dim. Nothing remarkable to write of. Nor unremarkable. I have, intermittently over the years, sought to know more of my story through the words of my mother. My mother reassures me these years were happy one for me and my family. I have no reason to doubt her. When I was about ten, my mother tells me, my parents, my three siblings and I left Ontario, and travelled across Canada by car to Vancouver, British Columbia. This move would apparently herald the end of happiness for our family.

I was enrolled in the neighbourhood elementary school. Another new school. Another new beginning knowing no one. For reasons then, and now, that I do not understand I was not welcomed at school. My classmates were not kind. Cruelly, they taunted, sneered, and gestured. I was not included. I had no friends. I ate lunch alone. I spent recess alone. I was lonely. PE was excruciating. Mortified, I waited each class as I watched, one by one, as my classmates selected their team until there was only myself, and maybe one, or two, others. Unwanted. Rejected. Shamed. Eyes determinedly fixed on the grey dusty gravel chips of the school yard ball diamond awaiting the inevitable. Last. I recall a few teachers from this time, most, unfortunately, unfavourably. I recall watching teachers fawn over favoured students, and wondered why I could not be among the chosen ones? What was so different about us? Them and me? I know that my father often compared me to my sister, and I was found wanting, and so it is, and was, no surprise that I also compared myself to her, and to everyone else I encountered, and found the same.

The next year. Grade 7. A new student arrived at the school, Shally. She too was deemed a misfit by the majority. Why was she too, were we, excluded, outcast, isolated? We became friends. Everyday friends. Each day after school we would walk to her house

and spend the afternoon together. And then came grade 7. Shally's family moved, she changed schools and I was again, friendless. I remember little of this also, only that she was part of my every day and then she was not. Odd. But that was what it was. We were friends, and then, not friends. I had no friends. I was alone. An outcast. Rejected. And, could not understand why.

Reflecting on the dim images, and recollections of this time, highlights the emptiness I experience when I endeavour to recall my earlier years. However, even from the sparse images I can conjure up, I see, and sense, the rejection, the shame. Even now as I write this, I feel its heat. Searing then. Smouldering now. But it's there. And I know from this exploration, that shame is, and was for me, an immense barrier to learning, and becoming.

After another summer, there was high school. I travelled to another neighborhood for high school in hopes of a new beginning. I recall little of this time, also. Bits and pieces. Stilled images. Memoried, or storied, I am unsure. It is only broken images I recall.

2.3.2 High school I

*The school.
Long hallways, lined with lockers.
Rooms, uninspired, with rows of steel and wood.
Walls of chalkboards, smeared with white dust,
a witness to schooling had.
Tiled bathrooms,
girls gather to giggle,
and paint their faces from forbidden pots.
Long white tables,
where we gather,
each morning,
to talk of,
nothing, made something,
holding Styrofoam cups of sweet, milky, tea.
There are nobodies, and somebodies,
pretty girls, and pretty boys,*

*and me,
searching for belonging*

I began with hopes that died in dreary hallways. Hallways tread by teachers most of whom are lost in time, and by youth, too many of whom, I never knew, and too few, who I would then, and now, call a friend. I recall French. My teacher Ms. M. I sit towards the back of the room on the right-hand side, across from the windows. Interesting, isn't it the details that are recalled when reminiscing? I recall the throaty huskiness of her voice as she spoke French. I was enamoured with the language and envied her bilingualism. I wanted that for me. I eagerly attended classes, and wanted desperately to be able to parler Français. Until I did not.

It was a class like any other class. Or so I recall. And truth be told, I cannot remember what came before, or after, or even the specifics of what occurred. But I do remember the searing white hot shame I felt when she publicly chastised me in class for smoking. Apparently, as she shared with the class, she had seen me in the pit (the place on school grounds where smoking was allowed, and where the smokers gathered at breaks and lunch), and was hoping to discourage me from smoking. I can still feel the edges of the embers of shame. How dare she?! How dare she publicly choose to disparage me? How dare she shame me? Even now, as I write this, I am both anguished, and enraged. Anguished, because I allowed the heat of shame to destroy my desire to not only attend her class, but to learn the language, and enraged that she, as an educator, chose to publicly comment, and chastise, my choices and in doing so shame me. More than thirty years later, and the ashes of anguish and anger still smoulder. Such deleterious consequences for me from her ill-chosen words.

I cannot begin to presume why she chose on that day, to not only name me, and my choices outside of our class, but to judge the choices I had made. I cannot know if her

actions, and words were the consequence of considered reflection, and intention, or of spontaneity, or recklessness. I only know of the impact, and consequence for me.

As I write this now I reflect on my experiences as student and what it means to me as an educator. This experience is perhaps another rung on the ladder towards my insistence of, and attention to, emotional intelligence as a beneficial competency for educators, and the necessity of being mindful of the potential of unintended consequences of instructors' actions for my students. Regardless of intention, there is no cause or justification for the shaming of a student. Ever. "We can't force people to make positive changes by putting them down, threatening with rejection, humiliating them in front of others or belittling them" (Brown, 2007, p. 1). It seems so obvious as to not warrant mentioning, and yet then, now and in between, I know it happens.

Surprisingly, for some, perhaps, but unsurprisingly to me, I struggled to find my way in these hallways. Still searching to belong, I recall being befriended by a few, but never feeling that I belonged. There were fragile, fleeting friendships. A few invites. A few phone calls. A few social somethings. Always knowing, I was on the outside. I cared for nothing, and wanted nothing, but, to belong. To be welcomed, and belong. I see now that the beginning of my attention to belonging in my pedagogy is to be found somewhere in the hallways of my schooling. Desperate, to belong. Desperate, to be accepted. Desperate. I did as the others did. And in doing, I soon began to fall.

Falling

*Falling.
Failing.
Nights in closets.
Days drifting.
Following,
footsteps,
of others,*

*to find,
belonging.*

*Blowing smoke rings,
bootlegged booze.
Sneaky Pete's,
a costumed child,
dancing in the dark,
stolen threads,
School?
I want to belong.
Learn?
I'm learning,
belonging.*

*And I fall further,
behind,
to,
lost.*

*Until one day,
I am seated in the office of the pretty painted teacher.
She is my English teacher.
Unruly black hair,
falls to her shoulders,
in curls.
Bright blue eyeshadow,
glitters,
her full lips, glossed, sticky, wet, bubble gum pink.
Always a dress,
it moves with her,
teetering on heels,
small steps,
ten, perfectly, painted, bubble gum pink, nails.*

I do not know if she remembers me, but I will forever remember her and will forever be grateful to her. Because of this teacher, I would soon leave the school I attended, the house I lived in, and the people I lived with, to become a boarder at a school across the sea leaving sadness, loneliness, and fear on the shore.

Reflecting on the writing of this passage and about this time was enlightening. It provided an aperture for appreciating why it is that welcoming and belonging may have come to assume such significance in my practice. Perhaps it is because of my experience of being unwelcome and feeling that I did not belong, and what I know to be its deleterious consequences, that I endeavour to ensure my students' experiences do not echo my own? I had assumed, until the writing of this dissertation, that my attention to welcoming as an educator emerged from my efforts as a consultant employed to develop education for agencies and organizations seeking to be more inclusive. I now believe that my attention to welcoming, and its prominence in my practice, is attributable to my experiences as a child and youth. I wish for my students to have an experience of schooling, and of teachers, unlike my own. I wish for them to be, and feel, welcomed and that they belong.

This passage also served as a poignant reminder of the consequences of one teacher's choice to care. Because of her choice to intervene, I was given a chance to live free of fear. Free of fear, loneliness, and sadness, and into possibility. While I would not, as an educator, want to claim credit for like outcomes for any of my students as a consequence of my caring, I can humbly attest to students crediting their experience of our course as life changing, and in at least one instance, as life saving.

2.3.3 High school II: Boarding school

*The ferry carries me
to the island school,
where I will remain,
and be reformed,
remade,
remodelled,
redone,
returning, only occasionally, to the house,
where the others who share my name lived,
until the day I left,
forever.*

I remember the night of my arrival. Girls whose names, and faces, I can readily recall, still now, straddling the top of walls that did not reach the ceiling. They called out to one another, while I lay on the narrow bunk curled in misery. Alone. Lonely. Aching for the familiar. And yet soon, the unfamiliar, became my new familiar. And in this place, I found belonging. I wonder now about this, as I write. How did I go from not belonging, to

belonging? Why and how here in this place did I find belonging? Or did it find me? Or perhaps, we found it in each other, somehow, amongst the rows of desks, and cots, and dining hall chairs. We were different, of course, as one girl is different, to another, and yet, there was so much, that was the same. Our uniforms, our schedules. Lights on, lights off, Stand. Sit. Silence. Green, piss poor tea, meat loaf, and mashed potatoes, cots and curtains. So much shared in the difference. Is that what brought belonging?

It is interesting to me writing this now, almost forty years later, how vividly I can still see so many of my boarding school teachers. I can see them. All. I can remember so few from later years, and even fewer, do I remember, with any fondness at all. But memories of my boarding school teachers evoke affectionate warmth. I can see too our classrooms. The black boards. The desks. And chairs. In rows. Orderly. As were we. The teachers taught. The students learned. Some of course better than others. And I was amongst the best. And I don't know how, but I knew we were expected, and encouraged, to excel. Possibilities abounded. For me to be, me.

Reflecting, as I have so often, during the thinking, and writing, and research, of this dissertation, I have wondered aloud why it is that I not only survived, but thrived? The rules oppressive. The routines rigid. The structure suffocating. The strictness stifling. The uniforms drab, and unbecoming. Yet, for me, the structure, the strictness, the routines, the uniforms (every day, and special occasion) crafted a quilt sameness, and wrapped me in belonging. Save the typical angst of most adolescent girls, I was, for the first time in my young life, living a relatively untroubled life.

With perspective born from the passage of time, I see now how the certainty surrounding me, the predictability of my everyday, and sense of sameness engineered from the accoutrements of our academy allowed me to feel a sense of safety I had not previously known. I believe there is a connection to my penchant for creating classroom rituals? Rituals of how it is, for example, I begin each class with an opening exercise we repeat each time we reassemble as a class, how it is I end each session, or how it is I orchestrate our small group activities in the classroom.

In the summer months, between Grades 9 and 10, our headmistress retired, and was replaced by a headmaster. A solitary man, in a school of girls, staffed by women. Even now all of these years later I see him clearly. Slight, red hair, pale, suited. Upon his arrival, he created a new student structure, the prefect. A legacy of the British school system, prefects are generally described as an honour bestowed upon students identified to be, and expected to serve as, leaders in the school community, as both an extension of, and liaison to, and with, the administration. He soon perfunctorily appointed a head prefect and several other students as prefects. It was not long before it became apparent to me that I would be expected to serve as a prefect when I returned the following year, for grade eleven and if all continued as expected, I would be the head prefect upon entering Grade 12.

I have paused in the intervening years to wonder what it was about me that compelled him to this conclusion. I have often wondered too, why it was it never appeared to occur to him, that I may not want what he wanted for me. Why I was never asked for my ideas about his decision to make me prefect? I, as the student, receiving recognition but the recognition is unwanted, and thus unappreciated. Even resented.

A perplexing paradox to contemplate as an educator. To realize the recognition I provide to a student, may evoke unintended and even deleterious consequences. A conundrum warranting contemplation.

With my future a foregone conclusion however, it appeared that me, and my behaviour, merited greater scrutiny, and I was frequently ushered into the headmaster's office for discussion about this, or that. While I recall being, hmmm, initially pleased, perhaps even a trifle excited to be sought out by the headmaster, the initial pleasure soon gave way to displeasure and later irritation and even resentment. My reactions of course had little, or less to do with him, and more to do with me. Illuminated now by the bright light of

retrospective reflection, I see a little girl terrified of the expectations of a man, not unlike her father. Terrified of living, and learning, in the shadow of shame, for being something other than what was expected of me. Unfair of course, and I can easily see that now, to burden him with the mistakes of my father. Sadly, and I realize this now, this too would soon end. Another, in a series of endings that had, and would continue to define my experience of schooling, for far too long. I did as adolescents too often do and rebelled. A dumb thing. Actually, it was two of my classmates, and I, who did the dumb thing by going off grounds without permission to visit our friends at a neighbouring school. The all boys boarding school. And all three of us received a suspension of two, or maybe three weeks, as I recall, for our shenanigans, and were sent home. Although I am not proud that I was suspended, I am not ashamed either. Not now. I was then however. Ashamed, and shamed.

Although softened with the passing of time, a residue of resentment, and remorse stain the recollections of the day preceding my return home to serve my suspension. Even now I am perplexed by the obstinance of the headmaster, and his refusal to believe me, critical of the enormity of the response of the administration to our relatively harmless adolescent shenanigans, and both forlorn, and furious, that I was not only berated for my behaviour but denigrated, and shamed. Unbecoming and unsuitable for the future head prefect.

There it is. The too familiar feeling of shame. Of being shamed. I wonder if this educator, this administrative educator, had any awareness of the potential, and eventual consequences for me of his response to our adolescent shenanigans?

There a cautionary note here for me, and other educators. I am recalling a recent meeting with a faculty member, and the discussion that ensued reviewing her proposed response to confirmed instances of intentional plagiarism. For me the script she had prepared for faculty to relay to students was too shaming. Although I agreed with her intention to chastise students, and their choice to plagiarize, I was troubled by what I perceived to be unwarranted shaming of the student. "You cannot shame or belittle people into changing their behaviours" (Brown, 2007, p. 1). "In any form, in any context and through any delivery system, shame is destructive" (Brown, 2007, p. 62). Perhaps my reaction to this faculty can be attributed to this and other shaming experiences I encountered in my education.

Truthfully, I recall little of my time at home. Returning to school was disorienting. I had not had any contact with any of my classmates during my suspension. I recall the evening of my return, walking to the gymnasium, and witnessing many of my friends absorbed in the preparations for the end of the year performance. I left unnoticed to return to my boarding block. I was so lost. I was frequently called to the headmaster's office to account for this, that, and everything, and reminded repeatedly, of the responsibility of the role of a prefect, and of me. The expectations of others gnawed relentlessly at my fragile esteem. Searing shame separated me, from everything, and everyone, and stole belonging from me. My esteem unravelled, driving the disconnection, to everyone, and everything, that had held me secure. Having abandoned my studies while at home, and adrift upon my return to school, I performed very poorly on my year end exams. Untethered, and withering, under the glare of disappointment, and expectations, I begged my parents in the summer break to allow me to attend public school.

As I write this today, regret tugs at me, pulling me to the page. I left too soon. I left choosing to complete high school elsewhere.

I wish I had had the courage, or my parents had the wherewithal, to choose differently for me.

I didn't. They didn't. I wonder what would have been different for me, had I continued to the end at boarding school.

2.3.4 High school III

Owning our story can be hard but not nearly as difficult as spending our lives running from it. (Brown, 2010, p. 6)

I chose to begin, and end, to waste, my senior years of high school, Grades 11 and 12, in the halls of my neighbourhood high school. I was unremarkable, and unpopular, and

truthfully, as I have written elsewhere, I know not why. Now, as then, I was neither pretty, nor ugly, neither dumb, nor smart, neither athletic, nor artistic, and as before, I knew, I did not belong. Even now, as I write this so many years hence, I am still unknowing.

Schooling. That was what those two years were about. Then, I understood I was attending school to get an education. I know differently now. Now, I know I was attending a school, a four walled concrete building, and was schooled. Attending, and assessments. Those were the basic requirements of schooling. About the acquisition of information and of ideas. I did less attending than was required to be successfully schooled. Much less. I know now, I did not attend class because of how isolating it was to be alone, in a room of people. A pointed and painful reminder of not belonging. Although absence did not change the reality of my identity, it allowed me to escape it. Not attending allowed me to not have to see my aloneness.

I also wonder now, how my parents did not see. Or maybe, one or the other saw, but chose not to look. Eyes wide open but choosing not to know. Not to know, that I was failing, and flailing. And perhaps they did know, but were then preoccupied with my younger sister, who was eventually hospitalized with an eating disorder? Or maybe it was my younger brother, who left home also for boarding school in grade eight, and never returned home, who had their attention? Or maybe it was not their children, but their own troubles that preoccupied them? I don't know. But what I do know is that these years of schooling were about surviving. Surviving and searching, for the path to belonging.

But before I leave this story of schooling, although it saddens me, I would be remiss if I failed to acknowledge, and appreciate the impact of two teachers on my schooling, and subsequent choices of schooling. Although, also lost in the hallways of this high-school, I did find solace in the spaces of two of my classes, English, and English literature. Surprising to

me, still all these years later, I see each of my teachers clearly. Thinking of them, I smile. Each engenders affection, albeit for different reasons, but both shared a love of the written word and of story and nurtured mine. I wonder now, if or how I might have chosen differently, in the absence of these two teachers? Would I have entered university with an intention to study English, if my experience in my senior years of high school were different, if my teachers had been less encouraging, less confirming? I wonder? Still now, all of these years later, reflecting on this experience of schooling saddens me. I am sad for the young girl that wandered the hallways of the high school lonely and alone.

I finished high school in June and began university in September. It was understood that in our family one finished high school and attended university. Period. If there was ever a conversation, or consideration, of an alternative to beginning university in the two months following the end of high school I was not aware of it then, or now. Each of my siblings followed. I do not recall a single conversation with my parents, or in my family, as to why one should or would go to university, should or would choose to pursue an education.

To choose or not to choose. Ha! There was no choice. To university I would go. I wonder how it is that I chose the school? There was less choice then there is now for my daughters. Or so I believed. Yes, less than now, of course but more choice than I allowed myself to see. My fifty plus year old self does not know how it is I came to a decision then. I do recall being seated beside my father on the stone steps outside the kitchen in the warmth of the sun while he inquired of my interest to go abroad to study before beginning university.

I also remember, oddly, on that occasion listening to the invitation of my father of an opportunity to travel abroad, torn between my fervent desire to escape from where and who I was and an equally fervent longing to belong, to a place, to people, to my family. Odd. As I write this now, all these years later, I wonder how or why I thought it probable or possible I

would find belonging at home. Eighteen years of experience. I had not learned. And so to university I went. A little less than an hour commute in my ugly burnished standard red Volkswagen rabbit to the concrete citadel atop the mountains.

Withering

*I tried,
to know,
to understand,
to care,
to love,
as I had always loved,
the word.
But this soon withered,
without nourishment,
of wisdom, on words from
those,
it was sought,*

Wearied professors,

*scribbling furiously on acetate,
words wafting through air,
towards me,
who sits anxiously, with cuppa in hand
Awaiting knowing,
that never comes.*

*Receiving papers
returned,
marked by names
familiar,
but unknown to me.
A spreadsheets of
numbers, and letters,
taped on glass windows,
confirm,
I am failing.*

How does one go from an A student in English and English Literature in school and a voracious reader to failing first year English at university?

I am unable to talk to my younger self but retain enough in memory from my experience to have some sense of how that might be. I must take responsibility for that. I could devote words, paragraphs, and pages even now, to musings about my experiences, in

an attempt to unearth how the system structure processes, and people I encountered as a student may have failed me. I am going to attend on these pages to a few who I can still remember, even now almost thirty years later. But before I do it is important for me to acknowledge the destructive consequences of mental ill health during my early years of university.

Lonely, and alone I struggled from the beginning. I registered for classes. How I wonder did I find my way and know what I needed? So many details lost to time. I do remember being both excited, and bewildered. Excited by what I saw as a new beginning, rich with possibilities, and bewildered by the enormity of it all. Struggled to find a place in the enormity. The edifice, the experience, the expectations all overwhelmed me. I belonged to no one and nowhere. I had hoped that beginning a university at a place other than where many of my high school peers would go would offer me the opportunity to begin anew. To leave behind the story of my childhood and youth, and write a different story. Although separated by miles and amongst the unfamiliar, my experiences were too soon familiar. After all, as Kabat-Zinn (2005) famously opines in his book by the same name, “wherever you go there you are” (p. 1). I wonder now, what I was doing there. What was I doing, getting an education? Or was I, getting an education? I was being schooled. This, I now know. But educated? That came many years later. Many, many years later.

As I wandered in the concrete labyrinth from room to room, searching for understanding, and belonging inside, and outside the classroom, I slowly, and steadily descended further, and further into depression. Driving back, and forth to the university every day, my shame silenced me from seeking help. I suppose my parents assumed I was succeeding; why would they have thought otherwise? Success was expected. But I was not succeeding. I was failing. Each one of my courses. Everything. I expect knowing this escalated my spiralling depression. Darkness descended. I travelled back, and forth, to and

from, university, attending classes, occasionally, submitting assignments, sometimes.

Shrinking still further away, from the possibility, I know now, awaited me.

Invisible. Identified, as enumerated. #843040825. I knew no one, and no one knew me.

And what I wanted, more than knowing, more than an education, more than a degree, more than anything, was to be seen, to be known, to be ... long. To belong. I am left to wonder now how many others then, and still now, also experience what I have written? Who arrived at university unknowing, and left many years later, still unknowing. Different, of course. Aged, if nothing more.

Writing the preceding passage pained me. As has the writing of so much of the story of my early years, and schooling. Nevertheless, write it I must, as I have been taught to see that within the writing are to be found the beginnings of the story of who I am as an educator. And I will return to this later, of the writing, and the story, but for now, it is for me to see the familiar thread, of belonging or rather, not belonging, and its legacy.

Drifting through the weeks, and months, that defined the academic calendar at the university, I registered, and attended, a variety of classes. Most of them I recall only by random association, to a text, a room, a theatre, a classmate or occasionally a requisite paper or project or exam. A look through my transcript may be warranted to confirm the classes taken. But not now. Not today. What, for me, is most memorable about my undergraduate experience, is the emptiness of it all. The absence of much of anything at all memorable, worthy of remembering. Were it not for this effort to better understand who I am, and what I do as an educator, and why, I am certain I would turn away from, rather than towards, my rememberings of those years on the hill. I was alone. Lone. Lonely and Lost. That I know. What dominates my hazy recollections are, rows. Rows, and rolls. Rows, and

rows of seating, fewer, or larger depending on the size of the room, and the rolls of acetate the professors would use to scrawl nearly illegible intelligence projected onto a large screen. Small, talking heads, standing at a distance, droning. Slight variations of this appear repeatedly, as I reflect on my early years in the academy. Talking heads, and massive texts, and paper. Lots, and lots, of paper.

There was my psychology professor. The stack of texts, and papers she would carry with her into the theatre, dwarfed her diminutive frame. Her heels echoing, she would noisily step down the many stairs of the theater to assume her position, fasten on a microphone, turn on the overhead, and begin. She was predictable. Formulaic. Talk, write, roll, repeat. Relentless. I was keenly interested in the subject so I attended classes, well, many of them, and committed each time to try to learn. I did learn. But not in that theatre. Nor from the scrawl on the screen. I learned from the text. Or so my grade would suggest. I tested well. Testing or not, I then, and still now, appreciated both what appeared to be an encyclopedic knowledge of the discipline, and a sense of her enthusiasm for it.

And there was one more. A professor of English. I should not blame her. But I want to. I want her to know that it is because of her that I chose to never again take an English class and abandoned any hope, however feeble, that I may one day write something that someone might want to read. There was no one single event, no one single interaction, no one single passage, on which I can hang the destruction. I know only this. A piece I wrote and proudly submitted for her class, "The Little Black Dress," was my last creative piece of writing I did until I commenced my directed study in my doctoral program with Dr. Carl Leggo (University of British Columbia, n.d.). For more than 25 years I did not believe I could write anything worth reading, and the fault line snakes all the way back in time to an undergraduate English class, and a professor with a penchant for red pen, and bold strokes.

Reflecting on this passage I wonder if my aversion to red pen is associated with this experience? I wonder too if this professor, this educator, had any awareness of the power of her professorial pen and its potential impacts? I know I do. I am candid with my students about this power, and my responsibility to wield it wisely. I am also candid with my students about the importance of endeavouring to separate critique of their work from critique of their selves. Like Brown (2012) I believe that “without feedback there can be no transformative change” (p. 197).

As I am reflecting on these memories of my undergraduate experience I am realizing that I, at least as I understand it now, was not taught. I was talked to. I was talked at. I was not talked with. We were in the same space these professors, and I. But I was not taught. And I was not seen. And I was not known. I was schooled. I was assessed, however. Evaluated. Graded. There were assignments, written, of course, and term papers, and exams, midterms and finals. Maybe there were projects. I don't recall any. All of my work in all of my classes was completed independently. Me, and me, alone. Perhaps a reflection of the time, rather than the topic or the teacher.

I see the legacy of these stories, these experiences on who I have become as an educator, and as an educator of other educators. In the retelling of these stories I detect the origin of my deep desire for every learner I encounter, institutionally or otherwise, to experience me as affirming and encouraging of their unique potential.

I know too these lecture theatres, in, and of themselves, were timetabled experiences of impoverished learning that sadly siphoned my motivation. Many years later, and so much wiser, I have to wonder if any of those professors I encountered in the early years of my undergraduate education enjoyed teaching? Perhaps, they did not. Perhaps, I had unwittingly walked into classes of professors for whom teaching was an obligatory chore, and I, one of too many students interfering with their research or writing. And yet, having both endured, and enjoyed, years upon years of education subsequent to my undergraduate degree, I would also be remiss if I failed to acknowledge my misfortune in failing to have a relationship with any one of the educators I encountered during my time on the hill as an undergraduate. A relationship between an instructor, and a student is after all a shared responsibility, created as a consequence of the actions of not just one, but both the educator, and the student. I did not know that then, however. Had I been able to reach out through the darkness I wonder what may have become, of me, and my education?

I graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree, with a psychology major. So how does one begin in English and end in psychology? I do not know how it is that I chose to register in a psychology course. Perhaps an elective for an undergraduate arts degree? I do know however that the course I found myself in, an introductory psychology course, piqued my curiosity. I believe then, as now, I likely saw the subject as illuminating the shadows that had walked with me for as long as I could remember. The first instance of which I will write, is about a professor of adolescent psychopathology. For me the topic and the theories of psychopathology of adolescence were fascinating, but it was the professor that fascinated me more. I recall little of him lecturing about theory, but still now so many years later, I recall him sharing stories of his work as a psychotherapist, and in doing so bringing us closer to him, and his world, and the words on the pages to life. He, his work, his world, and his words, became more than noise from the front, and text on a page. I know my experience in this class was instrumental in my choosing to consider declaring an entirely unexpected, and prior to entering university, unknown, possibility for my major, psychology.

But there was one small, but significant barrier, between me, and my now desired degree. Statistics. I began my last semester with Psychology 210, statistics, as one of my courses. I feared failing. I was determined not to fail. Fear, and courage, accompanied me to every class, and jostled for attention, as I studied at the wooden thrift store desk wedged between the waterbed frame, and my bedroom wall of my apartment. But I was not alone. Not entirely. Not this time. Blessedly, the professor who was assigned to teach the section I registered for, intuitively or intentionally, I will never know, was able to organize, and scaffold the material, in a manner that facilitated its acquisition. He was methodical, and disciplined, in his approach to the material, and to scaffolding us, his students, to understanding. His teaching, coupled with my commitment to do statistics every day, for the entire semester,

enabled me to surprise myself, and do very well in a course that I had avoided, for fear of failing.

Although my grades in my final two years of university were excellent, because of my early years, my overall cumulative GPA was much less than that. Truthfully, I don't recall the numbers, nor is it important for me, nor for you dear reader. However, what I do know, is that I believed it was not possible for me to continue my education. I wondered about teaching as a career, but understood Psychology was not a teachable major and thus, I was not eligible to apply to the Professional Development Program (PDP) to learn to become a teacher. I wonder if that was true and who had me believe this was so? Why did I allow myself to be so easily discouraged or deterred? I wonder if I once again allowed someone else to decide what was possible for me. I wonder too why I believed I had no other choice, or chance, to continue my education. Perhaps it was not my experience but my esteem.

I attended my convocation in June, crossing the stage with hundreds of others. My time on the hill had come to a ceremonial close. I had attended years of schooling. Had read a lot. Written a lot. Figured some. Tested a lot. Failed even more than all of that. And I was done. Graduated.

Gina Buchanan, BA, Major, Psychology.

2.4 Summary

In the preceding pages, I have shared some of my family and schooling experiences (up to my BA). As I have noted earlier, the journey back to these times has been both illuminating and painful. The writing process has enabled me to reflect on my life and pull through some threads of lessons learned that I have taken into my educational practice. My story continues in the next part of the dissertation, my post-graduate education journey.

PART THREE: The Later Years: Education

3.1 The Certificate

I chose to return to school when the questions I needed answers to, could not be answered by those surrounding me. I had been working since graduation from university in a not-for-profit, community-based agency beginning as a youth worker and progressed rapidly to a senior management role. With a significant, and expanding portfolio, I recognized a need for additional education and enrolled in a post baccalaureate diploma program in human resource management. I attended school part-time, while also co-parenting a toddler, serving as a senior manager in a community-based agency, volunteering my time on several boards, and too many committees. It was a busy time. I attended consistently, taking courses by correspondence, in the evenings, and on weekends and on more than one occasion, using my vacation time to take a course. My entry, and experience in this program would prove to be profound, life changing.

“School.”

Classes. Assignments. Presentations. Reports. Reading. Quizzes. Exams. Both, familiar and yet, unfamiliar. Familiar, of course, in their resemblance to many of the components of my undergraduate experience, but unfamiliar in how they were enacted. I could fill pages, and pages, with details of differences; however, I will highlight those that linger still, years later as most significant. My program of study was designed for employed professionals. Consequently, programs, courses, and classes were designed to be pursued through part time studies. Although the varied scheduling opportunities available to me were not entirely unfamiliar, what was unfamiliar, and ultimately transformative, was the structure of the classes themselves. Classes were generally small, almost invariably less than 24 participants with many less than twenty. Although, of course, there were differences across

instructors, collectively they afforded me engaging, invigorating, inspiring, and instructive, learning experiences. Contrary to the pervasively employed didactic lecture dump of my undergraduate education, the instructors typically employed a variety of strategies in their teaching. Almost without exception, there appeared to be an implicit appreciation for the expectations of the learners to be engaged with, and responsible for, their learning, rather than simply passive receptacles. Although there were lectures to be listened to, texts to be read, tests to be taken, and assignments to be submitted, the relevance, practicality, and applicability, of the material to my current context, and that of my classmates was invigorating. The invitation by instructors to create relevance in our program of study was inspiring, and realized frequently in our assignments.

As I wrote and reflected on the preceding passage and my experience of the program I was reminded of the significance of relevance for me as an adult learner. I know I benefitted from the opportunities afforded me throughout the program to experience learning I could readily identify as relevant to my life and work outside of the classroom, and to learn content from instructors with what Hill (2014) aptly characterizes as relevant practical knowledge, “providing relevant, real time information” and “teaching practice applications as well as theory” (p. 60). I see the recognition of relevance for my learners reflected in the choices I make and continue to make to create relevance for my students and facilitate application to their everyday in not only the articulated learning outcomes for this course (which I authored) but also how it is I choose to teach to design and deliver the curriculum.

With some stultifying exceptions, classes were typically occasions to engage in conversations, exercises, and activities, with our classmates in an apparent effort to ignite engagement, and facilitate learning. Case studies, situational analyses, videos, debates, small, and large group discussions provided opportunities for us to contribute our lived, and learned, experiences. The appreciable recognition of the potential for participants, students, to contribute to the content we were encountering, although unfamiliar in my undergraduate

education, was commonplace in this program. I enjoyed this immensely, and eagerly awaited each class, appreciating the beneficial triadic interaction between the instructor, the content, my classmates and me.

Unlike my previous experiences of schooling which were more akin to what Freire (1994) referenced as a “banking model” (p. 88), this certificate program encouraged, made essential, the engagement and contributions of myself and my classmates. Some classes encouraged more, some less, but all appear predicated on the assumption that we as learners were not passive recipients, nor receptacles, but rather active participants in the classroom, and our learning. Moreover, the school was repudiated as an institution purposefully intended to both prepare its entrants for the workforce, and developing those already in the workforce.

For me, the opportunity to connect my life, and work, to my learning was made even more meaningful by listening to, and learning from the others. With only one exception that I can recall at the time of this writing, all of the instructors created opportunities for us to learn not only from them, as the instructor, but also from our classmates. Although generalizing of course, this experience was characterized by conversation, conversations, a lot of conversations with classmates. I am quite certain that this experience has contributed to my penchant in practice as an educator to not only endeavour to create connections between our content and the lives and work of my students, but to invite them to do so, and to do so, in dialogue.

Of particular significance and benefit to me however, were not only the efforts of many instructors to familiarize themselves with their students, and specifically, me, but the explicit invitation for connection. A striking departure from the distance, both physical and psychological, of the archetypal university professor of undergraduate years, I experienced these instructors as interested not only in their discipline, or subjects, but also their students,

and me, specifically. Entirely unfamiliar to me from my undergraduate experience, I experienced a sense of significance in my classes from instructors who acknowledged my attendance, addressed me by my name, invited, and encouraged my participation, and appeared to respond appreciably to my contributions. Also, entirely unfamiliar to me as a student, was the demonstration of interest, of more than one instructor, in my professional development. This interest was evidenced in varied ways, by different instructors, including lengthy written comments on assignments, and a myriad of opportunities for meetings, mentoring, advising, and coaching conversations, outside of scheduled class time. Encouraged, and inspired by the instructors, and excited by the intellectual opportunities available to me, I excelled academically, inciting even greater enthusiasm, and engagement as I continued. Engagement, begets engagement.

And then there was “the course.” The course, and the instructor, that changed everything. Everything? Not everything, of course. But many things.

The course. Training Techniques. The instructor Rhonda Margolis.

From the grainy article that slid from the envelope I received in the mail, to the very last day I was keenly interested in the content of our course. I was learning, about learning and loving it! With only 5 days available to us I of course appreciated we were experiencing only a little of what it was there was to know. It was surprising to me then how much I learned in such a relatively brief period of time. Of testament to its meaningfulness, my binder of multi-coloured handouts and notes served as useful references for me and, followed me for many years, and through two moves, and only recently did I allow it to return to the earth.

From receiving the package prior to the first session I anticipated the instructor to be prepared and organized and these assumptions proved to be true. In hindsight, and from

experience, I appreciate also how artful was her instructional design, and delivery. Devising, and realizing tidily organized, scaffolded, components, varied strategies, and activities to engage her learners, and facilitate learning, and an array of assessment strategies to evaluate our achievement of the learning outcomes (e.g., small quizzes on varied colored paper, a written lesson plan, and the facilitation of a brief training session). Additionally, I recall participating in several experiential activities. One such activity, late one morning, just before lunch evoked a surprising emotional response. The details of the activity are, frankly, unimportant and I remember little of them. I do remember however the following pieces: We were asked to form a circle in an open space at the front of the classroom with a request for one classmate to exit the circle and remain outside of the room for the duration of the activity, we were instructed to throw the ball to one another replicating the sequence for successive rounds while simultaneously reducing the time it took to do so, at some point in time Rhonda exited the room and returned with our classmate (who had been outside of the room) and inserted them between two of my classmates, we continued to toss the ball.

I remember his return to the group as disruptive. We had effectively established a sequence, and strategies allowing us to successfully decrease the time necessary for each round, and as I recall it we did not welcome the interruption. Although I do not recall the specifics of the debrief I do remember, even now, the feelings of remorse and shame that engulfed me when the discussion highlighted the opportunities I/we missed to pause our activity, to educate our classmate about our instructions and ambitions, to collaboratively create/re-create a sequence that included my classmate, and to ensure I/we were welcoming to our classmate. "A desire for approval in a learning environment can mean women feel shame when they do not get approval from teachers or peers, regardless of whether they are learning or doing well" (Walker, 2017, p. 361-362).

I recall fleeing from the room in hopes of escaping from the feelings of shame Kaufman describes “to feel shame is to feel seen in a painfully diminished sense” (1985, p. 8). But of course, it followed me, and accompanied out of the building and onto the streets. I walked about for a while, and then returned to the classroom where I found Rhonda, eating a very large apple. Funny the things one remembers, or rather, I remember. I would be misleading you dear reader, if I fabricated words to write on this page pretending that they were recalled. I do not remember what was said or done in my discussion with Rhonda. I remember only feeling a relatively unfamiliar absence of judgement, much care, and a profound sense of gratitude.

This experience proved profound in many ways, and still now all these years later I believe this experience, and Rhonda’s response to it has served me. Why? As an educator this experience has served as a poignant reminder of the potential for unintended consequences in the classroom. Although I believe the time I spent working, and volunteering, in community-based agencies afforded me the opportunity to become sensitized to issues that I might have otherwise been ignorant of (e.g., for the need for a woman to maintain privacy should she have left an abusive relationship or the trauma that may have been experienced even a long time ago but has never truly left and whose scars are not visible but are there nonetheless), I am also convinced this experience created a personal connection to that possibility. I know that I am careful, and cautious in endeavouring to attend to consequences for learners of what I may ask of them, while recognizing that I cannot know, what I do not know. Recognizing that as educators we can never know our students fully, and what histories, ghosts, and traumas they bring with them, it is nevertheless our responsibility to be scrupulous in our attention to the potential for harm.

With this appreciable recognition of potentially negative consequences for participants of seemingly benign requests, I must be ready, and able to respond, with an absence of judgement, and an abundance of care. Dare I hope that those learners I have encountered over the years who have struggled, have felt as supported by me as I did on that day by my instructor? I think it is important we as educators are attentive to the consequences for our students of their engagement.

As I reflect on the preceding passage, reflecting on my reaction, it is not only the care, and support that I experienced that was significant but, the absence of judgement. This is worthy of more words. More words because it is important, to me. Important because I believe judgement, at least much of the way it happens in education, to be potentially destructive, or so it has been for me. Of course, as educators we must judge or evaluate our students' work but it can be done with an orientation to care and student success. My experience in childhood and youth, and my experience as a learner (both then and subsequently), has convinced me that the experience of being judged is typically destructive. Growing up in an environment where I experienced relentless judgement, has created not only a sensitivity to, but an aversion of, it. But for me it is more than an absence of judgement that I hope my students experience. I hope they experience, as I did on that day, appreciation, curiosity, and compassion. I identify these as necessary for our agreements at the beginning of our course (if the students have not already articulated similarly), and of course, these agreements apply to me also.

But I expect more from myself than I do my students, and so too, I believe, do they. I expect to emulate what it is to respond to another with appreciation, curiosity, and compassion. I want to appreciate my students for who they are, as they are, and what they have come to think, feel, do. This does not equate to agreeing with but rather simply appreciating that they too have come to think, feel, and do, as have I, as a consequence of their experience. I want to appreciate that. I want also for my students to experience me as curious. Curious in seeking to understand why they think, feel, and do, as they do.

I also learned from Rhonda about boundaries. Or at least that is the meaning I made from her choice not to join the class for lunch on any day, and not even on the final day, despite repeated invitations by several of my classmates. I also did not join my classmates, because even then as a learner, I needed the time away, and alone, to enable my

engagement for the afternoon. I remember on the last day of our 5 days remaining in the classroom and I inquired about her reason for declining the many invitations to join the group for lunch. Once again, I don't remember the words but, I understood she was not joining my classmates for lunch as she did not see it as appropriate to do so. She was the instructor. My classmates her students and moreover, students to which she would assign a grade following the end of our class. I have chosen to abide by this practice and maintain this distance or perhaps delineation in roles, both as an instructor in post-secondary and a facilitator in my private practice, never drinking, dining, or socializing with students.

As mentioned in the preceding paragraph, I, and my classmates, were required to submit a detailed lesson/training plan of the session we designed, developed and delivered on the last day, if memory serves me correctly. I laboured over the assignment, and expended considerable effort to prepare a thoughtful detailed plan. I had proven to be generally a committed, and capable student thus far in the program but I was motivated to invest even more in this course, and this assignment, because of my admiration for Rhonda. Sheepishly, I confess I wanted her attention, and perhaps even approval. Perhaps too, this is why I was so disappointed when my lengthy lesson plan was returned by fax (email was not yet a reality) with a mere few words, to the effect of "well done." Although, I can not truthfully tell you dear reader if I was as interested in the feedback from all of my instructors as I was from Rhonda, but for me, her comments counted, and I craved more than I received. I suspect this has contributed to my desire to provide copious amounts of feedback to my learners although frankly, too often to their detriment and mine. Yes, I do provide copious amounts of feedback but inevitably this often causes interminable, and unacceptable, delays in the return of their submissions. Recent years have witnessed some progress or improvement with this as I have moved to utilizing rubrics, and holistic

evaluations (Fenwick & Parsons, 2009). Creating meaningful assessments, and ensuring their timely return to students has however continued to be a considerable challenge for me.

I completed the program graduating with honours. I did not attend the scheduled graduation ceremonies. No need. The experience, the learning, was its own reward. I completed. Graduated. With honours. I knew it. That was enough.

3.2 The Diploma

Years go by. I leave the organization I began with as a recent university graduate moving to another not-for-profit organization to serve as a manager of a treatment facility for high-risk families. This is followed by another move, to another not-for-profit agency, to serve as the training and development manager. I have also now a small consulting practice designing, developing, and delivering training. Although I am receptive to requests from potential, and existing clients, I am tending to professional development programs for new, and emerging leaders.

I am now also employed as an instructor by the institution from which I had graduated only a few months previously. I stumbled from semester to semester, year after year, achieving success according to institutional student evaluations, informal feedback and registrations, and enjoying myself immensely. I know now, I was influenced by what Olson and Bruner (1996) describes as “folk pedagogies” (p. 10), my colloquial, intuitive ideas about teaching, and learning undoubtedly acquired from my experience of being taught, and of learning. Admittedly, I was also guilty of what Huberman (1995) describes as bricolage or tinkering, picking up new techniques here, new activities there, a piece of curriculum here, there, and everywhere. Unable to explain the reasons for my success, or failure, I felt increasingly unworthy of, and uncomfortable in, my role and haunted by what Palmer (2007) affectionately describes as the imposter syndrome. Unwilling to continue amidst such angst, and increasingly intrigued to better understand my educational endeavours, I began to search for means to have my many questions answered. A search for opportunities within my institution lead

me to a five-day workshop for instructors (those teaching adults), co-sponsored with another institute of higher education.

Truthfully, I recall very little about those five days, more than twenty years ago now, however I do recall planning, and delivering a lesson, on how to set a table for a multi-course meal. Later, sheepishly watching the videotape of that same lesson, and ruefully realizing I fidgeted with my hands, and said “um,” a lot, an awful lot. I soon learned the five-day course was eligible for equivalent credit in a diploma program for instructors, The Provincial Instructor Diploma Program (PIDP, then, PID now). I decided I wanted to continue, to learn more. The program comprised of a series of courses was designed to “build knowledge and skills to design, develop, manage and evaluate the instruction of adults in post-secondary education, business, industry and non-traditional adult learning environments”

I entered with the program expecting it to generally resemble my recently completed certificate program at my previous institution, and I was not wrong. There were many similarities between the programs and these I appreciated. It too was designed for working professionals, and classes were scheduled, structured, and delivered accordingly. My classmates consisted of professionals all somehow engaged in the training, and education of adults, albeit in varied contexts; continuing education instructors, driving instructors, pottery teachers and even, my former economics instructor. From the first course in the diploma program that I had unsuspectingly enrolled in, and completed, within my institution until the last course I completed, I was an engaged and enthusiastic, and perhaps even a little too eager student.

Interestingly, although more recent than my prior experience, I recall only one of the instructors of this program who proved to be profoundly influential in ways I did not expect upon meeting him. Returning to the instructor with which I began this passage I know his influence was a consequence of his congenial engagement and light-hearted humour, his infectious enthusiasm for the discipline of adult education, his passion for the science of the brain, and his affirmation of my abilities and potential as a student of adult learning. As I reflect on my experience of this educator and try to locate the particular of his influence I suspect it may be attributable to the enthusiasm he evidenced,

students notice when we are enthusiastic about course content, our disciplines, our research, and of course their ideas and work ... [enthusiasm] encourages students to explore ideas, take intellectual risks, and begin to see themselves as co-creators of knowledge and ideas regarding application, in turn reinforcing their motivation. (Schwartz, 2019, p. 37)

Enthusiasm, passion, presence, and care were all evidenced in this educator and each and all may have contributed to his impact (Schwartz, 2019). Regardless, however of the particulars of the influence, I am certain that it was he who encouraged me to apply to graduate school. I am so fortunate to have encountered this educator. I did, as students have done for me, extend gratitude for his beneficial influence on my journey as an educator. He was appreciative and yet characteristically humble, nonchalant. I wonder how many others he has similarly inspired.

So, let me return to the program courses, and content. As I have already confirmed, there was much in my experience of this program that resembled my recently completed program; the scheduling of the classes with one variation that I particularly appreciated and partook of, condensed alternate weekends. Additionally, the acknowledgement, appreciation, and integration of our work, and lived experiences into our classes, the relevance, and application of our assignments, the expectation, and appreciation, of our contribution to the classes, and as I recall it, the instructor choosing to characterize, and

conduct themselves as facilitators. This departure, in character, and conduct, from the professors of my undergraduate education, initially experienced in the previous program, persisted. Notwithstanding the profound impact of one of the faculty in this program, it was the content of this program that enthralled, and excited me. I remember distinctly the day the words pedagogy, and andragogy appeared before me, although truthfully it would take me many years, and not until my masters' program, before I could consistently correctly pronounce them! The first day of the first course, in a classroom in Vancouver. Opening the big, poorly-copied pages, punched, and placed, in a three-inch three ring binder that would serve as a course manual, both as reference, and as a workbook, there they appeared on the page (Vancouver Community College, n. d.). Andragogy. Pedagogy. And with the turning of a page, I entered a space previously unknown, that has now occupied me for more than 20 years!

Andragogy. Simply. Adult education.

I fear words will fail to describe the enormity of both what I learned, and how that learning transformed my practice, and me. I was by this time fully immersed in the field of adult education, serving as faculty in two institutions of higher education, with a fledgling private practice consulting on training, and development, and the content of the program was directly relevant to my every day. I learned how frightfully little I knew, at least theoretically, about teaching, and learning, and garnered a glimpse of what it is that I needed to know. I write "a glimpse" deliberately knowing now that I was merely toe dipping into the vast ocean of scholarship awaiting me.

I was introduced to so many ideas that I would carry forward in the years to come, returning to many of them time, and time again, as I leaned further into the literature. Ideas about course and curriculum design, facilitation, instructional strategies, classroom

management, learning, and adults as learners to note but a few in the miscellany I was introduced to. Simultaneously, interesting, and instructive, I was inspired by the content of the program, and sought opportunities to integrate, and apply the learning. As an applied program designed for practitioners, adult educators, the curriculum provided me with a plethora of possibilities for learning transfer, from the classroom, to my classroom, the legacy of which is evident to this day.

Worthy of distinction, and mention, and observable to this day, were the structures associated with curriculum design including learning outcomes, constructive alignment, formative and summative assessment; instructional strategies associated with the idiosyncrasies, and variances of adult learners, facilitating engagement, and learning, and emotional intelligence. Many of these topics have continue to linger at the edges of my interest field, and are featured in what I believe counts in teaching, and learning, and how it is that I have come to teach, and teach teachers, about teaching.

It has served as an endless source of varyingly amusement, annoyance, astonishment, and sometimes even anger, that so many of those who are hired to “teach” in higher education know little to nothing at all about teaching, nor about learning. They are knowing, of course, but not necessarily of teaching, or of learning.

Why do we have teachers who know nothing of teaching? Nothing that is outside of their own experience of being taught. Why is it that we continue to recruit, retain, and promote educators, who profess to know not, nor care not, about teaching? Why was I teaching knowing nothing about teaching? Nothing outside of my own experience of being taught? So perhaps not nothing, but rather very little. And the little that I had acquired was practical rather than scholarly.

Nearing the end of my program of study with only one course, and the practicum remaining, I received notification I had been accepted into graduate school. With disbelief, I recall opening the letter from the university advising of my acceptance into a Masters of Education, Curriculum and Instruction. Shocking to no one, but me, I returned to the place of my undergraduate studies to pursue graduate studies. As I type this, I shake my head in disbelief, wondering why it was there I chose to apply and attend. I had choice. I could try to feign faulty recall but truth be told, I believe it was more chance, than choice, that returned me to there. A consequence of the relationship forged between the two institutions and the suggestion of success should I choose to apply. And so, it was, with the encouragement, and recommendation, of an esteemed tenured faculty in the program, I followed the forged path, and applied to continue my education, in education. And yes, I was accepted.

3.3 The Graduate Degree I

In retrospect, I realize now, just how courageous it was for me to apply to and commence a graduate program. I had ended my marriage of nearly twenty years in the few months preceding the program's beginning, moved out, bought a house, and fractured my family. At the time of my application I was serving in a senior role in a college but resigned within the year. From beginning the program and to its completion, I served as contract faculty in two different institutions, and was working to serve an increasing number of clients in my burgeoning private practice.

I commenced graduate studies convinced that the committee, because I assumed it was a committee, had admitted me by mistake, so sure was I that I was not eligible to enroll let alone earn a graduate degree! Additionally, I was convinced that I would be rejected by the institution once they learned of my resignation. I was mistaken.

I began in September 2008, returning to the place of my undergraduate education. One of a cohort, I arrived at the university, anxious but eager to begin my journey in the Faculty of Education towards a Master of Education, Post-Secondary, Curriculum and Instruction. Ours was a concordant cohort of nineteen students, comprised of a diverse group of mature learners occupying an eclectic array of positions across varied institutional contexts but all engaged in adult education. Rich in differences, the varied threads of our experience, education, training and individual idiosyncrasies wove an inimitable tapestry of dialogue that varyingly inspired, informed, enlightened, frustrated, and challenged me. Collectively woven, the tapestry of our cohort was patterned with the care, collegiality, respect, humility, wit and warmth that characterized our cohort. Wrapped in its affectionateness, I was blessedly blanketed with belonging during my journey.

3.3.1 The Cohort

Common to many such cohort programs in education, our two-year graduate degree program was to include a series of six courses, a comprehensive examination, and an action research project. The courses, six in total, were instructed by a series of faculty, both tenured and sessional faculty at the university. Given that all of the courses were graduate courses situated in the Faculty of Education, I had expected to experience excellence in education but the naiveté of this assumption was soon exposed. With a few notable exceptions the “teaching” I experienced was unfortunately essentially unremarkable and impoverished. There were exceptions, yes. Exceptional. Unforgettable. And yet I wish I could. Forget that is.

The first session. I drive through the cityscape to the parking lot of the concrete tower in which I will learn. Walking up the stairs to the second floor. Climbing higher. The metaphor is not lost on me. I walk towards the bookstore, really a book-closet with a few books scattered on free-standing shelves and over-priced supplies. I make inquiries and

spend too much money on the requisite books wondering what awaits me beneath the covers. When I am there so too is another. Another student? I wonder. She is strikingly beautiful. I stare at her. I wish I was beautiful too. But beautiful I am not.

I am in a classroom. Me and several others, eighteen in total in our cohort I would eventually learn. I can't recall which classroom or if we returned to that particular classroom again in the course of our program nor can I recall much of what happened on that day. I do however recall it being stated we would be expected to form small groups and with others in our small group complete a series of group projects for the course and then there must have been some kind of introduction because I learned that there was a writer amongst us. And I decided immediately that I wanted to be in the group with the writer. Because, of course, I could not write. Or so I had been schooled to believe. And soon we were standing in a circle in the middle of the room. The anxiety was excruciating. Turning away from the angst that threatened to stop me, I feigned confidence and crossed the circle to stand beside the writer. Moments later the beautiful bookstore gal is standing aside us. S + D and me. We are three. And three we were for the next 2 years and then some.

Despite the relatively predictable familiarity of the program, and its purported intention to attend to the common complexities associated with serving a cohort of adult learners all employed in adult education, there were many instances where the stresses associated with my multiple roles as mother, ex-wife, instructor, consultant, homeowner, student, daughter, and friend threatened my mental health, and continued participation in the program. However, as Rego (2017) affirms I too benefitted from my membership in a cohort program, and the camaraderie, resources, and support, it afforded.

Participating in this experience within a cohort was not without its challenges, however. As an introvert, I found the expectations for participation alternatively exhilarating, and exhausting. Depending on the demands of the week preceding our class, I was sometimes too weary to meaningfully engage in the experience of our class. Additionally, I must also confess to being varyingly both inspired, and intimidated, by the intellectual abilities of my classmates. At times awe inspiring, I know too that sometimes, the intimidation, silenced me. Sadly, on more occasions than I would like to acknowledge, I wondered how it was that I was admitted into the program. Too often, I was stymied by the insights of my classmates, and sat silently shameful of what I perceived as my inadequacy, and obvious stupidity. My insecurities were insightfully highlighted by one of my professors who wrote “good academic style, but in the journal, I am looking for your own voice, your thoughts and your ideas in your own words.”

3.3.2 Learning in the Midst of Struggle

The challenges of the program paled against the challenges with which I silently struggled. This was a tumultuous time. Were it not for the stalwart support of my closest friends I do not know how I could have continued? My parents chose to align themselves with my ex essentially abandoning me, and as I attested to earlier in these pages, my siblings were personae non grata. And so, I struggled, it was tough.

*Oh why, that's what I keep askin'
Was there anything I could have said or done
Oh I, had no clue you were masking a troubled soul, God only knows
What went wrong, and why you'd leave the stage in the middle of a song*
(Mathes & Shamblin, 2009)

My elder daughter's best friend committed suicide. I want to write unexpectedly; does one ever really expect anyone let alone a young person of promise to take their own life? Are all suicides not somehow unexpected? It was, unexpected, unexplainable, unspeakable. Tragic. Chris Friesen. I want to never forget his name, or his face, or the feel

of his strength when I hugged him in the parking lot of the theatre after I arrived to jump start the car he had driven with Hope, my daughter, to the movies. He was seventeen. The consequences of his death and life linger, in the world, my family and me and informs a choice I have made in how I live, and how I teach.

Chris

*I am at home at my desk in the office,
it is late in the evening
the phone rings.
Hope is screaming!
Shrieking sounds!
I am confused? She is at a concert?
Chris?
Chris is dead!
Chris. Is. Dead!
Texts from too many.*

*Suicide!
I am driving to meet her,
speeding,
I am pleading with the universe.*

please please please please please please please please please please please

*At the hospital,
a nurse meets us,
I, am, so, sorry.
Hope screams, and slides down the door frame onto the floor.
Crumpled on the floor, she begs to see him.
Weeping stale smoke and booze stained tears,
my heart breaks.
Black rivers mix with snot, smearing her face.
The nurse beckons me to her, and whispers in my ear,
they are preparing him, transplants, cornea, eyes sewed shut.
This is all I hear.
I know Hope cannot know this, not now.
Gently, I pick my daughter up, off the floor.
We walk out into the night,
And, we are never, the same.*

*I am at home, at my desk, in my office.
Chris' smiling face looks back at me.
"Be the best!"
The caption reads.
What can I do, to honour you?*

Me. Gina. Hope's, Mom.

*You took a piece of my daughter with you,
when you chose to die.
You were so loved.
Did you not know?
And I committed,
to each day,
tell, at least one another,
"I see you. Thank you. You have made a difference."*

The challenges of attending classes, studying, teaching classes, serving students, serving clients, negotiating my separation, and later divorce, while trying to maintain a healthy relationship with the father of my daughters, were practically, financially, intellectually, and emotionally, exhausting. Adding to this exhaustion, was the additional challenge of trying to support the very different needs of my two daughters during this tumultuous time. My eldest angry, resentful, and attacking; my youngest sad, and needy. I wonder now how I was able to do it, all.

I did it. Yes, and yet, I also appreciate how the many challenges I was courting, may have impoverished my educational experience. Of the too many occasions where I scanned, rather than studied, the required readings. Where additional reading was relegated to a tomorrow that never came, and where deadlines, and due dates, invited flurried, frantic, activity, in pursuit of an A. Yes, an "A."

Ironically, despite verbal protestations to myself, my students, and even my daughters about the relative insignificance of a grade, be it a number, or a letter relative to the significance of the experience, the education, I sought even craved, the confirmation, validation, praise of my professors. Plagued with doubt, undoubtedly a legacy of my childhood and adolescence and likely also associated with my depression, I wanted, needed, affirmation of my worthiness. My worthiness as a student, as a scholar, perhaps even, as a person. I wanted an "A." Always. "A" is awesome. My work and me. Not an "A" is

not awesome. Period. You are, or, you are not. You are something. You are nothing. It is that simple. It was that simple.

Despite the challenges, and notwithstanding some of the lackluster, and lamentable faculty, and experiences I endured, I learned a lot in this program. A lot, of ideas, theories, models, notions, perspectives, paradigms, research and more hiding in plain sight. Visible, but not to me, not before now. From professors and pages, classmates and conversations what I knew about teaching and learning was forever changed and so it changed me.

Unlike my prior program that taught me well about how it was I could teach differently, and perhaps better, to facilitate the learning of my students, this program was teaching me more about why it was that I chose to teach as I did and also how I could choose differently. As a relative newcomer to the literature, entering into it in my previous program but still relatively infantile in my understanding, I discovered both familiar and unfamiliar notions about teaching and learning. The familiar both scantily and soundly evident in my practice. Unfamiliar were never before encountered, some of which I would wrestle with, and emerge victorious, determined to remember, and make mine, while some would be determinedly discarded as inaccessible, irrelevant or uninteresting. There were many of course that were neither intentionally kept, nor discarded, but rather fell into the valley of not. Not understood. Incomprehensible. Unintelligible. Indecipherable. The red book. Its author shall remain unnamed. Renown. Respected. His ideas alien. His writing foreign. Gibberish. Even now.

Because of some of my professors and in spite of others, I was engaged in what would ultimately be a transformative educative encounter. As I reflect on this experience with the wisdom only time affords, I surmise I benefited from the triadic interaction of which Guilar (2006) writes, that is, the interaction between myself and the classmates, myself and the content, and myself and the teachers/professors. Somewhere, somehow, in the spaces between these I was changed.

From the first day of the program until its end, our classes were similarly structured and consisted largely of discussions and presentations, both from professors, and classmates, and occasionally a guest speaker, with intermittent activities punctuating what evolved to be a predictable rhythm. As a learner with a penchant for dialogue, I generally enjoyed the weekly encounters with my classmates, and appreciated then, and now, the opportunity to learn from, and with them.

3.3.3 Dialogue and Boundaries

There was a particularly compelling example to evidence the power of dialogue for me during my time in the program. This course was held on a Saturday or on Saturdays. Beginning at 9:00 a.m. and ending at 4:00 p.m., or thereabouts. We would all meet in our assigned room arranging the chairs if they were not already so in a square. The seat at the top of the square, near the door left empty awaiting our professor's arrival. And always just before or after our scheduled start time she would arrive. Long black strap of her purse on her shoulder and holding either a bottle of juice or a cup of coffee she would arrive and take her seat and begin talking. Each time. No papers. No pad. No book. No notes. Nothing. Just her, her purse and her chosen beverage. From the first class to the last class.

Astonishing to me even now as I write this. I have faint hazy recollections of markings she made on the chalkboard as she spoke of "zones of proximal development" and "arising" and "concrete," but these scratches may be from my memory made, rather than a recollection of actual events. But recall I do, the hours spent talking, and how engaging, and profound the dialogue was. And only dialogue. There were no exercises or activities or small group dialogues. No deviation in the design, from the first day, to the last.

Begin. Talk. Coffee break. Talk. Lunch break. Talk. Coffee break. Talk. The end.

It was so interesting. So instructive. So enlightening. And to this experience the instructor brought nothing more than herself, and her personal necessities, and in doing so, demonstrated not only the possibilities inherent in dialogue, but how it was possible for a professor to choose to rely solely on dialogue to achieve the stated outcomes. Truth be told, I must confess to learning a lot but, much less than I expect was expected about Vygotsky, and constructivism. One of the most memorable classes for me with Dr. GN occurred on a day just like any other day, any other Saturday that is, during one of our many discussions. I honestly can not recall the preamble to Dr. GN's declaring (and I am paraphrasing):

I don't care about you. I care about my son. I care about my husband, some times. You, I don't care about you. You are my students. I care about you as my students but that is all. And only for as long as you are my students. But really, I don't care. My son, yes. My husband, some times. You, not really.

After making those comments she said goodbye, and exited. It was toward or at the end of the day as I remember it. So, the timing of her departure was not remarkable, in and of itself, but what was remarkable, at least for me, was her choice to rather callously announce her absence of affection for us. I remember remaining in my chair after she departed alternatively forlorn, enraged, and annoyed. Hurt at what I perceived as judgement, and rejection, annoyed at what I perceived as callous, and unnecessary, and enraged at her choice to close to our class as she had done on that day. I left holding an untenable tension, and held it, returning to class with it the following week.

Returning to class the following week, our professor began with questioning our reaction to her comments of the previous week. A lively discussion ensued, and I learned anew a lesson learned previously under the tutelage of Rhonda Margolis (2001), about delineating the role, and responsibilities of the professor or instructor in relation to their students. She spoke to us about how she has chosen to characterize her relationship with her students, and encouraged us to consider the same. Not necessarily to characterize the

relationships that we had or would have with students as she did or does, but rather that we would or should decide for ourselves. She continued to describe what she has decided is the role and responsibility of the professor in relation to their students and I have since come to describe it as “caring in context.” Dr. GN constructed boundaries in relation to her students. It was a needed lesson for our cohort, a group of educators, to determine how we would choose to relate to our students.

3.3.4 The Pedagogy of Vulnerability

Unfortunately, doubt rarely left me. Occasionally, it would retreat into the shadows muting its derision, and disdain, to murmurs. Typically, however, its sharp rebukes chorused loudly, gnawing at my

In the ensuing years I have struggled to care in context, sometimes perhaps, caring too much, and sometimes, not caring enough. It is an interesting dilemma to struggle with, and I remain uncertain, even as I write this, about the veracity of claiming my struggle as complete. It is not.

confidence, diminishing not only my participation, but also my performance. Anxiety provoked procrastination and created an inevitable panic as deadlines drew near, and fear of failure lurked as I toiled at my computer on assignments. It was a trying time for me. Nevertheless, I persisted. I attribute this persistence to my curiosity, and commitment to my pursuit of education, to ego, as I was determined to complete what I had begun, and to my daughters. For me, it, was, and is important, for my daughters to see me continuing my pursuit of education, to recognize the inherent meaningfulness of learning, and to observe me amidst challenging circumstances, struggling but determined, and eventually, succeeding.

Although I would like to say I am no longer plagued with doubt, that is certainly not so. I wonder if it will ever truly leave me, and I will be absent of doubt? Somehow, I don't think so. And I wonder, do I want to be without doubt. Is it not wise to have a little doubt? Preferable to stay curious, and open to what you might not know? As I tell my students with

age, and education, I have acquired the wisdom to know that I don't know a lot more than I do know. And although doubtful of many things, I do not doubt my confidence grew as a consequence of the experiences of this program. My confidence grew as I acquired knowledge from not only the readings, but my two professors, and my classmates. It grew as I reflected on my acquired knowledge, and the reflections of my classmates. I developed insight, and understanding, and applied it. And yet, I know that it was the comments of my professor referenced earlier that nudged me from the shadows, and invited me, to let me, and my ideas be seen, on the page. More of a push than a nudge, an expectation, rather than an invitation.

I often share this experience with my students when assigning their journals. Of proudly submitting my first journal only to have it rejected by my professor with an instruction to rewrite and resubmit. Unwilling to rely on my intelligence, experience, or wisdom, I responded to our assigned question by leaning, no relying, on the words of others. But our journal was not intended to be a literature review. Nor an annotated bibliography. The assignment was an exercise in critical reflection, requiring us to consider, and critique the notion of hidden curriculum. I share with them the comments my professor wrote, and the requirement for me to rewrite and resubmit (D. Bartlette, personal communication, January 29, 2010). Always, more than one expresses their surprise aloud, and I wonder if it is because I, their instructor, "failed" in graduate school, or because I am sharing my story of my "fail" with them? Or maybe, both. I tell them this story purposefully. I share it because I am cognizant of how easy it is for me, as a consequence of my family, to see anything I do that is not superlative, as a fail, and as confirmation of me as a failure, And, of course, this characterization is not only inaccurate, but unfair and harmful. I have not failed. I did not fail. As I student I received feedback from my professor. Period.

How I respond to my students begins before the first submission. Early in my course, often in the second session, I spend a little bit of time talking with the students about feedback, both the giving and the receiving. I have learned, with experience, both in and outside of the classroom, that for many if not most adults, to give, and receive, feedback is uncomfortable and yet, both would be required of them in our course. I began several years ago, inspired by the book *"Thanks for The Feedback: The Science and Art of Receiving Feedback Well"* (Stone & Heen, 2014), to engage students in a discussion about feedback, its function in our classroom and their learning. I sought to both normalize the discomfort that inevitably accompanied feedback and encourage and enable a constructive, rather than destructive response from the students. To do so required untangling their knots of discomfort to allow for better understanding and considering how to enable a more constructive response. Brown (2012) advocates a strengths perspective asserting "the strengths perspective offers us the opportunity to examine our struggles in light of our capacities, talents, competencies, possibilities, visions, values, and hopes" (p. 199) and suggests, by example, of requiring students when providing peer feedback to propose how the identified strength(s) may be utilized to address the struggle.

I share too my sensitivity to our collectively general proclivity to equate opportunities for learning more as mistakes and failures, and even more destructively, to make it mean something about who we are as people and our general worthiness as human beings (Brown, 2010, 2012). I tell them this story also because I want to encourage them, as I was encouraged. I want them to know that I have experienced struggles in my learning journey, but the struggles have neither defined, nor limited, my learning, or the opportunities it afforded, or created for me. I want them to know, to be reassured that having the confidence to venture to voice my thoughts on paper has not, has never been easy for me, and is still not now and this is true too for many. I want to also acknowledge that for some of my students, the ability to record their thoughts, and ideas, and share these with others, may be easy as it was for some of my classmates. It was just not, nor has it ever been, my experience. Brown (2013) affirms, "To put our art, our writing, our photography, our ideas out into the world with no assurance of acceptance or appreciation - that's also vulnerability" (p. 34).

But I want something different for my students and I believe I can contribute to this change by how I respond to their contributions, both to their responses in class and to assignments. Brown (2012) offers wise counsel to educators about how to support students writing

We believe growth and learning are uncomfortable so its' going to happen here – you're going to feel that way. We want you to know that it's normal and its' an expectation here. You're not alone and we ask that you stay open and lean into it (p. 198)."

Returning to my journals of my class with Deb, and the final reflection (several excerpts of which I have included below), serve to confirm the profound impact the instructor, and this course, had for me and my praxis:

I have certainly changed as a consequence of this course and of this program. Changed as an educator, as a scholar, as a person, my practices and curriculum illuminated, enlightened, and enhanced.

The notion of hidden curriculum revealed to me, a startling revelation, startling, humbling, unsettling and yet, exciting empowering and enabling. Startling humbling and unsettling as I pondered what I previously described as the ramifications of the potential chasm between the intention of the educator and the impact on the educated, and exciting, empowering, and enabling as I ponder the opportunities the acquired understanding of hidden curriculum will afford my students, failing to attend to the complexities of curriculum [seen and unseen, explicit, implicit and hidden] renders me and my students vulnerable to the individual, institutional and social ideologies, assumptions, biases and prejudices unwittingly hidden in the curriculum but witnessed and lived in the experience of my students.

But it was perhaps the final paragraph, of the final reflection, added below, that for me even now, stands as a powerful testament to not only the potential, but beneficial impact, of this educator. This final paragraph serves also to confirm how, and why, I concur with the contentions of Noddings (2005), Schoem (2017), and Schwartz (2019), on the centrality of caring relations to education, and its significance in the curriculum, created for new/newer faculty at the university.

Finally, I am grateful to also have had an opportunity to be educated by an educator who modeled for me many of the best practices I have rigorously studied but regrettably, not previously experienced in this program. In an article titled “caring in education” Noddings refers explicitly to “caring relations as the foundation for pedagogical activity” contending “how good (or bad) I [the learner], can be depends in substantial part on how you the teacher treat me.” I too assumed the centrality of caring relations in education, believing an intentionally constructed culture of care in a classroom creates an enabling educative environment that encourages the engagement of learners. I assumed this was true. I am now convinced this is true. As a consequence of the culture of caring you created, I was enabled to engage. Through word and deed, you demonstrated an interest in our education and us, my education and me. Your thorough and thoughtful comments on assignments; your respectful, compassionate and considerate engagement in our classroom; your attention to the preparation and conduct of our class and the generosity with which you shared of yourself and your experiences. I thank you.

But not all of my professors in the program were so benevolent nor all of my experiences beneficial. And one, in particular, proved to be very problematic and threatened my completion.

3.3.5 A Tale of Maltreatment

“Gina, are you getting this?”

Her voice pierced the air. The sharp, steely, exigent tone puncturing my concentrated attention on the candy coloured coding of my schedule prominently displayed on my laptop screen. Unmoving, I raised my eyes from the screen and met the eyes of my professor staring unwaveringly at me. The room grew still. The air thick. I slowly look up from my screen where I had been reviewing my schedule, feeling the stillness, the silence of my classmates, I see her gaze fixed unwaveringly on me. Slowly I turn my laptop toward her so that she could see the screen, mumbling something about scheduling the dates that she had been describing for the impending summer institute.

I don’t remember what happened next that day. But I do remember what followed.

What followed and continued and deeply disturbed me for the duration of my studies.

A professor in the Faculty of Education at the university, Dr. GG was assigned to teach one of the courses in our program. In addition to teaching our course, Dr. GG was engaged in research.

Our class with Dr. GG commenced May 15. And so too, my troubles.

The first class. The first few hours of the first class of this course unbeknownst to me at that time, foreshadowed many that followed and began a perplexing pattern of behaviour aptly characterized as “maltreatment.”

Maltreatment? Maltreatment. Adopting the Oxford Dictionary’s definition of maltreatment as ‘the cruel or violent treatment of a person or animal’ and the concomitant definition of cruel as “causing pain or suffering to others,” then yes, “maltreatment” appears plausibly proposed. Independent of intention, and I will not presume to assume what, if any intentions, she may have had, “pain and suffering” were indeed the impact.

And the impact was significant. Its jagged edges etching painfully marked in the lines, cracks and crevices it created in the landscape of my experience. And while time has swept across this terrain softening the sharpness of the etching’s edges, its silhouette remains

Peering closely, I readily recall several specific events, only a few of which I will generally describe here that when gathered together suggest a mosaic of mistreatment. I write generally because although details may become necessary for future events or be necessary for another purpose, for this purpose they are less relevant and thus I am intentionally electing to truncate the examples proffered providing only what I see as necessary to be sufficiently representative of my experience.

Another example. It was a Saturday class. DR. GG was lecturing on, ironically, “impact theory,” and although I struggled to understand, as I so often do, both the notion and how it was to be applied or assumed in our proposed program evaluation assignment, I did not understand. Knowing it was important to understand, not only to know but also to enable me to knowingly fulfill the assignment requirement, I asked for Dr. GG’s help in understanding. In response to my question Dr. GG turned from the whiteboard where she had been writing, looked directly at me and pointedly stated “Gina, I am not going to do your homework for you.” Dumbfounded I sat silent, unmoving. She returned to writing on the whiteboard. My question remained unanswered.

Yet another example. Another weekend. Another class. And for me another class invariably meant and still does, another question and typically several questions. However, although fortunately infrequent, there were unfortunately questions to which at that time, I assumed only she knew the answers. One such unfortunate occasion arose when I inquired about our action research project. Although the particulars of my question elude me, her response does not. Turning away from the class so that she was now standing sideways with one arm held out straight in front of her, her hand bent at her wrist with her palm facing the class she stridently stated “Gina, I am not going there.” Silenced by both her tone and gestures I sat still. The room was still. The silence palpable. I remember that. I don’t remember what followed.

And this was not all. But this is all I need you to know.

As I recall this juncture in my educational journey, I am pained. The inexorable tension that stealthily crept into my being as I struggled and suffered in silence steadily siphoned my curiosity and interest displacing it with apathy and disinterest. And I did suffer. I did not know then. I do not know now what precipitated the observed transgressions. But I did know then, and I do know now, that she was wrong and she wronged. And I said nothing. I did nothing. Well not exactly. I spoke with many of my cohort colleagues on more than one occasion. I spent endless hours communicating and corresponding with the President of the Education Graduate Student Society (PEGSS) and eventually in collaboration with the PEGSS and two of my cohort colleagues, I constructed, and sent, a letter to Dr. GG outlining some of my concerns.

And yet, with the exception of PEGSS and the cohort, no others in the Faculty of Education, or in the broader university community, were aware of my/our experience. I did explore the possibility of formalizing these concerns to the administration, and was essentially discouraged from doing so by the PEGSS. And I let myself be discouraged. And stayed silent.

And while I lost my way, and more, in the midst, and aftermath, of this mistreatment, I held tight to both my commitment to my education, and completion of the program. But this experience had deleterious consequences for me. I was afraid, anxious and angry. I lost interest in learning and struggled to maintain my engagement in the program, in education. In a mere few weeks I was transformed from an eager, and engaged learner, to a reticent, disengaged learner. I think too, I felt shamed at the public berating, and belittling I endured. I was truly terrified of what I perceived to be a threat to my education, and graduation from the program. In retrospect, I see now I was also truly puzzled, perplexed, and hurt as to how it was, or what it was, that had caused her to treat me so badly. Feelings reminiscent of yesteryears, of experiences at home and at school, of being isolated, berated and rejected. And with such vehemence. Writing this now, and reflecting on it, I am heartbroken that I suffered as I did and disappointed I allowed her to take so much from me. Still, to this day, I wonder why she said what she said. Why did I allow myself to be silenced? Silenced, silent for the duration of my program to those who may have assisted me to write a different ending to this schooling story.

But endure I did. And eventually, I completed the course with Dr. GG and all of the other required courses. I wrote, and passed, my comprehensive exam. I submitted my thesis, an action research project on the efficacy of dialogic pedagogy. We were not required to defend our thesis in this program. I had successfully fulfilled the program requirements. Graduation day. My daughters, Hope, and Kera, and my soul sister, Kate and her husband Colin, who is also dear to me, joined me, to watch me walk across the stage. In the academy convocation, and graduation, are sacred events, as is crossing the stage, shaking hands and receiving the parchment. For many of my classmates the sacred event was followed by a special event, a celebration of sorts. For me, it was enough to have finished. To have begun, endured, learned, achieved, and completed.

With the support of a stalwart trio of friends, I had managed to achieve a Masters of Education while leaving a marriage of 20 years, buying a house, moving, supporting my daughters, a distressed toddler, and a resentful and angry adolescent, negotiating and co-parenting with a grieving and angry ex, working full time, and then some, as faculty, and a consultant and endured some startlingly apathetic, and ineffective educators, and an abusive one. I had learned a lot, forever changing who I was as an educator, and how it was I would choose to educate.

I was so proud. So proud.



Figure 4. Graduation Day! MEd.

And, I think, I kept my cap. And yes, the parchment too.

3.4 The Graduate Degree II

I knew even before the end of my Masters' Program that I would be applying to continue my studies. Although I knew it was ending, I did not want it to be the end. I wanted to continue learning. Rather than satiating my curiosity, my years in graduate school reading, reflecting, writing, and researching, ignited it. I was compelled to continue.

Swept along on the waves of encouragement of friends, colleagues, and professors I applied to another, and more prestigious university. Truthfully, I did not expect to be accepted. And yet, to my surprise, and to this day, I remain surprised, I was accepted. Despite my earlier post-graduate and graduate successes, my self-doubt persisted.

3.4.1 Another Graduate Adventure

I remember vividly the first day. It was a very warm, summer, day. We met in a small building on the second floor, in a small classroom. I arrived late, of course, and despite my efforts, would continue to do so for almost every class for the duration of the program. The stressful, and lengthy, commute, to, and from each class, definitely detracted from my experience. I was envious of those of my classmates who did not have a commute, and were not trying to attend classes, while also working, and co-parenting, with a grieving, angry, unsupportive ex. Unlike most of my classmates, I was without a full-time employer, and thus without the option to take vacation, or leave. Each, and every class, would be a race, to arrive and then after class, to attend to my too many obligations. I would for the entire program struggle with meeting the demands of my children, my many employers (institutionally and organizationally, as faculty and consultant), funding my education while meeting my other financial commitments without child support or spousal support, commuting to and from classes, engaging in and contributing to the classes, and completing the required readings and assignments. It was both exhilarating and exhausting.

The first day. There we were. Fifteen people. Thirteen students, me and 12 more, and two professors. Fifteen people seated around a series of tables, arranged in a rectangle, the two professors seated beside one another at the head of the rectangle. At the back of the room was coffee, tea, and an assortment of goodies. I saw this as a gesture of hospitality, of welcoming, of care or so I experienced it. Despite my lateness and disruption both of my professors waved me in, greeted me with a smile and gestured toward the empty chairs. I took the chair closest to where I was standing. Introductions were already underway.

Inwardly, I squirmed. Shrinking, from the sheer enormity of it all, the pedigree of the place, and of the professors, the collective confidence of the voices surrounding me. I am

also berating myself for my late arrival. A disappointing beginning. The costume masking my insecurities, and inadequacies is gossamer thin. I hold tight to it, hoping it does not fray from the tension and fall away exposing my vulnerabilities. I wonder at the expectations of others. The emotions are palpable but tightly woven. There are so many it is hard to tease them apart, one from the other. I sense uncertainty, fear, curiosity, excitement, impatience, anticipation. I feel very small.

This was, is, us. The 2011 EdD or Eddies as we are affectionately known cohort. “Stupid is as stupid does” was our motto (see Figure 5).



Figure 5. The 2011 Doctorate in Education cohort.

3.4.2 An Educated Person

In the early days of our program, actually in our first few days, we participated in an exercise I will forever remember. And I will remember it, both because of its simplicity, and its profundity. The exercise was for each of us to identify an “educated” person and what it was that had you identify them as “educated.” I chose easily for this exercise. Rhonda Margolis. My former instructor, a mentor and ironically, a graduate, and awarded alumni of this very program. But, it was not simply for all of the degrees, and designations, she had earned that I named her as my educated person, but rather for who she was, and how she was. I was envious of many of my classmates who selected parents, and grandparents, a few of which had not even completed high school, and even more, with no post-secondary education. Envious, of the models in their everyday lives, because I had no such role models. And yet those chosen, even with little “education” they were deemed to be “educated.” Perplexing? Yes. If you equate education with schooling, educated with schooled. And this conflation, of education, and schooling, was exposed in this exercise constructed by our professors. Although many of the people identified in the exercise had spent little to no time in a classroom, real or virtual, they had invested themselves in learning, and had indeed learned a great deal. So, learned, yes. Educated, yes. Schooled, no.

And this, my ignorant conflation of schooling and education, was the first of many epiphanies that would transform me in the ensuing years. Seemingly simple, but deceptively complex, in its implications for praxis. I now knew two things. I was schooled by many, and educated by too few, and yet want to be educated, and, I wanted to be an educator.

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The first few days, or maybe weeks, of this first course in our program also provided me with encouragement I desperately needed to silence the self-deprecating narrative nibbling at my worthiness. Assigned to a classmate, we were to share stories of our education, and write a paper summarizing what we had learned. I asked to partner with my classmate who had identified herself as indigenous, both because she was enchanting, and because I was intensely interested in what I might learn about her, and from her. I wanted her to like me. I wanted to befriend her. Or rather, truth be told, I wanted her, to befriend me.

Outside seated on a patch of grass, we shared our stories, and I returned home to write, to tell a story of the story, that had been told to me. The papers were returned to us with requests to rewrite to everyone, except me. Except me. Everyone except me had to revise, and re-submit their paper. I did not. And on that day, for one day, I believed maybe I was good enough.

Day after day, week after week, we returned to that same building, that same room, my professors, my classmates, and me. For me, the classes were simultaneously exhilarating, and exhausting, delightful, and demanding. I was wound tightly, and struggled, to maintain my fraying sanity in the frenzy. I looked no further ahead, than to the next thing.

3.4.3 Doubt Returns

Although, only the first course in the program, the experience was a remarkable contrast to my previous experience. To my previous graduate program experience. I wondered if these two exceptional professors would also be “the exception.” Remarkably my

journey through the program would introduce me to so many more exceptional professors. Exceptional professionals. Professors. People.

This course was the first of six required seminars, two electives, a comprehensive examination and a dissertation that would comprise our program. Of course, the first course of my journey was followed by another, this one exploring ethics. This course would demand painful reflections and reconciliations, provide an unexpected catalyst for closure, and poignant memories. Two professors. One an esteemed scholar, and tenured professor, the other a fledgling scholar and sessional instructor.

Much like the first course, this too was conducted in a second-floor classroom of the aging building, rooted amongst the trees, along the path from the underground lot where I parked my car. This course beckoned, no compelled, me to return to the frightful experience in my prior graduate program, elucidated earlier on these pages. Slowly the fronds of this experience, alive but curled tightly in the recesses of my mind, unfolded in the light of the intentions of the course, and pulled me to them. Although twisted in a tangle of unresolved issues, and emotions, and terrified of exposing my story, and me, to judgment, I was eventually compelled by my integrity to choose courage over comfort and elected to use this experience as the foundation for an ethical inquiry in the course (Brown, 2015). Investigating, documenting, publishing, and presenting my experience proved unexpectedly affirming and cathartic. Bolstered by the support of my cohort, and convinced of the injustice of my prior experience I sought, and received an audience with the Dean of the Faculty of Education (from my prior graduate program) to share my story. Although at the end of the meeting, and to this day, I do not feel justice was served, the coursework and the ensuing conversations have afforded me a modicum of resolution. But, only a modicum.

Despite my commitment to, and investment in, the course and its inarguably beneficial contribution to my education and development, I recall receiving a relatively poor result for my term project. While I don't recall the words, or letter on the page, I do recall the angst, and panic, that ensued when I realized how poorly I had performed on the one assignment, although my grade was just a low A. Cognizant of the requirement to maintain a specific standing in the program I was both convinced the assessment was a confirmation of my ineptitude, and unworthiness, and certain that probation or perhaps even dismissal was imminent. I was beside myself!

The Pretender

*I am so tired,
of hiding,
of hoping,
of pretending,
to be,
something I am not.
Not titled,
nor lettered,
not a scholar,
nor studious,
Not published,
nor presented,
not conferenced,
nor followed,
not understanding,
nor understood,
I am not what you see.
I am pretending.*

My enormous emotional response was for naught. No, perhaps not for nothing. None of the imagined, dreaded consequences for me came to be.

The experience served as a poignant and painful reminder for me of the power of the pen, of assessment and its potential consequences, albeit unintended, for our students. "We judge too much and too powerfully, not realising the extent to which students experience our power over them" (Boud, 1995, p. 43). This experience also served to illustrate the frailty of my esteem, and how easily it unraveled in light of critical albeit constructive feedback. "Self-esteem, it is believed, is affected by receiving negative or unexpected feedback" (Weaver, 2006, p. 3). Young (2000) noted the potential for similar adverse consequences of feedback for mature learners with poor self esteem writing,

High and medium self-esteem students tended to see feedback as something they were able to act on and make use of; students with low self-esteem were more likely to feel defeated. (p. 415)

I am frequently unnerved, unsettled by my inability to understand. I am literate. I can decipher the letters on a page, and assemble them into words, and the words into sentences, and then paragraphs to pages. And at the end of this construction, or reconstruction, as I read, I have collected words, but neither made, nor found, meaning. It is frustrating, discouraging, and dumbing. I am dumbing, silent. Unable to contribute to the conversation, for I have not found the meaning to which I can speak. Sadly, this experience is oft repeated for me during the program, and I surmise it is because I am somehow lacking. I will never really know.

The Ponderosa

*A small room,
large with possibility.
I am with others,
Kind, and kindred souls.
I am one, of several,
but I am alone,
and lonely.
I am uncertain,
amidst certainty.
Stupid.*

*Seated,
amongst scholars,
And scholars in waiting.
Do they too know what I know about me?
Do they see me?
Do they hear me?
Look!
Listen!
Learn!
I am not of them!
Although I am with them,
I do not belong.
I know.
Do they?*

3.4.4 Pedagogic Duos

The program continued and so too my participation in it. Opportunities to confront and challenge abounded. Unlike my previous program, the program provided us with not one, but two professors, for each course. Two. Divine and each was splendid, albeit different from the other, with whom they were teaching. But there was no hostility or tension in the difference but rather richness. The differences emerged in experience, perspective, research, position, situation, interpretation but it only added, and never distracted, from the experience. The scholarly differences between our professors only added to how they were able to serve us, and our education. I was not only being educated, but inspired by the educators I was encountering in the program, and one in particular. But before I continue to write about this particular professor, who has proven to be so profoundly influential, I do want to confirm that I did not attend a utopian university. There were some disappointments.

And yet, even in the disappointment, there lay sweetness. A sweetness, a fondness, an appreciation for the effort of those educators who had given so much to me, to us in the preceding months. I have however so much to be grateful for and even now, years hence, I am able to appreciate what a privilege it was to have had the opportunity to engage with and be educated by the esteemed faculty I encountered in this institution. Yes, a privilege. To this day I herald each as exquisite exemplars of educators.

Reflecting on my experience then, and still now, there were many things that served as an inspiration for me as a student then, and as an educator now. Although each unique, they collectively endeared themselves to me as a consequence of their observed commitment to my/our education, and their own, the vastness of their experience, and scholarly engagement in education, their compassionate, caring, and nurturing characters. While I will never know for sure, nor do I need to, each, and all of these professors, had me believing they cared not only about my education, but about me, and they each appeared to believe that I was capable, and so too helped me believe I was capable.

And there was one. One whom amongst the jewels of this group of educators shone even more brightly for me. Dr. Shauna Butterwick. With her enchanting colleague Dr. Andre Mazawi, they would spend two terms with me, with us, teaching research, and related theoretical notions. Notions of power, privilege, social location, and identity were only some of that which were entwined in our examination, and inquiry into research. Some of these notions harkened back to the transformative learning I experienced under the tutelage of Deb Bartlette, extending even further to my experiences as a young worker in community. Shauna and Andre afforded us an opportunity to encounter, and engage with them in new, and unexpected ways. Although we were accustomed now to settling into seating with our bottles, cups, and mugs, thick piles of printed articles aside computers, and notebooks, opened to the writer, and the collegial dialectic typical of our encounters, we soon learned also to expect the unexpected. Dance, poetry, videos, fabric, object collections, drawing, photography, mapping, and presentations punctuated our familiar encounters adding whimsy, inviting creativity, and encouraging engagement. Although I experienced varying degrees of discomfort with the multiplicity of modes that were employed in their teaching, the numerous opportunities for access, and representation, afforded not only myself, and my classmates, was undeniably beneficial.

Despite my affections for, and admiration of, both Andre, and Shauna, I struggled to maintain my participation in the program during the second of the two courses we had together. Both physically and mentally, my health deteriorated and I became ill with pneumonia. I struggled too with responding to the grief of my daughters, and their vastly different needs, co-parenting with an embittered ex, the daunting commute to, and from, classes, attending to my obligations as a consultant, and faculty member, in not one, but two, post secondary institutions, and the near impossibility of completing the required reading, and writing for our course. Even now as I write this, I wonder how I managed to maintain any semblance of health.

I still recall all these years later, arriving late one evening for class. Shauna was readying a clip for our viewing, "The Danger of a Single Story, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie." I collapsed into one of the empty chairs at the table. I remember having a chest infection then. I also remember within a few minutes of being seated Andre, coming up behind me, and setting on the table in front of me a cup of tea, with milk, and sugar, beside it. Then, and now, I am humbled, and grateful, for this caring gesture of a professor for his student. So lovely.

And as much as I adored them, and wish that I could have afforded them, and their class, the attention it deserved, I did not. And could not. Sadly, I simply did not have the resources available to do so. Of all of the classes, and all of the assignments, I regret I did not have enough. And yet, those that I did complete were profoundly provocative. Provocative, because with both Shauna, and Andre, commenting on my writing I was afforded not one, but two different perspectives on mine, encouraging reflection, on reflections. For me this experience echoed that of mine with Deb because of the quantity, and quality, of feedback I received on my assignments.

As a faculty member who also includes written assignments, I appreciate the enormous amount of time that is involved in reviewing, and providing comments on written assignments. I have enviously observed my colleagues running a multitude of multiple-choice exams through a machine which graded them in moments compared with the hours, and hours, likely they, and certainly I, have devoted to marking written work. I would surmise that my experience of completing critically reflective journaling exercises as a student including those in this course during my doctoral studies, have convinced me of their efficacy. This learned conviction, supported by the benefits described in the literature, has convinced me to regularly include them in my courses (Hiemstra, 2001).

Although it is impossible to identify the roots of the affection that has continued to flourish in the years since our first encounter, it is easy however to identify the many reasons for the flourishing of my relationship with Shauna. I am grateful for the scholarship and writing that would still be hidden from me had she not helped me to see; for enhancing my awareness of, and sensitivities to, the complexities of power, privilege, and location; to the potential benefits afforded by alternative modalities for teaching, and learning, to introducing me to Carl who taught me to write (not letter, write). I also know that without her this dissertation would not have come into being.

3.5 Collage of Learning

For me it is important to acknowledge that as a consequence of the journey of writing this dissertation I unearthed the glimmer, and glint of the gifts, and the bruises, and burns, and scars of those that I encountered, in the classroom, and their influence on the educator I have become. I am convinced that it is as much about who they were as educators, and how they educated, as it is, and was, the what I was being educated about. I hope that who I have become today as an educator, honours them and their teachings.

I have included below a collage that I crafted during my directed reading with Carl Leggo. Inspired by the use of various forms of creative expression I encountered in my

next two days, I cut a total of 84 images, and 60 words/phrases, from the pile of pages. It was interesting to me then, and still now, that I chose almost as many words/phrases, as I did images. Perhaps a reflection of my penchant for words. Surveying the collection of 144 carefully cut pieces, and the poster board I had purchased a few days prior, I quickly realized I had two choices, rid myself of nearly half of my collection, or purchase an additional piece of poster board. I opted for the latter. Constructed using two pieces of poster board, this collage of both images, and words, this collage is a visual representation of the “complexity” of teaching Brookfield (2006) describes in the quote on the preceding page, and of the “tangle” of teaching that Palmer (2007) describes in the quote on the subsequent page. It decorates one wall of my office now.

This collage is rich with meaning. Each piece is significant with no one word, phrase, or image appearing to dominate. Returning repeatedly over time to gaze at this collage, standing both near and afar, I wonder at the themes it reveals. I see several. Possibility, passion, knowledge, love, inspiration, connection. Transformation. I am also struck by the enormity of it all. The complexity. I expect a lot from teaching. I expect a lot from me as a teacher. I hope for a lot for my students.

3.6 Summary

In the preceding pages, I have explored and reflected on my post-graduate education, noting some of the themes or messages/meanings that I believe have informed by teaching (some reflected in the above collage), my practice, and philosophy. In the next part of this dissertation, with the goal of capturing how these ideas shape my teaching, I describe in detail the preparations, and activities, and experiences of one day of teaching.

PART FOUR: Just One Day

We must enter not evade the tangles of teaching
so we can understand them better and negotiate them with more grace,
not only to guard our own spirits but also to serve our students well.
(Palmer, 2007, p. 2)

The following pages are a narrative of one day in my life as an educator. I have created a composite of the first day of a leadership development course I have taught for many years. This one day is a representation of the first day of the many, many times I have taught this course in the past fifteen years. Taught for both part-time studies, and industry training, on multiple campuses, and at varied client sites across the lower mainland, with varied schedules, both face-to-face, and online.

The students, both domestic and international, typically twenty or so, range in age from 19 to 60 plus years, and are employed in an array of industries, and professions. Most are employed full time. For many, this course is part of a program, for others it is an elective, and for still others it is chosen as a means to satisfy a goal, either an employer's, or their own. For some, this course is their first foray into post secondary education in a very, very long time, with some never having attended a class since they graduated high school. The motivations to attend are as varied as the participants themselves. This is the first class of five consecutive Saturdays, scheduled from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. There are 20 participants in this particular section, a composite of the students I have taught over the years.

Constructing the day temporally, and assigning names to each of the sections of the day, beginning with "the readying," and ending with, "the way home," I have carefully constructed a narrative of one day. The narrative includes details philosophical, theoretical and personal and endeavours to make visible what might otherwise be invisible. To illuminate for myself, and for readers, what it means to me to be an educator, the thinking,

feeling, and doing, of my teaching. I am hoping that my attention to welcoming, relationship and respect, (some of the themes surfacing from the previous stories of childhood, family, schooling, and education) are evident, as is my desire for my classroom to be experienced as a place of possibility, characterized by warmth, and an appreciable recognition for the unique potential of each participant, and the transformative potential of education.

In recent years, I have become enamored with the intentions of the transformational teaching literature. Transformational teaching has been described by Slavich (2005) as the belief that instructors can promote meaningful change in student lives “by affording the opportunity to not just impart information to students but rather [change] something about how students learn and live through structured experiences in the accompaniment of pre-reflection and reflection” (p. 3). His initial conception of transformational teaching was subsequently revised, and explicated as “the expressed or unexpressed goal to increase student’s mastery of key course concepts while transforming their learning related attitudes, values, beliefs and skills” (Slavich & Zimbardo, 2012, p. 576).

Rosebrough and Leverett (2011), however, offer a more endearing conception of transformational teaching in their *Transformational Pedagogy Model* comprised of three concentric circles, beginning with the learner in the center circle, encircled by the transformational teacher, again encircled by educational goals (a triumvirate of social, spiritual, and academic goals).



Figure 7. Transformational Teaching (Rosebrough, T. R., & Leverett, R. L., 2011, p. 16)

In their tripartite role construct of transformational teachers, I am to serve as a scholar, a practitioner, and a relater. Rosebrough and Leverett contend teaching should be more about inspiration, than information, “illuminating change in head and heart that helps learners achieve their potential and their purpose” (p. 21). I am also inspired by Quinn’s (as cited in Anding, 2005) enchanting conception of transformational teachers as “facilitator[s] of emergent greatness ... [who] call ordinary students to embrace their own greatness” (p. 487). I aspire to have students realize possibility for themselves, whatever that possibility may be, and that they can be changed as a consequence of our experience.

Transformational teaching is believing, really believing, in the potential of each and every learner and communicating that belief to the learner” (Rosebrough & Leverett, 2011, p. 30). I hope the following pages conveys to you not only the inherent complexity, and challenge, but also the love I hold in my heart, for what it means for me to teach. It is my heart’s desire to one day be the transformational teacher described in the literature, and in the words of Quinn (as cited in Anding, 2005):

When I reflect on the rows and rows of ordinary teachers at that university, I like to focus on the exceptions. I think about those few classrooms where the students were sitting on the edge of their chairs. Were those students in some way different? Were all the serious students somehow selected into those exceptional classes, or were they the very same kind of students simply having a very different experience? I believe the answer is the latter. It was the person in front of the room who was unusual. Those were the teachers who turned ordinary students into extraordinary students. Those teachers were transformational teachers. (p. 488)

4.1 The Readying

It is the night before, or perhaps the day of, but it’s before. That’s what is important. I am anxious. Always. And afraid I will be found to be a fraud. An imposter. The American Psychological Association describes the imposter syndrome as a “real and specific form of intellectual self-doubt” (Weir, 2013, para. 6), which haunts the victim who anxiously awaits the imagined exposure of their ineptitude. Brookfield (2006) also writes about this: “The one thing [teachers are] certain of is that unless they’re very careful, they will be found out to be

teaching under false pretenses” (p. 79). Despite accumulating credentials, and experiences, I struggle to this day, even in my current role, with this sense of impostership. It was not until I stumbled on Parker Palmer’s (2007) concept of the imposter syndrome in *The Courage to Teach* that I was able to name, and normalize, the sense of fraudulence I experienced each time I encountered a new group of learners.

Back to the before. It is about the readying. Of me, and my materials. There is a lot to prepare. For me the preparations for each, and every encounter, are extensive, and elaborate: physical (of things and tools and toys), mental (of ideas, information and issues), emotional (of feelings), spiritual (of hopes and dreams). The folk psychology, and pedagogies, the commonplace intuitive theories about how the mind works and the attendant assumptions about learning (Olson and Bruner, 1996), prominent in my early years of teaching, have faded in light of my discoveries in the literature. I am intentional now.

Returning to the readying, I have a bag; a black-bulging-bursting-at-the-seams-bag-on-wheels. It holds some of the tools I will use in my teaching. In his practical guide for adult educators *The Art of Teaching Adults: How to Become an Exceptional Instructor and Facilitator*, Renner (2005) details a series of checklists for readers to assist them in their preparations, and although, I would not dispute any of his suggestions, I have developed a list, and inventory of my own (see Figure 8 for a peek inside my bag):



Figure 8: Gina’s Black Bag

I will also bring with me an extra bag, number two. This bag holds books a half a dozen or so. I conduct a draw at the end of each session, and one student wins the opportunity to pick a book of their choosing from this bag. This practice was developed in honour of Chris (whose suicide I described earlier). For days following his death I searched for a way in which I could honour his life. I wondered if Chris may not have chosen to end his life had he known how much he mattered to so many, and maybe, just maybe, if I could be the light, however meagre, for another, perhaps they would choose differently in despair. And so, I have chosen, since his death, to make it an intentional part of my every day, the act of acknowledging, and appreciating another. Who, what, why, and how varies, but the intention is the same, to acknowledge, and appreciate at least one person every day. And from this intention was created a ritual in my classes.

At the beginning of each course I share with my students a little bit about the story of Chris and the legacy I have crafted of acknowledgement and appreciation. I tell them I have created a ritual for every class I teach whereby they will be asked to offer acknowledgement and appreciation to at least one classmate every class. I distribute index cards, one per participant, and ask them to write on the card, before the end of the class, the name of the classmate they wish to recognize and what it is they wish to acknowledge and appreciate. I offer some examples to inspire them suggesting they could, for example, nominate a classmate for a great comment, or question, or sharing a great story, or telling a great joke, or for whatever it is that for them is deserving of acknowledgement and appreciation. I tell them I will gather their cards at the end of the day and we will draw from those cards one or two and I will read aloud student's names and what they are being recognized for. The winning student is invited to select a book from those I have brought with me to the class that day. At the end of the term, I gather all of the cards submitted during the course (for all of the sessions), and forward them to the student who has been recognized (in their

package with all of their remaining assignments). Developed as a tribute to Chris, it has also become, a way for our class, as a community of learners, to acknowledge and appreciate the contribution of each member of our community to our collective experience.

This activity is not without risk, however. I am aware of the possibility that one, or more of the participants may not receive any cards of recognition. I wish I could be certain that each, and every participant, would receive at least one comment card in their package of assignments. However, experience has taught me that this is not to be. Experience has also taught me the benefits of this activity, such as the reinforcement of building community through recognition, and appreciation for the contributions community members make; the enhanced esteem of a student as a consequence of receiving recognition from a peer, and a student (and many students) having the opportunity to select a book they may be otherwise unable to afford.

These bags on wheels, and the two extras, are burdensome. Heavy, and awkward they are transferred from my car, and trundled to my assigned classroom. The weight of the baggage adds to the heaviness I carry with me, as I travel toward my room. I am at one and the same time anxious and excited, as I contemplate who I may encounter, and how it is that I will reach, touch, and teach them, and they me. I will learn. I will learn about my learners, and about what they choose to share with me. I will also acquire an eclectic array of extraneous bits, and pieces, as a consequence of who I encounter, and the experiences they bring with them. I will learn more about that of which I teach, and about me, professionally and personally. I am who I am as an educator, because of whom I have encountered in my journey to now. And I will learn about me, always about me, and will leave each day, and at the end, a different person. Changed, as a consequence of learning from my learners. I have taught my learners, and they have taught me. I teach. I learn. I become. I am an educator. I have read of many who write about this, but I need not look to a

page for evidence to support this claim, only into a mirror to know for sure. “When one heart, mind, spirit, connects to another, both become teacher and learner, and both are changed” (Palmer & Zajonc, 2010, p. 188).

There are many threads woven into the fabric of my teaching not easily seen. Yes, some are visible, such as the things taught to us in the Provincial Instructor’s Diploma about objectives, and outcomes, and lesson plans, and flip charts, and slideshow presentations. These are important notes on the song sheet from which I sing. But it is the underside of the fabric that I am looking at now. I appreciate this view, and avow it to be of greater significance than I originally understood. Much greater significance. The most brilliantly devised curriculum delivered seemingly faultlessly by an arrogant, impatient, derisive, disrespectful instructor, is unlikely to achieve the desired outcomes, and more likely to actually achieve undesired outcomes. “Stated more simply, the question is not whether teaching is an emotional experience but whether we acknowledge or deny the emotions inherent in teaching” (Schwartz, 2019, p. 8), and in learning. The possibilities inherent in the beginning are so exciting, and exhilarating, and yet, terrifying, and frightening. Intriguing that these two seemingly contrary clusters of emotions can be associated with the same endeavour. But, begin I will. So, what happens at the beginning?

4.2 The Staging

I arrive early to set up the room. I turn on the lights, the machines that I will need, projector, computer, and such. When I first began teaching I was using transparencies, an overhead projector, a TV, and VCR, and a textbook and now, almost twenty years later, I may use a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation, a built-in projector, educational media, D2L as the learning management system, videos from varied sites across the internet and an array of readings and other resources. The flip chart, which the audio-visual staff will ensure is ready, is waiting for me to write on it. I have not had to order it for years.

My physical classroom essentially resembles every other classroom in the building, but I stage the space, attempting to artfully arrange the multitude of materials, supplies, and resources I have brought for our session at the front of the room.

All of these homes begin with a physical area that is merely given. The raw space is a shell, determined, simply there. What happens next is an active choice-life is breathed into these settings by people who have certain ideas in mind, specific beliefs to enclose. And that's what makes each more than background, more than floors and walls and ceiling. That's what makes each a whole ecology of intention-the embodiment of thought and value. (Ayers, 2001, p. 49)

My intentions are informed by my experience as a student, of course, with additional inspiration provided by Palmer's (2007) six principles for the design of a teaching, and learning space:

The space should be bounded, and open, hospitable and charged, invite the voice of the individual, and the voice of the group, honour the little stories of the students, and the big stories of the disciplines and tradition, support solitude and surround it with the resources of the community (and), welcome both silence and speech (Palmer, 2007, pp. 77–80).

As soon as the room is ready, I leave, and remain away until only a few minutes before the scheduled start of the class, when I will re-enter. For twenty years now, this is the ritual. Each, and every time: arrive, stage and leave. Always. I cannot remain in the room while the learners arrive. It is too uncomfortable, and overwhelming for me. I must take the time after setting the room, to set, settle, and centre me. Put all my pieces, and parts in their places.

4.3 Welcome!

The students are welcomed into my class with a written "welcome" on the flipchart standing outside the door of the classroom. I write the same greeting each time in brightly coloured smelly felts (see Figure 7).



Figure 9. The Flip Chart Welcome.

"Welcome!" is also on the title Microsoft PowerPoint slide that is shining on the screen. If there is no screen, it is written in big, bold, colourful, letters on a flipchart. The exclamation point is not perfunctory. It is deliberate. It is, I hope, noticed by everyone. But noticed, or not, I know it is there, and its intention. I want for my students to know from the beginning, even before we begin, they are welcome. It is a small, but for me significant, gesture.

The time that we are to begin has arrived, and thus, so must I. It is the first class, and I begin the first class always, the same way. I greet them with "Good morning" and "Welcome to Leadership 1." What does this word welcome really mean? According to the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*: Welcomed; welcoming: "transitive verb 1: to greet hospitably and with courtesy or cordiality 2: to accept with pleasure the occurrence or presence of" ("Welcome," 2003, p. #). It is my intention to communicate my pleasure, delight, enthusiasm, excitement, happiness, interest, curiosity (and there is undoubtedly more not readily coming to mind at this time) that they will join me in what will be our space for our class. I want each, and every person, to feel welcome. I have discovered in the writing of this dissertation the significance of welcoming in my practice is likely attributable to my schooling experience as

frequently unwelcoming. Writing my story of schooling has afforded me perspective I am unsure I would have otherwise uncovered. Although not entirely unexpected, as I reminisced about my experiences as child, and youth, in school, I experienced profound pain, and sadness. I hauntingly recalled the rejection, the isolation, the loneliness, the unhappiness, the despair, the sadness, and shame. And despite the distance I have travelled, the time that has passed, these experiences are near to my heart, and continue to profoundly influence my praxis as an educator. I want each, and every student I encounter to experience my classroom as welcoming. I believe this becomes possible only when they experience my space, and me, as welcoming.

I have chosen to adopt several practices that I believe contribute to participants' reported experience of being "welcomed" in my class. Ayers (2001) writes about welcoming: "I want to build spaces where each person is visible to me and everyone else... where learners are known and understood, where they feel safe and valued" (p. 58). Similar sentiments are offered by Palmer (2007):

Hospitality in the classroom requires not only that we treat our learners with civility and compassion but also that we invite our learners and their insights into the conversation. The good host is not merely polite to the guest – the good host assumes the guest has stories to tell. (p. 82)

Palmer adds to his ideas of hospitality in a subsequent collaboration with Zajonc: "Learned spaces need to be hospitable places not merely because kindness is a good idea, but because real education requires rigor. In a counterintuitive way, hospitality supports rigor by supporting community" (Palmer & Zajonc, 2010, p. 29). To the notion of hospitality,

Melton (2013) adds listening, wondering, “could the better part of hospitality be listening” (p. 217).

What does it mean for my student to experience my space, our space, as welcoming, and to feel welcomed upon their arrival, each time they arrive? It is not only the first time the student enters our classroom, or the first time we encounter each student, but each, and every time, we encounter one another anew, that we must attend to welcoming. Because between the past, and the present, both you, and I, are changed, if only aged by the passage of time. Consequently, I believe it is important to welcome you, this you before me, again. “Teaching is an interactive practice that begins and ends with seeing the student. This is more complicated than it seems, for it is something that is ongoing and never completely finished” (Ayers, 2001, p 25).

For me, the welcome both on screen, and out loud, examples mindfulness, attention to the necessary effort to create learning spaces experienced by all who are in the space as physically, intellectually, and emotionally, welcome. A space where each, and all, feel invited, wanted, included, comfortable, supported, attended to, and perhaps most importantly, accepted for who they are, as they are; while still believing that each has an opportunity to effect change for themselves should they desire to do so. It’s idealistic perhaps even unrealistic, but nevertheless that is what I desire.

Maybe it’s a sacred spiritual practice because every single person who crosses our doorsteps is a gift ... and each guest has something to teach us if we’re present enough to learn ... maybe it’s just about soaking people in? (Melton, 2013, p. 217)

I have never asked those I welcomed if they did indeed feel, welcome. However, I have received comments from many, many participants, in many varied contexts, and endeavours, confirming they feel welcomed. Their level of engagement in varied activities and exercises (both in, and outside of the classroom), their disclosures, and other

demonstrations of vulnerability indicate to me they feel welcome, and a sense of belonging. Additional evidence includes students feeling comfortable with challenging me to make changes to the class, for example, to modify the physical environment or adjust break schedules, to enable and support belonging.

The clock signals it is time to commence our class. Smiling warmly, I move around the room distributing a handout, "Find Someone Who." I am very aware of being observed, their eyes on me, as I move down and between the rows of tables and chairs. This activity is one of many I have utilized to begin a session. Typically serving as both an ice breaker, and an energizer, this activity (learned from a former mentor- thank you Rhonda), has proven to be beneficial for both the learners, and myself. I am convinced that the consequences of these exercises and activities beneficially serve the learners because, as hooks (1994) attests, "Professors can dish out all the right material, but if people are not in a mind to receive it, they leave the classrooms empty of that information" (p. 156). Moreover, if one accepts teaching and learning as a relational endeavour "between the teacher and the students, among the learners in the class, and between the teacher and learners and the course content" (Schoem, 2017, p. 79), engaging in exercises, and activities designed to create, and confirm, connection and community are necessary. I employ exercises, and activities, both ice breakers, and energizers (ideally selecting those that serve both simultaneously), in the first class, and every class thereafter, and at varied times throughout the day. But always a little something at the beginning of our time together.

The exercise asks learners to find another who satisfies the criteria of, for example, "born in the same country as you are," "has the same favourite dessert," or "who is a vegetarian." The criteria have changed over the years to reflect changing times. For example, I used to ask "find someone who, has blue eyes," but deleted it years ago when I wondered it was inappropriate if not offensive to ask people to gaze into the eyes of

strangers. The beauty of the exercise is that it allows students varying opportunities to participate. Those who appear more extroverted often move about the room, seemingly eager to meet and converse with many of their classmates as the time will allow. Others appear hesitant, uncomfortable, or even reticent, to engage and either stand a little to the side or linger longer in conversations with one classmate. Soon however each and all are drawn into conversation with another, and then another, and the room has become a glorious noisy cacophony of voices. A community is beginning.

Always there is a late comer, and sometimes many, who arrive after this activity has begun. I welcome them with a smile, handing them a copy of the handout, I invite them to join the activity. I am amused by the drama unfolding as they connect, and converse with one another. Observing the group, in its initial forming is, for me, interesting. The group always begins at the forming stage; students are awkward, tentative, unsure (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). Generally, there are one or two who are more familiar with one another. But most begin this first day as strangers. Tentative. Distrusting. (Lencioni, 2002). They will journey together through our course, and I will endeavour to help them move toward each other, so that in the end, they will no longer be strangers.

My Student

*Who are you?
That sits in my room,
watching,
waiting,
looking.*

*Fear, excitement, anxiety, curiosity, angst, happiness, fatigue, loneliness, resentment, worry.
A silent symphonic.
Who are you?*

*Mother Nana Fiancée Brother Sister Spouse Partner Lover Auntie Uncle Papa Nona Uncle
Manager Supervisor Leader Foreman Director Staff Sergeant Coordinator Steward Member*

*Trucker, Customer Service Representative, Fireman, Operator, Teacher, Retailer, Owner
Shipper, Project Manager, Programmer, Financier, Technician, Grocer, Realtor, Cleaner.*

*Gym rat, foodie, knitter, volunteer, runner, yogi, roadie, chess player, traveler, boater, choir
master, gamer, shopper, crafter, wine enthusiast, chef, camper, swimmer, ballerina, blogger.*

*I see you,
Do you see me?
I don't know you.
You don't know me,
But we will come to know one another,
You and I.
And you.
May you meet yourself anew,
and smile,
as I will.*

Making tent cards for their names comes next. I instruct the students to write on the front, and back of their paper, in big letters so their name, nickname, their adopted or chosen name or whatever it is that they wish to be called for the duration of the course, can be more easily seen from around the room. And I say all of this as I move about the room, handing out pens. and helping those who are having trouble folding. There is always at least one.

And then I am back at the front of the room. Now, I ask them to introduce themselves to me. I remind them they have had the opportunity to be introduced to one another, and now I am waiting to be introduced to them. I ask them to please share with me/with us the following:

Their name and please call me?
What they do for work or school or with their time?
Why this course?
What brings them joy/happiness when they are not working?

I tell them I ask about their name deliberately, appreciating that some have perhaps adopted a name other than the name as it appears on my institutional register. I invite them to teach us how to pronounce their chosen name. I have been told for some they have tried

to make it easier for me, and many others and have simply chosen another name, and others may have a preferred name or nickname, and finally, still others may simply want to name themselves differently for our course. As I write this passage, I reflect on how I have changed, evolved as an educator. I have long believed it important to know, and remember the names of each of my students. I too believe it to be associated with creating, and maintaining, an inclusive classroom (Cooper, Haney, Krieg, & Brownell, 2017). However, in the beginning, I assumed the learners would identify with their name as it appeared in my register, and would, of course, introduce themselves as such. Later, becoming increasingly aware of, and sensitive to the diversity of my learners, their histories, and stories, I began to inquire about their preferences for naming rather than asking them to announce their institutional identity or name as it would appear on my registration list. I am sensitive now also to those in my classroom who identify as trans or non-binary, and their preference to not have publicized their 'dead' name with which they no longer identify (Cooper et al., 2017).

I also ask them to share with me the real reason for taking the course, telling them a story told by a woman who stated, "I am taking this course (it was offered on five consecutive Saturdays) because it is the only way my husband will babysit our children", or something to that effect. I try to reassure them that their reason, whatever that may be, is a good reason, I am simply curious and want to understand their situation.

These introductions begin when I throw a ball—a soft squishy colourful lit up ball—to one of the participants. I choose a participant who I perceive, based on my observations thus far, will be comfortable leading the introductions. Once s/he is finished they toss the ball to another student, and this continues until each participant has introduced themselves, and then the ball is tossed back to me, and it is my turn. As each student is introducing themselves, I make notes of pieces that will help me to remember the person, their name

and a little of the story they are telling. I also seek to craft a connection with each participant as they tell their story, finding, or sometimes creating, something shared between us. There, is of course, something, many things, unique to each learner. Unique. Special. I seek to uncover this. Maybe it is something in their name, or where they work, or what they do, or why they are there, or who recommended the course to them, or what brings them joy or happiness. And I share aloud the small threads of connections between us that I tease from their introductions. A small, but not insignificant, act of creating community. By the time we are done we have typically already shared in lots of laughter. Noddings (2005) appears to affirm the potential benefits of this exercise:

First, as we listen to our students we gain their trust and ... and as we engage students in dialogue we learn about their needs, working habits, interests and talents we gain important ideas from them about how to build our lessons and plan for their individual progress. (p. 3)

And now, it is my turn. I introduce myself last. For me, this is another deliberate act to creating community in my classroom. I always begin my introduction with what is most important to me, my two girls. With a picture of my girls on the screen, I smile, and talk about my daughters, and myself as their mother. And then I talk about me, as a student, what I am studying, and how I am challenged as a learner, and then finally, as a professional, and my work as an instructor, and a consultant. I believe learners want to know me, Gina. The person. I believe it is important to narrow the gap between us, to decenter me in the classroom and displace me from the professorial pedestal. My scholarly forays into the literature in recent years have reassured me of this goal. If I am to know about them should they not also know about me (Palmer & Zajonc, (2010)? If I believe that knowing them will allow me to teach better might not knowing me allow them to learn better?

And then, I pause. I believe also, as does Quinn (as cited in Anding, 2005), “great teaching is not primarily about thinking, behaviour, or techniques. It is not about style. It is about something more basic. It is about our being state. It is about the expression of who we

are” (p. 488). Palmer (2007) echoes Quinn’s assertions in his artful articulation of identify, and teaching in the acclaimed *The Courage to Teach*: “good teaching cannot be reduced to technique but is rooted in the identity and integrity of the teacher” (p. 10).

Experience has taught me many of my learners are curious about me. They want to know who I am. I believe a willingness to be vulnerable is important. I was once asked if my little one was a surprise, or on another occasion, if she was the love child of a sugar daddy (yes, this was asked/said). And I tell them “no, she was planned, and yes, there is a big age gap between them, my daughters.” Sometimes I will share with them a recent event, or piece of trivia, or something happening for me. I ask for other questions, about me. And almost always, there is a comment made, and often more than one, echoes of “do you sleep? I don’t know how you do it?” I laugh and I tell them, “I don’t.” I tell them that they have not seen my house, or my car, or the inside of my head. It is messy. Very messy indeed.

*The itty bitty shitty committee in my head cackles gleefully.
“Look at you!
They don’t know how little you know!
You are a fraud! A failure! A toss!”
My insecurities are tucked tidily underneath neatly pressed fabric,
the naked truth concealed behind my painted mask
hidden underneath the little black dress
“Fake it until you become it.” (Cuddy, 2015, p. 280)*

I want them to know that our course, this experience, is envisioned, and enacted, as a collective one. A collective of learning creating a co-constructed experience, and I am but one in the experience. I am cognizant of the institutional, social, and legitimate power that my position, and privilege affords me. I am also cognizant of the many other privileges that my location has afforded me, and which I describe below.

“Power” and “privilege” are complicated concepts seemingly simple, but dangerous. Dangerous in their potential to insidiously impact our experience, my learners and me.

Discussions of the forms of power associated with French and Raven (1959), as part of my studies at British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT), helped to begin to put words to the destructive experiences I encountered in my earlier socialization both at home, and at school, and referenced if only a little on the preceding pages of this dissertation. However, it was my work in community with people who were victimized, marginalized, and disenfranchised that made me realize the arrogance afforded me by what I would re-learn years later as privilege (Black & Stone, 2005). I did not yet have the scholarship to apply to my experiences, but, I saw too frequently what I had been spared, and how I had been spoiled, as a consequence of my birthright.

I could fill endless pages narrating the lessons learned from those I served, and worked with, in my various roles during my years in community services. Recalling these experiences, I am reminded of a student who stated aloud in class one day, in response to requests for reflections of our previous session, "Gina you opened my eyes and I can't close them, and don't want to." For me, my years in community services opened my eyes, and afforded me an opportunity to witness, and understand, or rather try to understand, experiences I could not have imagined let alone encountered. All night in a hospital emergency room pouring charcoal down the throats of two terrifyingly high boys; holding the hand of a 12-year-old girl, who had been raped, while hospital staff conducted an exam; kneeling before a soft, brown-eyed, little, boy who looking into my eyes whispered, "last night my daddy held a gun to my mommy's head;" watching a young child build a pillow fort, and hide, as she awaited the scheduled arrival of her mother for a supervised visit; and the bruises on the bodies, and scars on the hearts, of the women who arrived with their children at the transition house. These are only a few of the stories I could share with you. Horrifying, heartbreaking, shocking, alarming, perplexing, infuriating, distressing, depressing, and occasionally, surprising, mystifying, heart warming, gratifying, and more. No one day was like any other. No one story like any other. My lived experience, my story, a stark contrast to

that of those I encountered in this work. This is not to minimize my story, my struggles, my pain nor aggrandize theirs, but rather to recognize what I discovered and uncovered. I was taught by those I served, and have one poignant, powerful story as one example of the lessons learned from those I served.

Her name was Vanessa. She was a young girl of about fourteen when we first met at the emergency respite home where I served as a youth worker. It was an afternoon shift, four o'clock to midnight. Her foster home placement had broken down, and she would stay with us until a new one could be found. I soon learned from staff that Vanessa was involved in the sex trade. A young, white, girl serving exclusively South Asian men. One afternoon, standing inside in the kitchen talking to two other staff, I heard a voice from outside loudly call out, "Hey, you, rich White girl!" Ignoring the call out, we continued talking. The same voice repeated again, this time with even more energy: "Hey, you, rich White girl!" The conversation paused, and I turned around to see Vanessa standing outside the sliding glass door, pointing her index finger toward us. Looking to my two coworkers, neither of whom were White or girls, I realized she was talking to me. As though reading my mind, she said, with her finger pointing at me, "Yeah, you. I wanna talk to you."

Once again, I wish I had the foresight to know how much I would learn from, and how many times I would share, the story of this day for I would have surely committed every detail to memory. On that day, I learned that I was White. Or rather I learned that others saw my Whiteness while I was oblivious to the meaning of my coloured skin, and about what it might mean for others. I had also never thought of myself as rich. We were simply six people living in a six bedroom, two dens, two family rooms, and many more rooms house, with a pool, tennis court, and hot tub in our backyard, on a street in one of the wealthiest suburbs in Canada, with a boat nearby, and a summer retreat across the ocean. My mother did not work outside the home and my father was a doctor. We lived much like everyone

else I knew, my relatives, the people that lived next door, across, and down the street from us. From my unknowingly privileged place, we were, quite simply, average.

Acknowledging my ignorance and privilege for all to read here is embarrassing. I want to honour the legacy of the lessons taught to me by Vanessa, and appreciate the consequences of the imposition of my privileged identity for my students (Schwartz, 2019). Vanessa saw the color of my skin, and my wealth. For the first time in my life, I did too. I was a socially privileged person who was oblivious to her privilege (Black & Stone, 2005) until I was not. I am indebted to Vanessa, and her teaching.

Extending the work of the irreverent McIntosh (1988), Barnett (2013), in her article “Unpacking Teachers’ Invisible Knapsacks: Social Identity and Privilege in Higher Education,” inventoried numerous privileges afforded educators, some of which I share. As the title of the article indicates, I carry my privilege with me wherever I travel. I am White, able bodied, middle class, and English speaking, and because of this, I have opportunities unavailable to others. In the event of an alarm I will not have to wait for assistance to evacuate the building in which I teach, I will exit the building by walking down the stairs. I have also power and privilege attached to my position as an instructor, not the least of which is determining grades forever enshrined on the transcripts of my students. However, “even as we consider the privileges that accrue to a particular identity, we should be mindful that other intersecting identities may either compound or counteract them” (Barnett, 2013, p.1). Yes, I am able bodied, White, and English speaking, and am also female, an immigrant, and live with a mental illness. Over the years I have had experiences associated with my gender with female students commenting on my clothing, male students commenting on my appearance, and some even asking me out. My eyes are open, wide open, but still I do not see it all, do not see everything and most importantly, try as I might, I do not see me as my students see me, or perceive me as my students do. But I must try.

When I understand both the power and the marginalization imposed by my identities I become a better educator, as I am more likely to recognize obstacles and injustices faced regularly by my students, the manifestations of power and marginalization in my relationships with students, and the limits that my worldview potentially levies on my teaching and thus my teaching relationships. (Schwartz, 2019, p. 7)

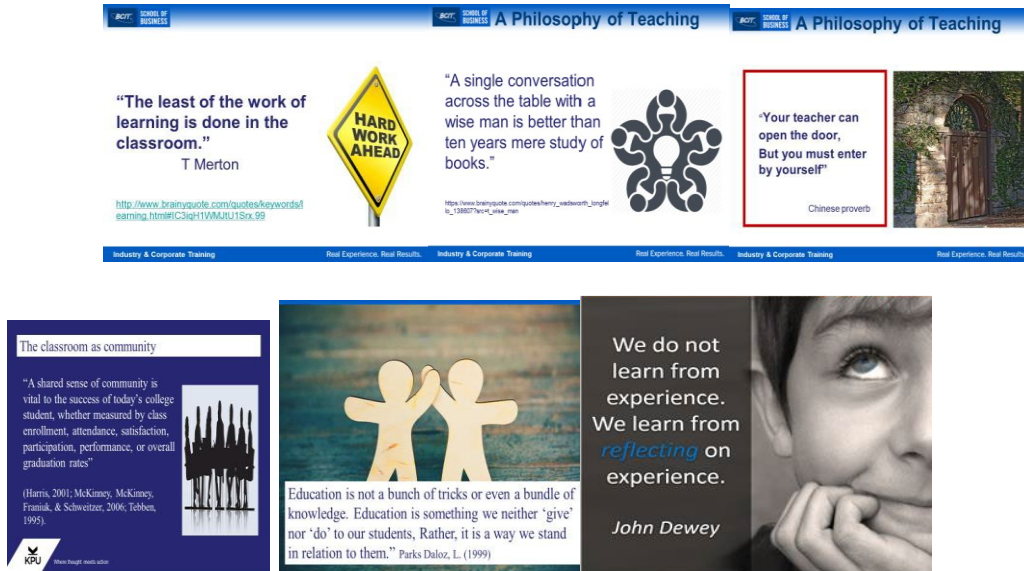


Figure 10. The Philosophy Presentation Slides

With the introductions complete, it is time to turn to the next piece. I post a few slides (see Figure 10 above) containing images and quotes--shards of insight into my philosophy of teaching, and learning. Only recently do I refer to the description of my teaching as my teaching philosophy. Kenny, Berenson, Jeffs, Nowell, and Grant (2018), for example, describe a teaching philosophy statement as clearly communicating our beliefs about teaching, and learning, why we hold these beliefs, and how we translate them into practice. I hope they understand that I am an intentional educator. I hope too the brief description will inform, and perhaps challenge, or change, the assumptions of my students. They have assumptions, and expectations of me as an instructor, from their stories of schooling. I am aware of this. I too as a student have assembled my own suitcase of assumptions of instructors. I believe this exercise is a particularly important one for those who have come to my classroom as students from far away where the cultural norms of education are so very

different from those informing my classrooms. This is another example of the hidden curriculum I am hoping to reveal (Margolis, 2001).

I generally begin by sharing my experience of learning, of what it is to learn, both as a student, and as an instructor. From sitting in the room, and standing at the front of the room, I believe that any learning endeavour, including our course, is a collaborative venture requiring co-learning by both the learner, and me, the instructor. We must come to, and be with, one another in this endeavour we call education, and at the end, we are possibly more educated than when we began. I share also my belief in the power of dialogue in community to facilitate learning, about ourselves, one another, and our subject, leadership. As a master's of education student, I tell them how I conducted a small action research project on the efficacy of a dialogic pedagogy in a leadership development program, and I continue my research on the potential of dialogue as pedagogy as a doctoral student. I convey to students, or certainly try to, my conviction in the power of our collective contributions where the edges of my experience, and competence, and the edges of theirs, come together.

Taylor (2006) posits dialogue as one of the core elements, essential, and common to transformative approaches to teaching. In contrast to what he characterizes as commonplace or "everyday discussions," he describes dialogue as "the medium for critical reflection to be put into action, where experience is reflected on, assumptions and beliefs are questioned, and habits of mind are transformed" (p. 9). Palmer (2007) posits, "A dialogical exchange in which our ignorance can be aired, our ideas tested, our biases challenged, and our knowledge expanded" as requisite for learning (p. 79).

For Freire (1972), a Brazilian adult educator and social activist, dialogue was not simply an interactive exchange between people; rather, it was "the encounter between men [*sic*], mediated by the world, in order to name the world [and] by naming the world, transform

it” (p. 147). Characterized by relationships predicated on assumptions of equality, respect, and a commitment to the interests of participants, Freire (1972) heralded the liberating, and transformative potential of dialogic engagement. Colloquially characterized as a pedagogy of hope, Freirian pedagogy emerged as critical discourse, inspiring trust, and hope in its participants (Elbers & De Haan, 2004).

I share with the students that the education they receive is also commensurate with their investment. I remind them that this is a credit course, requiring that they invest not only during our scheduled sessions, but also outside of our class time. If they invest a lot, they will likely learn, and benefit, a lot, and vice versa, invest little, and they will likely learn, and benefit, little. I share a little about some of what I have to know about adult learners, from the literature and my experience, including some assumptions I hold about how adults learn, drawing on Kolb’s (1984) theories (as cited in McLeod, 2017), and his argument that reflection is necessary for learning to occur. I am also guided by the writing of Taylor (1986), and particularly her assertion that learning begins with the collapse of the learner’s existing preconceptions, assumptions, and expectations, and a disorientation as the learner’s experience something different from their assumptive world.

I highlight the necessity of reflection for learning, and how, in my work in community, I was taught to employ critical reflection. In debriefs, clinical consultations, case conferences, critical incident debriefings, and conversations with colleagues, we shared experiences, critically analyzed those experiences considering for example, individual, structural, systemic, social, and political contributions to the experience, and how we were impacted and often, changed, as a consequence. How I was changed as a consequence. My prior experiences aligned with what I later learned was Schön’s (1983) seminal work, *The Reflective Practitioner*, and his insistence of the importance of reflection to support student learning. The ensuing years have witnessed a proliferation of scholarship promoting

reflection as a means of increasing students' learning in varied contexts. Although increasingly complex, and nuanced, the fundamentals of reflection persist: experience, cognition, and application. I often use a triadic question sequence "What? So what? Now what?" in addition to my own script: "what happened, what did you think/feel/do, what did you learn? what if anything would you do differently? I share with my learners we will utilize primarily two tools, weekly reflections, and in class reflective activities, and exercises.

More specifically, I discuss how acquiring the capacity to, and developing a practice of, thinking about oneself, and one's experience, is not synonymous with simple criticism, and the destructive self-talk that so many (myself included) engage in when mistakes are made. Learning to critically evaluate oneself, feelings, thoughts, beliefs, and behaviours, is, I emphasize, necessary to encourage and facilitate learning. This program, and course, will thus require students to reflect, both in, and outside of, class and this will be integrated into each, and every assignment.

I discuss a little about the challenge of change, of effecting change, for ourselves. Of thinking, feeling, doing, being, different. I recite a phrase from Berns shared with me by a colleague "the brain is fundamentally a lazy piece of meat. It does not want to waste energy" (2008, p. 36). I note how we are each vulnerable to living by habit, doing what is familiar, and to varying degrees, our ego, achievement, and fatigue make us resistant to change.

I reiterate what for me is the opportunity that is available to each of them; to see our time together as an opportunity to be, and do, and become, different, dare I say better and my belief in the transformative possibilities of education. Through dialogue, and other forms of engagement, I endeavour to invite and inspire students to consider, critique and reconsider who they are, what they think, believe, feel, and do. I am excited about the

opportunities, and possibilities the course offers students. “What do you want for yourself?” I ask? And then I often tell the story of The Chief.

On the first day of our course one of the participants told us her chosen name for our course was, Chief. She announced on that very first day she was determined to one day be the chief of a police department. She was a confident, extroverted, energetic, and engaging young woman and soon emerged as an informal leader amongst her classmates. Academically she excelled. The final day of our course arrived, and she was scheduled to deliver a presentation on an article of her choosing. I don’t remember the article, or the required synopsis, or critique. But I do remember vividly the sound of music playing in the background, “I have confidence in me” (from the Sound of Music) as she presented, and of the story she told.

She also shared, had we asked how her colleagues in the detachment (the police station where she worked) would name her, “mouse” would likely be chosen if they even knew her at all to name. She also decided, in that same moment in class, that she would not only call herself “chief” assuming a new identity but also a new persona. She would be in our class the person that she wanted to be. And that was what she did. And in five weeks she crafted a new identity for herself.

And as I write this now, I am again humbled, and inspired, by the significance of the experience for her. Although I can see her in my mind’s eye, I cannot recall her name. She did, earlier on, give me permission to tell her story and I want to credit her. So many more have influenced my practice who cannot be properly named. They invited, and sometimes demanded, that I revise my story of them, or me or of teaching and learning. At different intervals in the first session, I share with them what I have come to realize are the limits of what I know, and how much I both appreciate the opportunity to learn from, and with them believing “everyone has something to teach me if I am willing to learn” (Wheatley, 2002, p. 30).

And then I ask them to assemble into groups according to the number I have written in the top right-hand corner of their handout. I prefer groups of four or five and number them accordingly. They begin moving themselves, their belongings, and rearranging the tables to enable them to talk together. This is not an insignificant act as I am intentionally structuring

our space. The room, the rows, the people, the faces, are no longer oriented to the front of the room. I am effectively decentered. They are now oriented to one another, and the space in between. To the community in the making. Not a classroom in waiting.

I invite them to talk together in their small groups about what it is they need to enable the course to be a beneficial one for them, what they need from me, and from one another. What are the expectations they hold? This is important. Another act of creating community. Known varying as group rules, group norms, terms of engagement, rules for the room, and my own term, Group Agreements, they are important to structuring, and supporting spaces for learning (Renner, 2005).

I endeavour to simultaneously occupy the positions of participant and teacher. The former because I also learn, and will both influence the group, and be influenced by the group. The latter, because that is my formal role, I am the teacher. We do not occupy equal positions within the institutional structure. There is an inherent inequality to our relationship in our institutional relationship. Nevertheless, I know too, in a different context, the imbalance currently favoring me may favor another, and you, who is my student, would become my teacher. I know this. I believe this. I am humbled by this. In this classroom, in our classroom, I endeavour to de-centre myself, sharing hooks' (1994) assertion or perhaps aspiration, "we are all equal here [in our classroom] to the extent we are all equally committed to creating a learning context" (p. 153).

As the groups engage, I try to gauge when it is opportune to interrupt, and declare the end of the activity, by sensing when the conversation is beginning to wane or wander. I invite them to share then, table by table, each group speaks to two of their ideas. This round of sharing continues until all that wants to be said, is said. I take notes, typically recording the comments on a flip chart that, upon completion, is posted at the front of the room. I tell

them I will transcribe the recordings and distribute them in the second session and that as we begin each class, I will refer to them. I conclude the exercise by stating that the document created today is a living document that will live with us during our course. As will we as a community change, so too can our agreements.

This may appear relatively easy. However, for some if not many students, sharing what they expect from the course is a novel invitation, and with this lack of familiarity they are hesitant, even reticent to engage. There is also the challenge of achieving clarity, and understanding of the stated expectations in the context of an increasingly diverse assemblage. What, for example, is the meaning of respect, and moreover how is it enacted by each? I endeavour to understand what they mean by respect and how do I, and each of us in the class experience it and do it? Unpacking the suitcase of meanings takes time, and respect is but one of the suitcases that will have to be unpacked.

Eventually, all that has been said in the small groups, has also been said in the large group. And now I consider how what has been stated reflects what I believe is crucial to the development of a community of learning. If they are not visible, I add them to the list of conditions and criteria. The group agreements have changed, and evolved over the years however, I commonly ask for learners to agree to be present, patient, curious, courageous and compassionate, to honour difference, assume good intent, be patient, and maintain confidentiality. I know these are also a 'suitcase' needing to be unpacked which will take time. Experience has taught me this unpacking of meaning is important to building community, and so I will take the time.

Often creating a safe space is raised as a criterion for spaces associated with facilitating opportunities for learning. I recognize the notion the of a safe space is inherently problematic. It is problematic in its presumption of the possibility of attaining safety when I

cannot presume to know, or understand, or enact, what each and every person in any given moment in our class needs to be feel safe. I have recently been attending to the conception of ‘brave spaces’ offered by Arao and Clemens (2013), elaborated upon by Ali (2017) and described by Cook-Sather (2016):

Brave space, on the other hand, implies that there is indeed likely be danger or harm—threats that require bravery on the part of those who enter. But those who enter the space have the courage to face that danger and to take risks because they know they will be taken care of—that painful or difficult experiences will be acknowledged and supported, not avoided or eliminated. (p. 2)

Abandoning the notion of safe space and turning toward the notion of brave spaces, the attention to the language and sensitivities of brave spaces has proven beneficial. I endeavor to be consistent with these authors’ proposals, and attend deliberately to respect, to affirming the right for students to choose when, and how, to engage, and to appreciate the how we are each responsible to be mindful of the potential impact of our engagement (Ali, 2017; Arao & Clemens, 2013).

I do not speak to these criteria until the learners have spoken. If they have included these criteria, explicitly or otherwise, I do not need to add them. If, however, they have not done so, then I add them to the flip chart and speak to the additions as I have for each of the class contributions. At times, I will spend more time on curiosity as invaluable influential, and an important attribute influencing not only their capacity to learn, but also our capacity to learn from one another and from the everyday. And I often tell another story.

It was another class. A long time ago now. I had a student; his name was E. E; he was from Paris. One day, E approached me at the end of class. The second session of what would be five sessions. And he said essentially this: “Can I ask you a question? I have noticed something about you and I want to know if it is Canadian thing or a you thing?” To which I essentially replied, “I am not Canadian, I am from New Zealand, so it must be a me thing. What have you noticed?” He replied “You say “interesting” many times. Many times.” I do not recall what, or if, I said anything. Nor can I recall how I responded to his comment. I do however vividly remember what he said next. “Today, I counted, 41 times.” To which I recall, I laughed. Incredulous.

I tell my class that I was unaware of this behaviour. When I reflected on my behaviour, and why I may have developed this habit, or practice, as a typical response to learners, I discovered that uttering interesting afforded me an opportunity to both affirm the contribution, and yet, defer or even avoid, evaluation. So, with the telling of this story, I suggest to learners that they see the door to our classroom as a metaphor for opening their minds; opening the door, and leaving it open while in our room to allow themselves an opportunity to be with their thoughts, and similarly defer evaluation. Later, when as they leave, and the door closes behind them, they can, if they choose, move to sifting, sorting, judging and evaluating their ideas. I encourage them to see this as an opportunity, a luxury of sorts, perhaps unlike what is demanded of them, or they demand of themselves, daily.

I also speak of others I have encountered in other classes for whom English is an acquired language, maybe their second, third, fourth, or even, as was the instance with one of my students, their fifth language. I speak about how past learners have shared with me their feelings of fear, of self-consciousness, of anxiety, of worry at speaking in English out loud, in small, or large, groups. And then I talk about these students' achievements, of leaving their homes; travelling to Canada, enrolling, and engaging, in a post-secondary institution, learning, amongst many other things, a new language or building their skills in a new language. I invite them to feel good, feel positive, feel proud. I am envious because unlike me I know they speak at least two languages. I am envious of the multilingualism, and humbled by their courage.

I want to reassure those who are learning in a language other than their mother tongue that they are welcomed, and encouraged to engage in my classroom, and our conversation. Welcomed, wanted, and encouraged as much as those who are native English speakers. I want also for those students learning additional languages, to appreciably recognize their native language fluency as a competency they have in addition

to other competencies they bring to our classroom, and the program. I tell them that I understand that their English language fluency does not necessarily correspond to the fluency of their thought. I invite them to share with us, and teach us about their experiences from another place, but endeavour to do so without tokenizing, or burdening them.

In the classroom during this first session, and sometimes subsequently, I speak about the importance, and benefit of learning to appreciate differences in communication. I acknowledge that some of the struggles to communicate may be associated with language, but others may be more about preference, or what it is we choose to highlight when in conversation with another. There are many differences we share, and it is important to allow those to enrich, rather than enrage us, and to work together to build bridges of understanding across those differences. It is not only the information but the understanding that makes communication. I want them to know that. To believe that. And to live, and learn, in the spirit of brokering difference with bridges, not walls.

And now, we are typically nearing our first break, and I will tell learners that if they return from the coffee break, I will assume their agreement to our “agreements.” And the last task before the break is what I will call Administrivia. I review our schedule; start, stop, and break times and ask them to choose if they would like to shorten their lunch break, and leave a little earlier, at the end of the day. I share that my tendency is to break a little later for lunch, appreciating, after so many years of practice now as an adult educator, and experience as an adult student, the benefits of extending the morning session, and shortening the afternoon. I suggest that this schedule is tried for our first session, to be revisited, and reviewed at the beginning of the second session. I review also what I see as relevant location information; restrooms, computer labs, student lounge, water fountains, the bookstore, and other practical information specific to the location. I will also typically share

student recommendations for snacks, and lunch, and invite suggestions from the class. Instructions, for what to do in case of an alarm or other emergency.

I also invite and encourage them to make choices to support their ability to be present by, for example, choosing to stand instead of sit, to stretch when they need to, to use the restroom or simply leave the room. I invite them to attend to the multiple roles many of them may occupy (partner, spouse, parent, child, caregiver, volunteer, supervisor, manager, soccer captain etc.). While I inform them that I will solicit feedback formally, at the end of the day, I also encourage them to give me feedback at any time, particularly if their experience in our course is proving not to be of benefit to them. I remind them that misery loves company, and they will likely find companions for their concerns amidst their classmates however, if it is change they are seeking, I tell them that talking to each other will be less effective than talking to me. I can't change what I do not know needs to be changed, so I ask them to help me know. And then I remind them of the "agreements," and their choice to stay, and commit or not. We break, and I exhale. I have already given a lot of me to this experience, and it is only coffee break. So much of me is invested in, and given to each session. It is exhausting.

4.4 The Break

Teaching is arduous work. It requires not only our heads, but our hands, and hearts too. As others have attested to (e.g., Brookfield, 2015, 2017; hooks, 1994, 2003; Schoem, 2017), teaching asks of teachers that not only do they share their intellectual capabilities, and intellectual capital, but also their energy, enthusiasm, and emotions. Thus, to teach draws not only on what we know, but what we can do, and who we are. A lot is asked of us. With each give, of head, heart and hand, a little of me is lost. I choose to do so, to give all of me, in service of my students, but it is exacting and exhilarating and exhausting and inspiring. I have learned that to do what I am called to as an educator to care for students

demands I also care for me. Separation. Solitude. Silence. These are necessary devices for my well-being as an educator.

I am attentive, and keenly attuned to the group, informed by intuition, intelligence, and legacies from the destruction wrought in my childhood and youth. I see, hear, and feel the group. I am of the group. My eyes are wide open, but with only two eyes I know my vision field is limited. I stretch, and strain, at its limits. Who is doing what? How are they doing what they are doing? What are they not doing? What am I learning about each of them as they present themselves to me, and one another? I squint with my ears. Listening. Carefully. Deeply. I listen to what is said, and what is not said. I listen to the pause. The periods of silence. The sounds of tension, angst, energy, excitement, and joy. I hear it. I try to listen for what it is they want to be said, and understood. One does not always emerge tidily from the other.

I recall in my graduate studies delightedly alighting on the writing of Morton (1985) and her expression “hearing to speech” (p. 128). In a poetic passage shared by Keller (1988) the revelations of another who marvelled to Morton of her experience of being heard, “I have a strange feeling you heard me before I started. You heard me tell my own story” (p. 53). For me, this story of Morton, and her reflections, evocatively narrated my intentions in the classroom. To behave in such a way by both what I say, and don’t say, do, and don’t do, to create conditions where others too will be enabled to find their voice. Speak their unspoken. Hear their truth.

As a result of my studies, I am now also able to readily identify the importance of emotional intelligence (EI) in my educational endeavours. Support for the importance of EI, and specifically empathy, for educators is provided by Lees and Barnard (1999, as cited in Cherniss & Goleman, 2003) who concluded, “Teachers who are more aware of how

students feel in the classroom are better able to design a learning environment that suits students and better able to guide them toward success” (p. 41). Consistent with the assertions of Reuven Bar-On (2000) and Drew (2006), I am able to appreciate how each of the dimensions of emotional intelligence individually, and synergistically contribute to my perceived effectiveness as an educator. I am generally highly attuned to the emotional climate of my classroom, and broadly aware of, and sensitive to, the emotions, concerns, and needs of my students. I now characterize the explicit attention I afford to appreciating their context, lived experience, assumed anxieties, uncertainties, and expectations in my opening remarks as evidence of my social awareness. I attend carefully to their nonverbal cues, and consistent with the empathy competency associated with Goleman’s social awareness domain, I also “read emotional currents [and] pick up on nonverbal cues such as tone of voice or facial expression” (Cherniss & Goleman, 2003, p. 8). Later, in the afternoon session of Just One Day, I introduce EI to the students.

While I have my strength in relation to social awareness, there is an attending vulnerability. Paradoxically, I am both enabled and disabled. Abled by my ability to create connection, construct curriculum, and arrange classrooms that enable learning, and occasionally disabled by my inability to ignore these same cues.

What happened? I am still puzzling as to why I experienced the session so negatively. Why? What created the weariness that appeared as thoughts of the session weaseled into moments otherwise occupied. The tedium of it all sucked the marrow from the bones of my practice. I felt weak standing in front of the room. Unsteady. Unsure. Wobbly. I moved away. Off side, in their midst, at the back while they talked. Trying to hide in plain sight.

I was excited by a few, disappointed by many if not most. There were some diamonds in the coal pile. Or so I believed. I dug and sifted and blew. Nothing. I poked and prodded and pushed. Still nothing. But wait. I see a glimmer. A tremor of possibility startles me. Surprises me. Delights me. Possibility dances. I laugh giddily.

Thank you, Tony. It was brief but beautiful.

Brown walls, brown carpet, brown chairs, brown tables, everything is brown. I feel brown. Brown, dull, heavy. Dirty and reeking from the stench of apathy that hangs heavy in the room.

Why, I wonder, are you here? Why, are you here? And you? And you? You?

You are draped listlessly in your chair. A wriggler is beside you. And across from her, a stiff starched figure. Your eyes are open but unseeing. You have ears and you do not hear. You are not here. I know it. You know it. But let's pretend. I won't tell, if you won't.

My mind is a whirr of activity, buzzing with excitement about engaging in the experience of the course with those before me, the possibilities, and opportunities that are before them, and oh so curious about will become of each participant as we journey through our course together. I am also intrigued about how it is that I will teach them, from what I know, and how they will teach me to teach them. I am excited, and maybe a little anxious about the changes that I have already decided to make to the curriculum in response to what I have learned thus far about the expectations, and experiences of the participants. I believe I have opened my mind, am open minded, but experience has taught me that I too have biases, and prejudices, and habits of mind. I must be open to exploring, to stay curious.

As I write of this day, this one day, this one encounter, I am coming into knowing who I have become as an educator. There are the many whose teachings are woven into the tapestry of my practice. Teaching for me is an art of the heart. Born from the mind, and nurtured from the heart. And already, at the first break, my heart is full of affection for those I have only just met. Each time I fall in love, all over again. And this too, is both exciting, and exhausting. Falling in love. So, I too, am eager for the first break. And I try to escape quickly so that I can be alone.

I almost always take my first break at a local café. Only rarely am I joined by a student, most preferring the more populous coffee houses. I relish the solitude. Time to be

alone with my thoughts, to breathe, to be silent, to reenergize. I sip my coffee, an americano misto, and slowly walk back.

I am busy during the “break.” It is not really a break, not for me. It is an extension of the thinking that began on waking this morning. There is so much to think about. I am thinking about the people who are in my class, and of their introductions. I am thinking about what I have learned about who they are. I am thinking about what I have observed of them, individually, and collectively. I think about who thus far is in the light, and who appears to be in the shadows, or even unseen, unheard, thus far. I am thinking about how I will conduct the class after the break in response to what I have observed, heard and experienced. I am thinking about what if anything from the morning, seen, heard or experienced, do I need to comment on and/or attend to. I am wondering about how each will fare in our class, and how I might contribute to their experience, individually, and collectively. I am curious about how this group will create community, and how each will act to contribute to it, and their individual, and collective outcomes. I think about what I have learned already, and, almost always, there is something that makes me smile. I return almost always a few minutes late, but I know I needed the time, and I do not regret the stolen minutes.

4.5 The Settling

I recognize that some are watching the clock when I re-enter the room. I accept this. Without much of a pause, I request their attention. Sometimes I stand quietly in the middle of the room, sometimes I speak, loudly, sometimes I ring the triangle. As they are settling, I move about the room distributing handfuls of individually wrapped mints. An after coffee treat. I experienced this, the gifting of me as a student with treats from an instructor, for the first time ever as a student in a class with Rhonda (when she was my instructor at BCIT). I was surprised, and delighted to receive treats, mini chocolate bars, as I recall. I recall this gesture fondly. The fondness for me, aside from my affection for the chocolate, was a

fondness, an affection for the generosity, and hospitality, and nurturing she demonstrated. I do not know, and actually have never inquired, as to why she chose to gift us in this way. But that is how I experienced this gesture, as a gift, an act of caring, and nurturing. I vowed on that first occasion if I was to ever be in a similar role that I would ensure I emulated this. And I have honoured that vow. In every session I have ever facilitated, since I began in 1999.

I believe it is important to care for my students. The provision and distribution of treats is just one of many acts of caring by me for my students. In an article titled *Caring in Education*, Noddings (2005), identifying herself as a care theorist, argued for “caring relations as the foundation for pedagogical activity” (p. 3). Consistent with Joseph’s (2007) contention that “students’ need love, safety, freedom and guidance to be able to learn” (p. 83), Noddings (2005), in a later article, proposes that “how good (or bad) I [the learner], can be depends in substantial part on how you [the teacher] treat me” (p. 2). Kozulin, Gindis, Ageyev, and Miller (2003), substantiate Noddings’ (2005) claims for caring in education citing “a caring orientation” as characteristic of effective teaching (p. 323).

For me, Noddings’ (2005) steadfast belief in the centrality of caring relations in education is confirming. Her recognition of caring relations in the classroom as the “foundation for pedagogical activity” is also consistent with the assumptions of the tenets of the transformational teaching theory proposed by Rosebrough and Leverett (2011). I too believe that students are more likely to realize their capacity as learners, and benefit from their education, when learning is contextualized in relationships characterized by care, and offer my experience as a student to substantiate this supposition.

I thank them for returning, and remind them that by their return they have agreed to honour the “agreements” generated by the group. I then ask for questions. Occasionally,

there is one, or two, or a few. But not often. They are still relatively unfamiliar with one another, and with me. The traditional code of classroom conduct prevails. They are waiting on me.

And now, I distribute the detailed course information package, the result of my collaboration, and mentorship with my dear colleague Gail Sexsmith (thank you), and my education, in education. I have learned, for example, students benefit from knowing exactly what is expected of them, and required of them to be successful. As I am waiting for the packages to be distributed, I reassure them we will return to this information package, and its contents many times during our course. My intention at this time is to simply provide them with an overview of the package, and highlight what I have come to know as important. I ask learners to review the package in detail, and communicate to me any questions, comments or concerns they may have, at any time. The package contains my contact information (in multiple places), how to contact me by phone or text, the course outline, and relevant institutional policies (e.g., on attendance and plagiarism), and all of their assessments. I encourage them to contact me if they have questions and concerns, and to avoid wasting time wondering or worrying.

Next, I direct their attention to the course outline, the first few pages of the package. Utilizing BCIT's requisite template, I have detailed the course description, outcomes, evaluation criteria (I simply note its location, and state we will return to it momentarily) and select relevant BCIT policies, notably on accommodation, attendance, and academic integrity, and review these with the students. I ask students to note the addition to the attendance policy specific to our course, and the consequences for exceeding allowable absence limits. I have learned over time it is also important to familiarize students with the academic integrity policy, particularly plagiarism, and provide a simple explanation of what it means to plagiarize. I have also learned it is essential to be explicit about my expectation of

attribution, and citation for their assignments, and the consequences for failing to do so. Finally, I encourage for them to get assistance from myself, one another or the library if they are unsure. I know each class is typically comprised of a few students for whom this class represents their first foray into public post secondary education, and thus it is important to give them the information they need to ensure they are equipped, and protected from plagiarising from ignorance. I know too each class is typically comprised of several students who have been educated elsewhere in the world, and they arrive in our class with a different understanding of the ownership of ideas, attribution, and citation, and I need to both acknowledge my awareness of this potential difference in understanding, and reiterate the importance of adhering to the traditions of academia in our culture, and the attending institutional policies. I believe highlighting the policy, reviewing its contents, and providing examples for students to illustrate plagiarism is beneficial. I also believe that stressing to students the potential consequences of plagiarism, including failing not only the assignment, but the course, is necessary, and I hope a deterrent.

I return to the information package, and direct them to the section containing their assessments. I announce there are no quizzes, tests or exams of any kind in this course. There are always smiles, sometimes appreciative shouts, comments, and sighs of relief, even happiness, and joy. They tell me so. I am pleased that they are pleased. I have learned, with time, my learning outcomes, and students, are better served with assessments other than examinations (Fenwick & Parsons, 2009). I direct the students to the assignment section and highlight how for each assignment I have included a title, corresponding learning outcomes, rationale for the assignment, instructions, and a rubric. The assessments I employ have changed over the years; currently the assignments include five items: (a) weekly discussion questions (students are assigned a series of questions from which they must pick one to respond to and engage in discussion with their classmates the

following week),(b) weekly reflections, (c) an assignment requiring them to interview a person in a leadership role and prepare a brief reflection of their experience, (d) weekly self-assessments on engagement, and (e) a brief presentation on an article of their choosing, in small groups.

I encourage students to notice the varied options available to them for most of their assignments, all of which satisfy the prescribed criteria, and demonstrate learning. For example, students could submit an audio recording, a video, a creative work, or a written piece. There are exceptions--for example, the small group article presentations, but most other assignments can be submitted in a variety of formats. I share a story knowing that many students have been acculturated to what I will describe as traditional assessment measures to evidence learning; quizzes, tests, reports to name a few.

Many years ago now I was teaching this same course at this same campus, BCIT downtown, in a room on the fourth floor. I was reviewing the assignments, much as I am now, and describing what was then "the journal" that learners were required to submit to successfully complete the course. At the time it required learners to develop responses to a series of ten questions with each response approximately ½ to 1 page typed. At the end or in my description somewhere a voice shouted aloud from the back of the room, "do I have to write this thing?" And I remember thinking in that moment "duh, of course. You are attending BCIT." Fortunately, there was a speed bump between my brain and my mouth, creating a moment between thought and sound and I remember still now holding those thoughts in my head and asking "Why, what are you asking?" And without a pause he said, "cause I wanna mix you something."

I only wish I knew then what I came to know in a very short time and more deeply still as time has passed between then and now. That young man changed everything, no, not everything, but many things, for me. He ignited a revolution. And yet regrettably I don't remember his name. I did not think to remember his name. Because, I did not know the significance of the moment until much later. He continued expanding on his initial ask, telling me, and us, that he was a DJ and pursuing a career in music, and sound, and wanted to mix me a recording of both sound, and music, rather than writing a journal or paper. I recall that one or way another essentially I said "I am willing to try it."

And I still remember the day I received his disc (yes it was that long ago) and put it into my computer and looking out at the garden from my home office I heard, "Hey Gina ..." and in his own unique way he rapped his response to the assignment

teaching me, his teacher, of the efficacy of alternatives to writing to demonstrate learning.

Since that day, I have created opportunity for learners to submit their assignments in alternative formats. I tell learners their task is to complete the assignment, meeting all of the assignment requirements, prescribed learning outcomes, and evaluative criteria. How they choose to do so is for them to decide. I have had, for example, the journal assignment submitted as videos, collages, scrapbooks, floor size puzzles, multi-media creations, and more. I have had other assignments completed as videos, recordings on phones, audio-files, handwritten pieces sent as images through text, and other options likely a consequence of creativity, resourcefulness, individual limitations, and perhaps preferences. I receive predominantly typed papers, but each term I also do receive several assignments submitted in alternate forms.

In response to the above story, I receive appreciate comments from learners for the opportunity, freedom, flexibility, possibility, and relief about the relative absence of strictures. For some, however, the options are uncomfortable, even distressing. Freedom for one, is frightening for another. I appreciate that now. I came later to understand the significance of my choice to offer them choice. More than merely novel, or innovative, I soon learned to appreciate how these options were a way of contesting the hidden curriculum of the institution.

Hidden curriculum. Hiding from me too, until Deb Bartlette helped me to see. I still remember the article we were assigned to read *Peek a Boo: Hiding and Outing the Curriculum* (Margolis, Soldatkeno, Acker, & Gair, 2001), and the light it shone into the shadows. Returning to retrieve the paper from my bookshelf, I peruse the notes I penned for that course discussion, and the scribbles in the margins from the Margolis (2001) book. I see now my appreciation for the concept of hidden curriculum or, “hiding in plain sight”

(Margolis et al., 2001, p. 1). How can something be both visible, and invisible, or perhaps better written as visible, but not visible to me, or known to others but not known to me?

I write with some trepidation knowing that even now with years of education, and consideration, that I am still blinded by biases, privilege, and assumptions, and often unable to see what others see. But I also now see more, and know more. And what I know is, how much I don't, know. But I keep looking; it is hard to see even when shining a very bright light, if you don't know what you are seeking. This is the benefit of education. Of critical reflection. Of collegial conversation. I have needed others to help me see what I did not, "a hidden curriculum is not something one just finds; one must go hunting for it (Martin, 1976, p 139).

And now I rearrange the groups, using playing cards. I try to move students several times during the session, and in subsequent sessions, using varied mechanisms such as playing cards, numbering handouts, markings on their name cards, chocolate, gum, and more. Orchestrating their movement, randomly assigning them to assemble, and reassemble, with varied classmates throughout the session is beneficial. Many students (as did I, as a student), experience returning to class time and time again to sit in the same seat surrounded by others who also returned to sit in their same seat. With the exception of an energetic, and extroverted few who would introduce themselves, students would remain relative strangers to one another as I had in so many of my classes. So, this arranging and rearranging is another deliberate gesture to build community. It is not possible to be in community with strangers so I need to help them de-strange, and connect, and this is but one of the many opportunities that I must, and will, afford them.

And it is surprisingly effective as it requires learners to engage with others that they may not have otherwise, and perhaps, even avoided. Some enjoy, and appreciate it more

than others, who tell me how it feels disruptive to have to move themselves, and their belongings repeatedly in a day. They also tell me it is uncomfortable or perhaps worse, to repeatedly be with an unfamiliar other, a stranger. As the course progresses, I continue to shuffle them in an attempt to give each person an opportunity to engage with every other. I am not always successful; however, my intention is made explicit; generally, I receive appreciable reports from learners. And now, I need to transition to curricular content of the course, moving away from the experience of our learning to discuss what, as opposed to, how.

To begin our leadership development journey, I need first to discover how each participant envisions, and what they believe it is. To access their individual, and collective understandings, I ask each of the participants, in their assigned small groups, to share a story from personal experience. I have learned through lived experience, and from revered scholars, such as Freire (1998, 2000) that the lived experience, and wisdom acquired through those experiences should be acknowledged, affirmed, and ideally, utilized in the present educative endeavour. So, I want to know what they know, and what they don't know, and also discover how I might best bridge my knowing to theirs, their knowing to myself as instructor, and to other students. I try to highlight both similarities, and differences in their individual, and collective understanding, and when my perspective of leadership is reflected in their knowing. And I share with them what I have come to know through experience, learned, and lived. I tell stories, of my daughter, and others, teaching "leadership" through story, theirs, mine and others.

It is time for a break; I remind them of our agreed 45-minute break, and the return time. Those waiting for me are typically seeking reassurance they have understood the requirements correctly, that they have understood me correctly, and that they can be successful. Sometimes, there are also inquiries, or requests for absences associated with

special events, or work obligations, and these are negotiated along with obligations, and consequences. Occasionally, at some point during the first session, and sometimes during a subsequent session, a student will approach me expressing what I will name as fear. Fear. Anxiety. Uncertainty. These, and more, often felt as a consequence of their story of schooling. As noted, for some, this is their first return to formal education in some time (10, 20, or even 30 years). Almost all those seeking reassurance are men, although very occasionally, women also seek my support.

Some share troubling experiences of their former formal schooling with lackluster learning environments, impoverished experiences, and poor outcomes. They are anxious about their potential performance, and capacity for success, while others with similar stories of earlier schooling are more reticent, cynical, and even suspicious. Still others share relatively unremarkable stories of earlier apathetic schooling experiences with attending impoverished outcomes, and a subsequent resistance to the pursuit of any formal education. Returning or being compelled to return to the classroom is challenge to their identity of themselves as learners.

Adding to their shared history of schooling, is their employment history and working environments often vacant of offices, and desks, and chairs, and so prolonged periods of sitting, reading, and writing, are absent in their work experience, and represent additional adaptations demanded of them during our course. Completing the required reading is also, for some, daunting; the complexity of the writing as well as the amount of reading, and a level of language proficiency make some fearful, and uncertain. Still more troublesome for many, if not most, of these learners is successfully completing the requisite assignments for the course at least one of which necessitates creating a written report, an utterly alien experience for some.

I have empathy for these students. As I have testified to in the preceding pages I have experienced deleterious consequences as a student. I wish to help, not harm, my students. I seek to affirm their struggle, allay their angst, and support them to realize their potential as learners in our class. And yet, I really want to escape, because I am drained, and need to recover, restore, reenergize, for the afternoon. I need time alone. I do not want to talk. Not any more. I do not want to be with others. I want to be alone, in silence. I have managed to extricate myself from the learners, and excuse myself from those who remain, but not before checking with each, and every person that they require nothing more from me, and then I leave. Hurriedly.

4.6 The Escape: Lunch

I typically go first to the instructor's centre, located on the second floor. I dig in my bag for my institutional identification card without which I will be unable to enter the instructor's center. Found, and swipe. The door lock clicks in recognition of my electronic identity, and it opens. I am allowed to enter.

I reflect on the morning. There is a lot to think about, always. There is the space between what I had envisioned upon waking, and preparing for the morning, and the experience of our course as it had occurred, and what may come. There is the content of the course that I have covered thus far, what was planned, and missed, and unplanned, and enacted. There is the content that will comprise our afternoon, and considerations for its presentation, in response to the particulars of the learners I have encountered this morning. There is also curiosity, and a wee bit of anxiety about what the afternoon may bring.

I am also thinking of the people, and what I have learned of them, thus far. I am wondering who I have noticed, who has caught my attention, the reason for this, and how I can best engage, and encourage them. I am also cognizant of those who I sense are

troubled, and those who may be troubling. I sense a something they are bringing with them; it is not more, or less, than any other student, for every one of the learners has a story, and the story of each is unique, and significant. I rarely know the specifics of the something but I sense its presence. It could be crippling anxiety, financial woes, homesickness, abusive partners, ill children, loneliness, depression, health issues, and toxic workplaces. I know too because of experience there will be more than one who is struggling with mental illness, and I have compassion for them because I too struggle with mental illness. And I reflect on what it is that I will do with what I have sensed.

Encountering these learners, I rely on instinct, and experience informed by many years in the classroom, and more so by my many years in varied roles in community-based agencies, providing support, and services to children, youth, women, and families in crisis. Without this experience, confidence, and competencies, I would be ill equipped to engage with many of the issues that confront me in the classroom. Although invaluable, my many years of training, and education in adult education was inadequate in facilitating the development of what I now believe are necessary characteristics, capabilities, and competencies for an adult educator: courage, confidence, humility, empathy, authenticity, flexibility, and vulnerability. These are all necessary competences for an educator. I think too that to be a good educator I need to care. I need to care about my students, and about their experience of me, of one another, of our content and of our course. "At its best, teaching is a caring profession" (hooks, 2003, p. 86).

Well Suited

"You are well suited to your profession" a student named H wrote to me recently. These comments on a card given to me in class, following a very late evening telephone conversation earlier in the week, H at the end of her shift and me on my soft couch at home. How am I "suited" I wonder? Suited is not I assume intended to describe my wardrobe. Suited is what then? A googled meaning: "right or appropriate for a particular purpose, or situation"

How am I suited then I wonder? Because of my education? Experience? Training? Or is it not about what I am, but who I am? Is my suitability about my soul, perhaps? Is it because I care? I truly do. I care about them while they are with me and for some for thereafter and fewer still for forever.

I care and they soon seem to know that. I am humble. I am. Humble and insecure. But it is the latter that guides me in my work. I think. An openness to the students and an intention and effort to be responsive. Is that the suit that I am suiting? What else could it be? A willingness to be vulnerable. To invite vulnerability means I too must be willing to get naked. Is it that I let the messiness of me be seen so they too may be willing to be and get messy. Or is it that I am willing to take risks, step outside the lines, step on the lines, screw the lines. Or is it that I really want to see the best in and for them? That I truly try to encourage the uniqueness of each to be found and seen. I want that. I want that for each of them. I want them to believe in themselves. I want them to see and know and feel, really feel, and believe they are each unique with a special something that is only about them and of them. I want each of them to know that one person believes in them. I lived too much of my life knowing that no one believed in me.

Teaching is “frequently a glorious messy pursuit [...] our lives as teachers often boil down to our best attempts to muddle through the complex contexts and configurations that our class represent” (Brookfield, 2015, p. 1). I have crafted a compilation of a typical session, but depicting a day as “typical” is disingenuous. It fails to capture the daunting and exhilarating, reality of adult education. There really is no typical because the content changes, it is always evolving, with no two sessions alike. And while the content of the course is introduced by me, it is shaped by the learners. And each time the learners are different; they are different, so the content is shaped differently. I must be attentive, open, and responsive to the differences as they emerge. “To perform with excellence and grace, teacher must be totally present in the moment, totally concentrated and focused” (hooks, 2003, p. 14).

And for me it is the attentiveness to these matters, and realities, that contributes to the exhaustion. It is simultaneously energizing, exciting, and exhausting, to be attending so mindfully, and for hours on end.

4.7 The afternoon: Welcome back!

And I am watching the clock and see it is time. It is too soon, but it is already time for me to return to the classroom. I have to ready the room, and gather the supplies necessary for the afternoon. There is usually at least one student, and often more, in the room when I return. I get busy immediately numbering their name tents/cards to rearrange the learners into new groups. I am also busy gathering, and distributing the large post-its for our first exercise after lunch.

As soon as the time of our return is on the clock, I ask learners to join me outside our room for a brief activity. I have over the years used an assortment of soft, and squishy, balls but most recently I am using three brightly coloured hacky sacks bought at a roadside stand during my recent mission trip to Colombia. I smile as hold them in my hand. They are a happy reminder. I assemble the learners into a large circle, and share with them the instructions of the activity intended to help build community through familiarizing themselves with the names of the others in our course. It is, basically a ball toss.

When giving the instructions for the activity I move to the middle of the circle, and inform learners the intention of the exercise is to help them know the names of their classmates. I tell them I don't expect them to know, but this exercise will help them to know. I tell them while I recognize that some will have been taught, as was I, that pointing is rude, I ask them to allow, and forgive this behaviour, for this one exercise. I commence the activity by joining the circle, pointing to one of my students, instructing them to say their name (even if I know it), repeating loudly when they do, and throwing the ball to them at the same time. I instruct the student who is now holding the ball to point to a peer, say their name aloud and throw the ball to them. Moving to the outside of the circle, I, too, of course am observing, re-learning, and confirming the names of each of the participants. Inevitably, there is one, and sometimes several missed, or dropped throws, which thus far have created only a

momentary pause while the ball is retrieved, during which I offer a supportive comment to both the thrower, and the receiver. I allow the activity to continue for a few minutes before tossing another ball into the activity, to which I add a third ball shortly thereafter. There are now three balls in rotation. I allow the activity to continue for 10–15 minutes, depending on the size of the group, the rapidity with which the learners appear to be acquiring, and recalling the names of their classmates, and the relative equity of opportunity for engagement in the activity, as a thrower, and receiver. As we walk back to the room I hear the appreciative comments of the students. They appreciate the opportunity to learn the names of their classmates and also, perhaps to be known themselves, and to re-energize after lunch, often a time of fatigue.

I wish to acknowledge Rhonda's influence on my practice. It was she who initially helped me to see the significance of non-verbal communication when communicating across cultures guiding me to, for example, replace pointing with a finger, to gesturing with an open palm. A small, but potentially, not insignificant difference when communicating with people for whom a pointed finger may be offensive. Another point of awareness, again small, but potentially not insignificant, is that of proximity, of the distance between people, and the attending intercultural differences (Hall, 1966). I am mindful of my space relative to learners, and what I may be inadvertently, and implicitly communicating to participants. I am, for example, mindful of how my relative proximity to participants may, for example, be experienced as intrusive, and thus intimidating or inhibiting. It is another small effort of many I will make as I engage with them individually, and collectively, and I hope conveys a positive regard, and respect for my students.

Another example to illustrate my respect for learners is how I respond to learners seeking, or appearing to need assistance. I am mindful of where I am standing relative to the student who I am assisting. I may lower myself into a chair if one is available, or crouch

down so our eyes are level to one another. I will ask if I can come closer if I need to see, or read, or write, something. I do not touch another learner's belongings without asking their permission, even something as simple as turning a page in their handout package, writing a note, or instruction, on a handout, or their page. I am mindful of making, and maintaining eye contact, and mindful too, of how they are responding to my eye contact. I recognize there are intercultural differences associated with eye contact, and individual preferences also. What is important to me is that I attend to these differences. Small actions, big intentions.

And I am increasingly conscious as to how these many small, and subtle, acts are individually imperceptible. Nevertheless, I believe that word by word, and act by act, both said and not said, done and not done, I help to create a space for learners that is experienced as respectful, inviting, supporting, encouraging and I hope, inspiring.

But back to my content. We are embarking on a segment on emotional intelligence. The term emotional intelligence (EI) was originally defined as a specific intelligence describing individual variations in the cognitive ability to process emotional information and to relate emotional processing to a wider cognition (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Later, these authors revised their definition of EI to a hierarchy of abilities, in this order: the ability to perceive emotion, to integrate emotion to facilitate thought, to understand emotions, and to regulate emotions to promote personal growth (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 1999). Comparably, Reuven Bar-On (1997), a psychologist, and prominent researcher in EI, employed a broader definition, describing EI as being concerned with effectively understanding oneself and others, relating well to people, and adapting to and coping with the immediate surroundings to be more successful in dealing with environmental demands. Bar-On (1997) conceptualized EI as consisting of several related dimensions: intrapersonal abilities, interpersonal abilities, adaptability, and stress management abilities. Goleman (1995), another prominent researcher of EI, described it as the ability to recognize and

regulate emotions in ourselves and others. Goleman mapped out four domains: self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship management, and the corresponding competencies.

I initially stumbled on the notion of EI, and specifically the work of Daniel Goleman (2005), during the Provincial Diploma Program. Intrigued by my initial discoveries in the literature, and popular media, I continued to explore EI during my master's program researching the relationship between EI, and leadership effectiveness in higher education, and beyond.

For many, actually experience has taught me, most, of the learners, this will be an introduction to the topic of EI. After many years of searching and stumbling, I have finally happened upon an activity that has thus far proven to be very effective in facilitating students acquisition of the notion of emotional intelligence and moreover, frankly persuasive in illustrating the importance of EI. I have modified the activity over time and now am satisfied with it. Essentially, I instruct learners to collectively brainstorm a list of characteristics and competencies that they would use to describe an admired leader -someone that they know personally and write each descriptor on a single post-it note. After a few minutes I place three post it notes on the wall, each representing one category, I, for intelligence or wisdom, E, for emotion (expressed by the leader or experienced by them in response to the leader), and T, for task or behaviour (an observable characteristic, or competency). The students are asked to place each post it generated by their group with the category they most closely associate it with (T, I, or E). Of no surprise to me, but often incredulous to many of the students, is the overwhelming number of the post-its they elect to associate and post with E, emotion. Once all of the post-its have been placed by the group I ask them to return to their small groups and make meaning of what they see asking them something like "what meaning do you make of this? What does this tell you?" Despite previous protestations of

many to the contrary, the colorful display of post-its along the wall is a vivid visual of the potential significance of emotions for leadership, and, in the workplace. Of course, it is not me who names this significance, but the participants.

For some it is simply a confirmation of their experience, and what they have intuitively come to know as counting in the workplace, and more specifically for leadership. For others, this exercise is revelatory, and still for others, revolutionary. I am always delighted to observe the reactions of what I would describe as surprise, and dare I write, delight, in their new knowledge. It is elating, and inspiring, to have the opportunity to open a door for another, to expand what they know, and perhaps even more importantly, what they know about themselves.

After a few minutes, as with almost all of the small group discussions in our course, the small group is invited to share highlights, and insights from their discussion with the larger group. As I proceed around the room, inviting a representative of each group to share, I am cognizant of who has been chosen. Having observed the learners for more than half a day, I am noticing who appears to more readily engage, speak more frequently, and at more length than others, who appears to have more experience, life or work, they are able to reference in the discussions, who appears more confident when speaking. These are but a few of the things I am noting as I observe the discussion. I often instruct the groups to select a speaker to represent the group, and sometimes, I select the person who is to report back to the large group. In this opening session however, I try to afford an opportunity for everyone who wants to speak; to speak, however, for some, is not always easy or possible. But, that is my intention.

I am cognizant of how I respond to each offering; my response is public, and thus all of the others in the room are learning from me, not only by what I say in my response but

what I do, how it is that I respond. It is important to me that the contribution itself is recognized, and appreciated. It is less about the correctness of the contribution than it is the contribution itself that I attend to. And not just the content I am seeking to recognize, and appreciate, but also the contributor. Without the contribution, there is no conversation. Without conversation there is no community. For learning to occur I believe there needs to be conversation and community. So, I want to appreciate the contribution in hopes of encouraging further contributions. In hopes of facilitating learning I also seek to find something in the contribution to recognize as of potential significance to the topic, and how their contribution is reflected in, or echoes, what has already been said.

And this takes time. I sometimes fear at the end of a discussion it has taken too much time. This is a constant tension between breadth, or depth. Do I cover fewer topics in more depth, or more topics with lesser depth? And how to facilitate the conversation, to not only achieve the specific outcome associated with the activity or exercise, and ensuing discussion, but to create, and sustain, the culture of community in my classroom. The connections between the learners, and between the learners and me, are still relatively fragile. It is also of course about being respectful of the individual who is speaking, and of all those who are listening. It is about their learning, and the learning of the group. It is a constant tension that endures for the duration of the course. It has been almost twenty years now that I have been teaching, and it is ever present in each endeavour. I wonder when, or if, this tension will ever cease to be; perhaps it is something that I should not seek. Or perhaps this is about something else entirely, a cherishing of the precious possibility inherent in each encounter. As Palmer and Zajonc (2010) ponder,

Semester after semester, I watch with delight as we take a journey together, a journey whereby we hear our souls, breathe in silence, cherish stillness and learn from one another in the most enduring ways. Our journey is a dance, a conversation, a celebration of the heart, and a sacred moment in the process we call education.
(p. 92)

We are now entering into a deeper conversation about EI. Commonly I introduce a topic, and will provide what my lovely colleague Gail Sexsmith describes as a theory burst, just a wee bit of theory, and information. At this time, I am providing the class with an overview of EI, and the theories of Goleman (2005), and Bar-On (1997, 2000). It is brief, less than thirty minutes, and I conclude by providing them with additional references, and resources should they be interested in extending their learning. And then I pause, and give the class an opportunity to digest, and discuss, what I have just presented. Sometimes the discussion is in the form of an activity, or exercise but, more, and more frequently it is a conversation that I invite them to have, first in small groups, and then in the large group.

In my earlier years of practice, I created, and conducted a lot more activities, games and, experiential exercises. I have many plastic bins in my office, filled with materials for these activities that have remained unopened for years now. I do appreciate the value of experiential exercises, and games, and the importance having them correctly employed. In my earlier years of practice, I employed them frequently, enchanted both by the respite they typically afforded me coupled with the apparent enjoyment of many participants. And while most of these activities were employed with the intention of connecting them to our outcomes, students may have benefitted more, had I been more thoughtful in my choices or how I integrated it with our curriculum.

As I continue to reflect, write and re-write these pages, I am becoming more cognizant of how my beliefs about teaching, and learning are layered with meaning. Layers, and layered from years of learning, studying, students, teachers, and teaching, enriched by experience has yielded the fertile ground on which I stand as an educator. Sifting through the compost, I see more recent years as composed of classes where dialogue-in its many iterations has assumed primacy in my practice. Inarguably, turning away from these, and towards a more dialogic practice has emerged from my continued study of its possibility, and

my personal penchant for dialogue. I am much more aware and articulate about my affection for, and employment of dialogic pedagogies, and their possibilities for learning. And I am also more intentional about how I do so. As I write this, I reflect on all that I have come to know as a consequence of my education. I know more now. I know more, so I can do more. Do more, and do better, for my students.

And now, shifting gears, I move us along, in hopes of helping them to appreciate how the notion of EI is likely of everyday significance to each of them. I return to the presentation slides, and arrive at a slide titled, Anger Mountain (this is a representation of the stress response otherwise known as the flight or fight syndrome). I review with them the physiological response to stress (depicted in the image of the mountain) and its correlation to our response in the moment. In a brief lecturette, I share with them my powerful experience of learning this model, and how it gave me a better understanding of my conflict response, and some insight into the youth with whom I was working. It allowed me to appreciate my response to conflict as a legacy of my childhood, and youth, and more specifically my parents' conflict response, which was explosive anger from my father, and silent acquiescence, and conciliation, from my mother. I shared how through that session on Anger Mountain, I became enlightened as to my inability to effectively engage in conflict. More importantly I also learned, and share with them, how I could interrupt my initial typically ineffective response, and do something differently, and often, more effectively.

With that being said, and shared, I ask them to proceed, one by one, to discuss in their small groups a series of reflective prompts.

- Conflict is
- I learned from my family about conflict
- When in conflict I usually ... (think, feel, do)
- When in conflict I would like to

I remind them, as I typically do when inviting them to participate in any exercise and asking them to share ideas, information, beliefs, stories, about themselves, that they have the right not to participate, and to choose what they wish to share in response to the questions being asked of them. This is important in creating a space for students conducive to learning, to affirm that they have the option to choose how they wish to engage in the exercise that may afford some semblance of safety for some students. I have observed over time, there are varying propensities for disclosure from students, some appear more willing to be vulnerable, to disclose, while others are initially more reserved, more reticent, even resistant. This will change over time, as our course continues, with many appearing increasingly inclined to disclose as our course continues, nevertheless, of course, the variability persists. After a brief period of time, usually 15 minutes or so I signal an end to the small group discussion. Again, as previously described how I do so will vary, but end it I do. And I ask the group for any insights or pearls of wisdom gleaned from the discussion.

Asking for these, insights or pearls of wisdom is often greeted by silence, and so I wait. It is important to wait. Waiting because someone may wish to respond but need time. Sometimes I see, and sense hesitation, someone who wants to speak but is hesitant, and perhaps silenced. The reasons are as varied as the people I have encountered, but it is there. The hesitation. I see it. I sense it. And I invite them to voice, by inviting them to share their thoughts. Sometimes there is an emptiness I sense to which I add a correction saying something like, “maybe asking for insights or pearls of wisdom is asking too much, anything, does anyone have anything?” and there is laughter, and a hand, and then another, and another.

And there is attention necessary in responding to the hands in the air. Who do I invite to share, and in what order? And what of those who have something to share, something that is potentially beneficial to not only them but others, but who are not inclined to raise

their hand, ask or perhaps even compete for the opportunity to be heard? And then there is the clock, menacing as it is, its hands ruthlessly moving too quickly towards the end of class time. The tyrant of time that won't be ignored. It influences each of the decisions that I must make, only one of which is the time that I can afford to allow for the debrief of the small group discussion.

I am inclined to typically iterate the names of the people who are attached to the hands I see in the air, in the order that I see them rise, and proceed to share. I am also cognizant of those who are less inclined to share in the large group, and so may ask them to offer their thoughts before others who do so more readily. I am not averse to making explicit statements acknowledging, and appreciating the willingness of a particular participant to be too often a representative for their group, and asking another to assume the task. I am also observing the other students, watching for cues to indicate a desire for sharing, a leaning in, a hand gesture, a marked change in facial expression. And seeing any of these among other postural changes, I may invite the student to speak by saying something like, "Robyn, you appeared to have a thought in response to Salim's idea of," or "Sam, I saw your mouth drop when Volka said" I want learners to recognize I am paying attention, and I am trying to encourage the engagement of everyone. I am cognizant it is not only those who are perhaps more ready, or even able to voice, who have something from which we can learn.

I am remembering the last time I taught this course, and the young man I encountered. He began the first day sitting in in the back corner of the room. From the beginning of the day, but particularly after lunch, was seemingly occupied by his laptop, both reading on the screen, but also moving about his mouse, and typing on his keyboard. He was not loud nor disruptive, if you don't experience such behaviours as disruptive, but I do. As a strategy, I had learned to move in closer proximity to those engaging in disruptive behaviours, which often yielded the desired effect, an end to the disruptive behaviour. This

appeared effective with this participant, as he would stop looking at his screen, and typing on the keyboard, and would appear to give attention to his quad mates as I moved, and stayed in closer proximity to his group. However, after a few minutes, I would leave to circulate around the room, and the next time I looked in his direction he appeared to again be disengaged. I would again return to be in closer proximity to him, and we would repeat the pattern previously described. At the end of the day, among the last things said to the group, was “Shaz, may I please see you for a moment?”

And, although soon thereafter there were a few folks waiting to talk to me, I walked to the back of the room, and stood near Shaz, waiting for the other members of the small group to leave, thus affording some privacy. Many, if not most of the learners, were still mingling about, gathering their belongings. A few stayed standing at the front of the room, waiting for me to return there. I chose to address him in the room, rather than ask him to leave, and speak with me outside in the hallway. This was the first session, and I wanted him to hear my reflections, and concerns, as less formal, as an invitation, rather than retribution.

And I shared with him my observations of him being occupied with his computer, rather than with his group, and the activities, and exercises, of the group. I acknowledged that while there is not a participation mark assigned to our course, there is an evaluation of engagement. I remarked on, and reminded him of, the group agreements, particularly the expectation of attention and participation of all the learners, and his responsibility to live the agreements. I spoke of my expectations of engagement in general, and in particular (what for me is representative of engagement). I asked him to help me understand his behaviour and what I observed, and assumed. Perhaps, I am mistaken? I have been so before. Essentially, he attempted to confirm his engagement despite the appearance of being occupied by his computer, apologized for his behaviour, and committed to engaging

differently in the subsequent session. I thanked him for his time and for listening and for his willingness to do something differently the next time.

These conversations are never easy, although certainly getting easier. I am more ready and able to address troubling behaviours in the class, both individually, and collectively. Sometimes, it is individually, as just described with Shaz. Sometimes, however, it is collectively that the behaviour must be addressed. The group, for example, failing to honour an agreed principle of sharing air time, or an experience of a general tension or malaise in the group, or an incident of potentially offensive behavior, or humour. These have all occurred. I believe I have become both more competent, and confident, in addressing issues in my classroom as they arise. Certain about what counts for me in my classroom, and is conducive to learning, and willing to wade in, and do what I believe is needed, from me to invite and encourage that. I am compelled to do so in my commitment to community for our classroom.

Are you here?

I see you sitting – your eyes are open- but you are not awake. Your eyes are open but you are not seeing. You are unseeing. Blind to your life.

You are here in body. Pieces of you are here. But you forgot to bring all of you. Some of you was left behind from where you came. Pieces of you are with your lover. Your heart is with her.

I invite you to join us. Eyes open. Mouth moving. But you have declined my invitation. I watch you. I listen to you. your body tells me some of what you have not. Not yet.

Why I wonder? Is it me? is it you? is it another? The others? Why won't you lean in? Why won't you listen ... really listen?

I watch you look ahead but not seeing. What are you wanting to see? What is pulling at you? What is holding you? I wish I could know. I wish I knew

I see you. Do you see me?

Although our conversation on EI is not yet complete, it is time for another coffee break.

4.8 The End is Near: Weariness Descending

Phew! I am feeling very weary now. Always. My phone's power is in the red zone, telling me when I need to turn it to power saving mode. I savour the few precious minutes of space, I am afforded during the too brief break. The demands are lessened, but still present. I have just over one hour left and, as is all too familiar for me, I have more material than time. This is always the way. It is an ongoing struggle.

I try to turn off for the precious few minutes the break gives me. I leave the room promptly deferring learners who want to talk to me until after class. I need the time. I too am in the red zone, dangerously low on energy, with still a lot required to get me to the end of our session and then, invariably, to respond to the several learners who will ask for time with me after our class concludes. Away from the room I am thinking about what can be achieved with the remaining time, and perhaps even more importantly, what I need to tell them to ensure they are effectively prepared to complete the required assignments in the interim. It is time for me to return now. The clock is moving so much faster than I at this late

hour of the afternoon. I slowly gather energy as I get closer to the classroom, and taking a final deep breath I cross the threshold to my room.

Although it is only the end of the first session, the tense, stilted, silence of the morning has been transformed. I can hear the cacophony of conversation pulsing from our room evidence of the burgeoning ease, and relationships emerging from our efforts of the day. Witnessing strangers of only eight hours ago becoming familiar is a wondrous happening. Wondrous. Warming. I am warmed by it. Energized by it. I pass out a few more treats to the group, “lollies,” my Nono would say. I smile, and try to catch their attention. It is harder now. The day has been a demanding one for many, and they too are weary. Many are unaccustomed to sitting for any length of time. Many have not been engaged in formal education for an extended period of time, others are unfamiliar with, and challenged by my requirements of them as learners. More have never engaged in the reflective thinking I have asked of them even this first session, and still more from not only the demands of the day, but the realization of the continued demands this course will place on their already limited resources. Regardless of the reason, I see, and sense their weariness. For some it is written on the pallor of their faces, and their slumped bodies, while others exclaim aloud their exhaustion. Some are weary as a consequence of their active engagement throughout the day and many tell me that the experience invited them to engage in ways that they have not done so elsewhere. And, in addition to the demands and drains of the day, in stark contrast to the morning, most of them are engaged in animated conversation with one or more of their classmates, with some sitting and talking in their assigned groups, while others have moved elsewhere in the room to connect with a classmate.

Eventually, however, each is seated in their temporarily assigned seat, the chatter ceases and I begin again. It is later than I anticipated, or hoped for, and there are many hands up when I ask if anyone has questions. The learners appear anxious. Or so I sense.

They want to review, and confirm, what is required of them in the space between this session, and next, and what is required for the next session. I review with them again the information outlined in the assignment package and anticipate some of the questions from learners who have come before this group. Although I have detailed instructions in the information package, it appears to be helpful when I speak them aloud. I remind them of the evaluation sheet for each assignment detailing the breakdown of marks assigned to each component. Surprisingly, each time I distribute and review this package with learners, more than one student will inquire about preference for font, font size and spacing. With one exception, these questions about font and so on are irrelevant. I remind them there are no marks assigned or awarded for creativity, formatting or presentation. I emphasize I am interested in learning what they think about, whatever it is they have been asked to think about, and moreover, if they copy anything, from anywhere, or anyone, at all, they must provide proper attribution, otherwise they may fail the assignment and potentially the course. It is a repeat of the information on plagiarism I provided to them at the beginning of our day.

And, of course, I have a story to tell them. As I write this, I realize, just how many stories there are. I tell them of my experience, of being in my graduate program. I was in my second year of my master's program, and we were assigned by our professor, Deb Bartlette, a series of reflective journals. In short, my first journal was returned to me with a request for a revision, or resubmission. I can't recall specifically what was written, but do remember feeling that I had failed the assignment. Or so that was what I experienced in the moment. A failure. And that is what I tell my students. As I have testified to earlier, Deb was not failing me on this assignment; she was simply encouraging me to turn away from the voices of others, and toward my own. To trust my voice. I think, no, I know, that my students, many of my students, appreciate, and perhaps even enjoy, hearing the story of their instructor having

an assignment returned to them with a request for revisions. It is reassuring, I think. I tell them I was a second-year graduate student who lacked confidence, and thus depended on a legion of scholars, experts, and others, I deemed infinitely more capable, more deserving than I. Then, and still sometimes now too, I can appreciate students may similarly misunderstand and struggle with my feedback. I take great care with my written comments. I also appreciate how some may struggle with completing their assignments independently, relying only on themselves. And yet, in assuming a leadership role in the workplace by default, desire or direction, they will inevitably encounter an instance and likely many instances where it will be necessary for them to trust, in the absence of any other, their capabilities. As such, they can see this course, and specifically the assignments, as an opportunity to develop their self-confidence.

And I continue to answer questions, until there are no more questions. I look at the clock, and it is just after four o'clock. There is no time for us to meaningfully engage in another segment, and this is what I share with them. I relay to them that I have two tasks for them to complete, and upon their completion, they can leave. The first exercise I ask of them is a simple formative evaluation. I provide learners with a small index card, and ask that they write on one side a plus sign (+) and on the other side, a negative sign (-) to communicate with me their positive and negative experiences of the day. They do not put their names on the cards. I always share these evaluations at the next session; I do not edit the comments, rather, I recite them verbatim. I also share whatever response I see as appropriate from me, as the instructor. I have on occasion been surprised by what a student/s has shared, for example, the negative impact of something said, or done, by myself or another, in the class. In almost all instances, I suspect I would have remained ignorant to this experience had I not deliberately sought their feedback, and afforded them anonymity.

It is hard seeing comments of critique on paper, and hearing them. But it is important to know how their learning may have been negatively impacted by their experience of the course on that day. Sometimes I make changes, we make changes, in response to a comment, such as adjusting the time we stop for lunch, or encouraging more accountability in the small group discussion so they are attending to the directions for the activity. Sometimes it is simply about me providing information, or clarification on an assignment, or explanation of a choice of an activity. Sometimes the comments are more critical, more controversial, more difficult, and compel me engage the group in conversation. For example, there was a participant who was offended by some of what were perceived to be stereotyped sexist comments by some of their classmates. But, there has been more than one comment, and one card, that has led me to stand in front of the room, and apologize. For example, I recall a participant objecting to, finding offensive, my reference, if memory serves me correctly, to characterizing a difference as schizophrenic. So, I apologized for an inappropriate word choice to describe the difference or separation, and shared a little snippet, of my family story of mental health. All of this of course intended to affirm an absence of judgement associated with mental health, and those who suffer from it.

The other task that I ask of them is to complete their assigned self-evaluation, attached to the discussion question assignment, and associated with their engagement. I do not assign marks for participation, nor attendance, and have not for many years now. I do however require students to evaluate their engagement in the course. Truthfully, I am unsure as to when, or how, this idea emerged, but believe it is likely a consequence of my increasing sensitivity to the many variables influencing how students engage in our experience, and their learning, and moreover how it is enacted each session in my classroom. I require students to assign themselves a mark for each of the four components comprising their engagement in our course; preparation, curiosity, critical thinking, and

facilitation (including how they facilitated the engagement of their classmates). I require them to not only assign a numeric value but provide examples to support their assessment. I acknowledge aloud many, if not most, will experience this assignment as challenging. Many have little, to no experience, of the critical self-assessment I am requiring of them, and some struggle each week to complete their self-assessments, although fewer with each passing week. I empathize with their struggle, and encourage them to embrace the opportunity to assume the ownership of the assessment of their own performance.

I assure them that their final grade in this assignment will, in essence, be determined cumulatively. If their later assessments are better, so too will be their final grade. I see, and hear, what I would describe as relief, when I say this. Tentative smiles, nods, sighs. Students begin to write. Some rapidly, some hesitate, some sit quietly, thinking, I assume. I feel myself exhale. It is done. I am no longer needed in the front of the room. Weariness washes over me. I begin to slowly, quietly, gather my belongings scattered, and strewn, across the front tables. Books, paper, pens, felt pens, tape, post it, coffee cups, food wrappers, candy and treats, binders. An assortment of items in unsightly disarray. Soon, too soon, there is someone before me, needing something from me. And there is never one. And as I stand near the front of the room, talking with the learners gathered there, responding, reassuring, encouraging, confirming, inquiring, assisting; others are leaving. Most call out as they walk by, “thank you,” “take care,” “awesome,” “great class,” “see you next week,” “have a good week,” “thank you,” “thank you,” “thank you.”

And eventually the room is emptied. The end.

It is just me. And the clock. Although our session ended at 4:30pm, it is now nearing 6:00 pm. 6:00 pm, and I am only now, finally, alone. I sit down in the chair, and, sit. Sit,

breathe, and survey the room. Very slowly I replay the day, from the beginning as I abstractly repack my materials. I am very weary now. I want to go home. Shower. Be still.

My hands are full as I leave the room. So too, are my head, and heart.

I dim the lights as I leave the room until the light is no more. The room is dark and so too is this session. Dark. Done.

The elevator door slides silently open. It is empty but for me, and my too many bags.

First floor. Exit. Turn right. Smile, and nod to security. Push the button, pause. Grudgingly the door opens. With a tug, I pull my wheeled suitcase over the transition. Tile gives way to stained concrete. Parkade elevator. Push the button. Pause. Enter. Turn left. Push the button. Pause. Wait. Grinding, I hear the elevator approaching. Haltingly, the doors slide open. It too is empty. I enter, and turn around. Push the button. Pause. Too slowly it begins to descend. It slows to a stop, and the doors slide open. One more button. One more push. Pause. The door jerks open. I see my car. Weighted by the bags on my shoulders, I slowly pull my suitcase across the cement garage floor. It all feels so heavy.

I heave the bags into the trunk. Opening the door, I wearily drop into my seat. Locking the door, I put my head back, and sigh, breathing deeply. I nudge out of the parkade onto the busy street.

Seymour Street. Turn left.

I am going home.

4.9 The Way Home

I have a long road to travel home. The highway is relatively clear. It will be an easy drive home. I am preoccupied with the events of the day, my discoveries, delights, and

doubts. There is a lot to think about. And I will return to this class many times before I am again with my students in our room. Fortunately, today although not an easy day was certainly easier. Easier than other days that I have encountered, and will if I continue to teach, encounter again. The days that char your confidence, ignite doubt, fuel fear, seed shame, and leave me wondering, and wounded.

On Nothing

Sometimes,

nothing goes right.

Nothing.

Not the beginning,
not the middle,
not the end.

Not the small group,
not the large group,
not the dyads,
not the triads,

Nothing.

I mean,

n-o-t-h-i-n-g.

Not-a-thing.

Why?

Does anyone else see?

What I see?

Feel what I feel?

Nothing?

Not a thing.

Not a thing, is nothing.

I want something.

Anything.

Please.

Not-a-thing.

Nothing.

This has been a story of just one day, a compilation I have created from many first days of a course on leadership I have taught for more than fifteen years now, to hundreds and hundreds of students. The writing of this narrative surprised and delighted me. I was not expecting to narrate such detail, nor was I expecting it to be so revealing, nor to have it reveal so much in the telling. Writing this story, like other stories told in this dissertation was itself a form of inquiry, not the outcome of research but a research process itself inviting me to explore the multitude of actions, decisions, and beliefs influencing and informing my philosophy, and practice. Richardson (2000) speaks of this process:

Writing [is] ... a way of finding out about yourself land your topic. [...] writing is not just a mopping-up activity at the end of a research project. Writing is also a way of knowing—a method of discovery and analysis (*italics in original*, p. 923).

I am a teacher

I teach students

To think.

To feel.

To believe,

To do.

In possibility,

for themselves,

for others.

To feel

for, with and about,

others.

I teach them,

to be,

and to allow, and enable,

*I am a teacher,
my students,*

*I am inspired,
To teach.*

Room 261

*them to be
who they are capable of,
becoming,
I teach.*

*they learn,
they teach me,*

*It is there I am,
bent head,
rests heavily, on my
waiting palm.
Bright, blue eyes,
dimmed,
wearily, behold the
pages, strewn across the
table,
pages,
piles of pages.
Black, font, stamped on
white pages.
My students' voices,
held captive,
Arial, Times New Roman,
and others,
whose names I don't
know,
and don't bother to know.
Hold them,
Silent.
I read them to life,
they are waiting on me.
The words are waiting on
me.*

*I lean over,
Lean in.
Listening.
Wondering.
Bending, to understand.
Leaning in,
leaning out,
leaning back,
I squint,
I stare,
eyes open wide,
to allow understanding to
enter.
Reverently, I hold the
pages,
bearing witness to the
stories, of my students.
A chorus,
a cacophony,
music making,
the words sound on the
page.
I cannot hear myself.
I shriek!
It's a mouse!
A mouse!
There is a mouse in the
house!
A mouse!
My scream spills out the
door,
and echoes in the inky,
black, stillness of the
night.
I am alone.
Alone?
No, I am not alone.*

*There is a mouse in the
house.*

I am afraid of the mouse.

*But the voices of my
students,*

*are calling from the
pages.*

Come,

I am waiting

for you,

to read,

to listen,

to learn,

to understand.

Do you understand?

What do you understand?

I do not understand.

With head,

bent,

in reverence,

and awe,

I read,

I reflect,

I write,

I wonder,

Why?

Why, they write

what they write?

Why, I write,

what I write?

*I read each word they
write.*

Worthy of writing.

Worthy of reading.

Was it worthy of writing?

*Is it worthy or writing?
They wrote.*

I read.

I listen.

*I squint with my eyes and
ears,*

I want to see it all.

I want to hear it all.

Five hours have passed.

*My head and heart are full.
I carry them with me,
to my car,
we are going home now,
my students
and I.*



Figure 11. Collage: Love Returned: The Gifts.

This chapter concludes with a collage created from a myriad of small squares, cut from the collection of the cards and comments of appreciation I have received from /my students over the years. I chose to include this collage in my dissertation because it both represents another influence on who I am today as an educator, the voices of my students and my assertion of teaching and learning as affairs of the heart.

The courage to teach is the courage to keep one's heart open in those very moments when the heart is asked to hold more than it is able so that the teacher and students and subject can be woven into the fabric of community that learning and living require (hooks, 2003, p. 19).

I am very fortunate having received so many of what I will described as appreciative words and some I have chosen to hold onto. It is those saved writers and words from which I have constructed this collage. With a few notable exceptions, I endeavoured to cut the

squares to be of relatively the same size, so as not to have any one piece have more significance than any other piece in this collage. I did, however, choose to keep two pieces with “thank you,” one piece where a student wrote my name, and glued beads around it, and two images of butterflies intact. It is difficult to detect the depth of the collage in the rendered image however the collage is not flat, but rather textured from the glued layers of imperfect pieces, randomly placed. The textured layering a deliberate effort to represent both the depth of the sentiments expressed by the students, and their meaning for me.

The collection is an interesting one, and includes squares cut from the institutionally required feedback forms, handmade cards, bought cards, note cards, and cursive lettering on paper. There are cards from entire classes, and from individuals too. The sentiments are, of course, unique to the cards themselves and the individuals who authored them, however piecing the deconstructed writings together, and the repetition of select words is apparent. The words “thank you,” “amazing,” “enthusiasm,” “welcoming,” “learn/ed,” encouragement,” “appreciate/d” “compassion/ate,” “funny,” “enjoyed,” “change/d,” “inspire/d/ing,” “energy,” “support,” and “best” are those that I notice are often repeated. I am warmed by this even now as I write on this page. Warmed, and affirmed to know that these are the adjectives ascribed to me by my students. Some sample statements from students include “You gave me a hook to hang my fear on,” “I always felt blanketed by your compassion. Thank you from the bottom of my heart,” “I have appreciated more than you know, the support and encouragement that you have extended my way,” “thanks for making me feel welcome in your class,” “thank you so much for your dedication and compassion,” “you are an inspiration to me and I feel blessed to have had the opportunity to meet you,” “you’re such a compassionate and funny teacher and you have facilitated a ton of personal reflection for me.” Interestingly, several of the cards, and envelopes too contained images of butterflies and I have included cut-outs from these also in the collage.

I am reminded now of a student who submitted her journal rolled into a scroll in a glass mason jar. Affixed atop the jar, glue to the lid, was a butterfly constructed from brown paper and twine. The student presented the jar to me on the last day of class sharing with me that within the jar were the words that had freed her. She was changed. Thus, the butterfly.

I do not know if one, some or all of the butterflies in the collage, or the scraps that are now being recycled carry the same meaning.

I purposefully chose to construct this collage in the shape of a heart, and named it “Love returned: The Gifts” in hopes of capturing, and conveying not only the affections of my students, but also mine. The affections are mutual, my students and I each affected by the other. I loved, and was loved in return. Each, and all of the squares represent a gift from my students. Each and all are meaningful, and cherished, and both affirm and inspire me. Affirming in realizing, at least for some, the positive impact I intended and inspiring in realizing the possibility that my role and education affords. They are thanking me but it is I who thank them. For by engaging in my course not only do I have another opportunity to practice as an educator, but also as a student, learning anew with each encounter about teaching, and learning, but also about whatever it is that my students have to teach me. I am who I am today, as an educator, not only because of how I was educated, and what I learned from other educators, but also because of how my students educated me.

4.10 Summary

This has been the (reconstructed) story of one day in my teaching. Engaging in an autobiographical narrative inquiry has been difficult, but it has also offered me gifts of knowing, of understanding, of insight, into what matters to me, and why, in relation to my teaching practice. Next, I describe a professional development course I developed for faculty; it is a reflection and culmination of the very personal journey of this narrative inquiry offered in hopes of inspiring other educators to similarly engage in a pedagogy of possibility.

PART FIVE: A Legacy of Love: Foundations of Instruction

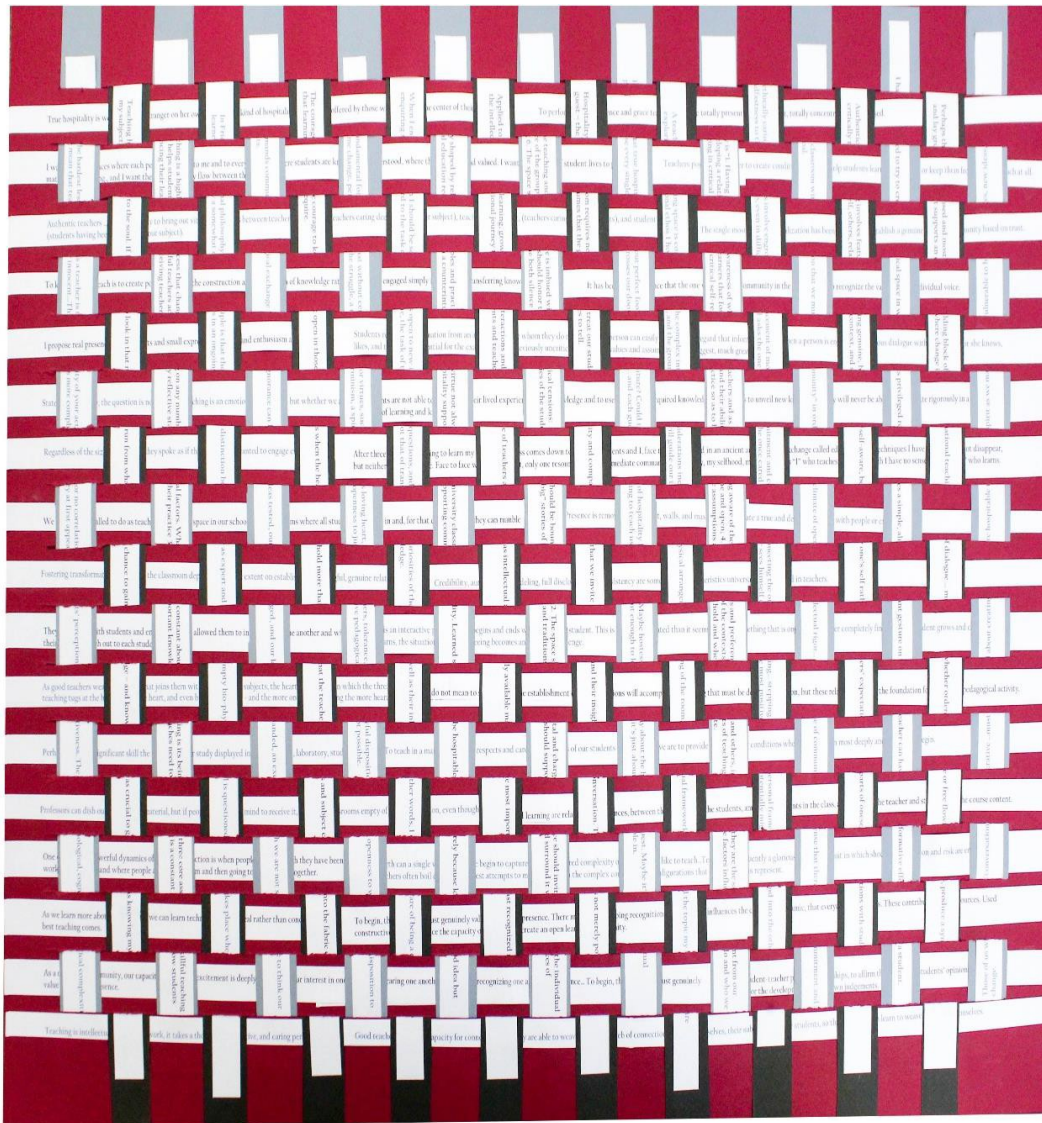


Figure 12. Threads of the heart: A Collage of Praxis.

Throughout the years of reading, reflecting, and writing this dissertation I was collecting quotes that I found particularly meaningful in capturing a sentiment of pedagogical significance. Of the more than one hundred quotes I collected, I eventually selected fifty-six quotes as of particular significance. The quotes and their sources are detailed in Appendix A. Determined to include them in this dissertation, the decision to weave these quotes together emerged in conversation with a colleague, and was inspired by Parker Palmer's

(2007) poetic profession “good teachers possess a capacity for connectedness. They are able to weave a complex web of connectedness among themselves, their subject, and their students, so that students can learn to weave a web for themselves” (p. 11). Weaving the words to create this collage was yet another act of meaning making in this dissertation. For me, the collage also beautifully illustrates several themes of significance I have endeavoured to consistently weave throughout my praxis; of welcoming, and hospitality; of connection, and community; of authenticity, and vulnerability; of respect, and affirmation; of the heart of teaching.

Although not easily discerned from the rendered image, the collage was painstakingly constructed by printing the quotes, cutting them into strips, and weaving the strips together. To add visual interest, some of the quotes were affixed to black, and others to grey construction paper, with large red poster paper serving as the loom through which the paper was woven. The strips were randomly selected, with no one strip more significant than another in this collage.

Although I do have affection for each, and every quote I chose to include in this collage, I am particularly moved by the following: “to teach in a manner that respects and cares for the souls of our students is essential if we are to provide the necessary conditions where learning can most deeply and intimately begin” (Schwartz, 2019, p. 3). I do not mean to suggest that the establishment of caring relations will accomplish everything that must be done in education, but these relationships provide the foundation for successful pedagogical activity (Noddings, 2005). As Palmer (2007) notes, “Learning demands community—a dialogical exchange in which our ignorance can be aired, our ideas tested, our biases challenged and our knowledge expanded, an exchange in which we are not simply left alone to think our own thoughts” (p. 79), and “stated more simply, the question is not where teaching is an emotional experience but whether we acknowledge or deny the emotions

inherent in teaching” (Schwartz, 2019, p. 8). Each, and all of these, are representative of the heart of teaching.

I do think it is important to note however that the form, and size of the weaving prescribed, or rather more precisely, limited, the number of quotes that could be included. Additionally, although I do adore the metaphor of the weaving of the multitudinous threads of the heart in my teaching, its tight, tidy, and measured construction denies important truths of teaching. As Brookfield (2006, 2015) notes teaching is frequently messy and complex and Palmer (2007) echoes, “a teaching and learning space is composed from [a] complex interplay of considerations” (p. 76). Nevertheless, I have elected to include this collage in this dissertation as it provides yet another representation of my efforts to meaningfully identify, and engage with, the scholars, and sages who have influenced, and informed, my philosophy, pedagogy, and practice as an educator, and whose words I cherish, and for its evocative depiction of the weaving essential to educating with heart.

5.1 From Personal Inquiry to Creating Curriculum

From the early days of assuming my role at the University I recognized an opportunity to realize a dearly held aspiration, to design, develop, and deliver a learning opportunity for faculty to help others know what I had come to know. The previous pages of this dissertation bear witness to the evolution of my understanding of what it means to educate, to be an educator. A glorious but laborious journey through education as a student, a practitioner, and a scholar, has birthed a conception of what counts for those of us who dare to educate, to teach to transform.

I have learned so much during this journey through the scholarship and the academy. So much that has both affirmed what I acquired through experience both in, and out of the classroom, and still more that has served to disrupt, inform, and transform my

teaching. I have a desire to share this. I know only too well now, how little I knew when I first began. Entrusted with the education of those that appear in in our rooms, be they physical or virtual, we ought to attempt to appreciate how it is that our students learn, and thus how it is that we must teach. Too many institutions of higher education, including my own, appear to choose to reify discipline specific scholarly achievements in the recruitment, retention and promotion of faculty, with too little attention afforded to initially assessing, and subsequently attending to their achievements as educators, in their classrooms and with their students. Nevertheless, I have encountered many, many faculty, in my previous and current role(s) who are interested and invested in their teaching, committed to their students and to serving their students learning, and furthermore are interested in opportunities to enhance their effectiveness. It is my intention, and aspiration to assist them. But, I want to do so in a very particular way.

I want to help faculty to learn, what I did not know I needed to learn, when I began all those years ago. I want to invite, and encourage them to “enter not evade the tangles of their teaching” (Palmer, 2007, p. 2). I want to help faculty to know that teaching is less about instrumentation, and more about identification, less about the tools, techniques, tips, tricks, and devices, and more about who they are, “where success and failure ride less on the specific methods adopted and more on the humanity of the connection teachers can weave in their face-to-face, voice-to-voice, and heart-to-heart interactions among themselves, their students and the subjects they teach” (Intrator, 2002, p. xxxii).

I want to invite them to unravel their praxis. To weave anew a pedagogy of possibility for themselves, and their students, fabricated on the loom of relationship. After all, as stated by Schoem (2017), “Teaching and Learning are relational experiences, between the teacher and the students, among the students in the class, and between the teacher and students and the course content” (p.79). The poetic Schwartz (2019) adds, “I believe relationship is

the fulcrum and the spark, the valley and the vista, the essential driver of teaching and learning” (p. 1).

I want faculty to get a glimpse of those who have, and continue to influence my praxis, so they too may be informed, influenced, inspired and perhaps even, transformed in their praxis. I want them to appreciate the many considerations and complexities they must contend with, if they too wish to serve their students well. Most importantly, I hope they appreciate the exquisite privilege and opportunities associated with our role as educators, as faculty in a public post secondary institution. I sought the support of the Vice Provost of Teaching and Learning to design, develop, and deliver the professional development opportunity I envisioned, and it was granted.

In dialogue with a colleague the workshop documented on the ensuing pages was designed and developed for our educators, both faculty and instructional staff. Two days in length, the sessions would be hosted as a face-to face delivery, and co-facilitated by myself, and a colleague. Intentionally designed to allow the participants to both experience, and explore select notions of teaching and learning, I was determined it would provide participants with an opportunity to both reflect on, connect with and ideally, change their praxis.

I have detailed the lesson plan (the facilitator and participant activities) of the Foundations of Instruction Workshop below. Appendix B lists the resources utilized in the construction of the program and supplementary resources for their reference during the program and thereafter. It is a protected site available only to those who have participated in the program.

5.2 Foundations of Instruction: The Lesson Plan

Legend:

HO: Handout

IA: Individual Activity

L: Lecturette

LG: Large group

SG: Small group

NOTE: Supplementary resources and materials are available to the facilitator and participants in the KPU Foundations of Instruction Moodle site ([link](#))

Session 1

Topic	Facilitator Activity	Learner Activity
Welcome, Introductions Orientation	Welcome Introductions LG: Find an Object OR Find Someone Who LG: Introductions (participants then instructors) This is important to reinforce the community as prime and the instructor a part of the community LG: Facilitator to review Housekeeping LG: Agenda review by facilitator	LG: Introduce themselves to one another using either “Find Someone Who” or “An object of significance” where participants will select an object to represent what they most enjoy about teaching
Creating classroom agreements	L: Facilitator to introduce concept of creating group agreements (norms) for the classroom IA: Instruct participants to identify and reflect on their best learning experience? What were the factors (criteria and conditions) that contributed to their “best” learning then and will contribute to their learning now? SG: Invite participants to share with others in the group and identify commonalities	IA: Identify and reflect on your best learning experience to identify criteria and conditions contributing to your “best” SG: Share and identify commonalities (5) LG: Creating on flip chart “agreements for the group” (5) SG: Identify role and responsibilities of educator to realize the identified criteria (10)

Topic	Facilitator Activity	Learner Activity
	<p>LG: Round robin invite small groups to share two ideas at a time, record on flip chart</p> <p>SG: Identify role and responsibilities of educator to realize the identified criteria.</p> <p>Note: Curiosity, Courage, Respect, Assume good intent, Care, Confidentiality</p>	
Assumptions	<p>L: On assumptions</p> <p>L: On the different curriculum: Explicit, Implicit, Excluded/Null and Hidden</p> <p>IA: HO: On Assumptions</p> <p>SG: Assign participants to triads from their handout and invite them to share their reflections on the exercise, encouraging participants to consider consequences of their assumptions for the students</p>	<p>IA: Review HO: On curriculum</p> <p>IA: HO: On Assumptions Review the handout and highlight any assumptions they associate with their past experience</p> <p>SG Triads: Share their reflections on the exercise</p>
The current context of Higher education	<p>L: The current context of education in Canada <u>Briefly</u> review some of the current variables influencing higher education in Canada and specifically KPU.</p>	
Classroom as community	<p>SG: Brainstorm/Mind Map I: Invite participants to identify what factors contribute to “community” in a classroom and create a mind map to illustrate</p> <p>SG: Brainstorm/Mind Map II Invite participants to identify strategies for the components/criteria they identified</p> <p>LG: Mind Map Display and Debrief Instruct groups to post their mind map on wall</p>	<p>SG Brainstorm and create mind map (10)</p> <p>SG: Discuss and brainstorm specific strategies and behaviours to achieve the assigned factor (etc) (10)</p> <p>LG: Invite participants to view the different mind maps. Discuss and debrief</p>

Topic	Facilitator Activity	Learner Activity
	Invite comments questions from participants	
Reflections on practice	<p>L: On Reflection Review literature on reflection and its efficacy as a means for developing their practice as educators</p> <p>HO: On reflection Review select model of reflection</p> <p>IA: Invite participants to review and reflect on their practice</p>	<p>IA: Reflection</p> <p>IA: Reflect and write on card strengths opportunities and aha's</p>
Teaching Philosophy	<p>LG: Teaching Philosophy Facilitator instructs participants to select an image that represents their individual teaching philosophy.</p> <p>SG: Each participant shares their image, how it reflects their "teaching philosophy"</p> <p>IA: Timed writing (5 min) Reflecting on previous exercise draft a teaching philosophy</p>	<p>IA: Pick an image that represents your philosophy of teaching (5)</p> <p>SG: Pair-Share Each participant shares their image, how it reflects their "teaching philosophy" (5+5)</p> <p>LG: Invite participants to share their teaching philosophy</p>
Learning	<p>Lecturette: Theories of Learning Kolb's Learning Theory Taylor's Model of Learning ARCs Model of Motivational Design</p> <p>LG: Video: introduction to Andragogy Watch video on Andragogy and identify one</p>	<p>LG Exercise: Watch video: Andragogy (Malcom Knowles) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vLoPiHUZbEw</p> <p>SG Exercise: And ...? What else would they add Have participants identify what they could or should do in practice to respond to each of the principles</p>
	Transition	
Relational Practice	<p>LG: Video: "Anyone"</p> <p>SG: Brainstorm: The characteristics and</p>	<p>SG: Brainstorm Write one word on each to describe the characteristics and competencies of a "good teacher"</p>

Topic	Facilitator Activity	Learner Activity
	<p>competencies of a “good” teacher Write one characteristic/competency per post-it</p> <p>LG: Post, Review and Debrief Facilitator to invite participants to put post it notes; with participants organize/group/name them</p> <p>Lecturette: Briefly highlight connection between participants’ experience and selected notions in the scholarship about what it reveals is associated with being a “good” teacher On Transformational Teaching hooks, Palmer, On Relationship: Schwartz, Schoem et al., hooks, Brown, Noddings, Palmer, Brookfield On Authenticity: Brown, Cranton Schwartz Palmer, Brookfield On Emotional Intelligence: Goleman & Reuven Bar On</p>	<p>LG: Lead by facilitator post review and debrief</p>
The Students	<p>Lecturette: Who are our students? LG: Quiz: True/False? SG: Inquiry based learning project Review KPU data to check your answers</p>	<p>HO/IA/SG: Individually have students complete the quiz</p> <p>SG/LG: Debrief Link to KPU student data</p>
Student Engagement	<p>Activity: 12 nails (5)</p> <p>LG: Discuss: “Why is it important even necessary for students to be engaged?” (5)</p> <p>Lecturette: Student Engagement in higher ed Review select theories and notions (10) Schlechty ARC Model of Motivation</p> <p>SG/Dyads: Each participant to interview another on ideas to promote student engagement with the group.</p>	

Topic	Facilitator Activity	Learner Activity
	<p>SG/Dyads: Debrief: Dyad selects the best activity to share with the large group</p> <p>Gina: In class recognition activity (The legacy of Chris Friesen)</p> <p>LG: Debrief</p>	
Closing	<p>LG: Formative feedback Invite participants to provide feedback by writing a comment(s) on an index card +/- (one on each side of the card)</p> <p>Closing round: Facilitator to invite one reflection from the session today from each participant</p> <p>Encourage participants to continue to develop their teaching philosophy</p>	

Session 2

Topic	Facilitator Activity	Learner Activity
Welcome back, Orientation	<p>Welcome Back!</p> <p>LG: Connections Facilitator to invite each participant to “Please share a highlight of teaching (or not) for you since we last met</p> <p>LG: Reflections on previous session Facilitator to share with the group feedback from the last session (collected on the comment cards)</p> <p>LG: Review the group agreements LG: Housekeeping LG: Agenda review</p>	
Teaching Philosophy	<p>SG: Triads/Dyads Review experience of reflecting on/writing their teaching philosophy</p>	<p>SG: Debrief In small groups share their teaching philosophy</p> <p>Invite participants to share example</p>
Introduction to Course Design	<p>L: Course Design Review components of course design Overview of KPU course design process and approvals</p> <p>Distinguish between KPU course outlines and course presentations</p> <p>Identify KPU course presentation components</p>	<p>SG: Compare sample(s) of course presentation(s) to identify the requisite components of a course presentation at KPU</p> <p>Identify beneficial features of the selected course outlines</p>
Learning outcomes	<p>Lecturette: Learning outcomes</p> <p>Video: (Burns)</p> <p>Components of a learning outcomes Knack, VCC PID</p> <p>Blooms taxonomy</p> <p>IA: Writing/Re-writing learning outcomes</p> <p>SG: Debrief</p>	<p>LG: View video</p> <p>HO: Learning Outcomes Identify the components of a learning outcome</p> <p>IA/SG/HO: Evaluate learning outcomes by rewriting examples</p> <p>LG: Debrief Invite participants to evaluate the rewritten learning outcomes</p> <p>IA: Write/Re-write learning outcomes of their course</p> <p>SG/Dyad: Share revisions with assigned partner</p>

Topic	Facilitator Activity	Learner Activity
Backwards Course Design & Constructive Alignment	<p>L: Backwards Course Design Constructive alignment</p> <p>LG: Video/Screencast on Constructive alignment (KPU TLC Freshdesk resources)</p>	<p>HO: IA: Review handout. Review course presentation and</p>
Lesson Plans	<p>Lecturette: Lesson Plans Overview components of a lesson plan</p>	
	Transition	
Universal Design for Learning (intro)	<p>LG: Video: Universal Design for Learning at McGill https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LjUKGBipJZA</p> <p>Lecturette: Overview of UDL HO: UDL framework</p> <p>IA: Instruct participants to apply UDL framework to their course(s) presentation by highlighting using color corresponding to representation, etc</p> <p>LG: Debrief Invite participants to share what they discovered</p>	<p>LG: Video</p> <p>IA: Apply UDL framework to their course(s) presentation by highlighting using color corresponding to representation, etc</p> <p>LG: Debrief</p>
Assessment	<p>L: Assessments Review the purpose of assessments</p> <p>L: Principles of Authentic Assessment Review the principles of authentic evaluation/assessment</p> <p>Review relationship between Principles of assessment design, Backwards Course Design, Constructive alignment</p> <p>SG: Timed Brainstorm Instruct participants to work in their assigned small group to generate options for assessment</p> <p>SG: Assessment Design: World Café: Facilitate a world café (using flip charts on the wall). Post varied learning outcomes, 1 per flip chart, around the room. Invite participants in small groups (2-3) to write suggestions of assessments for posted learning outcomes</p>	<p>LG: Brainstorm What is the purpose of evaluation/assessment?</p> <p>IA: Word scramble The five principles of authentic evaluation</p> <p>LG: What do these principles mean for us as educators when designing assessments?</p> <p>SG: Assessment alternatives Instruct participants to work in their assigned small group to generate options for assessment</p> <p>SG: Assessment Design: World Café Participants to brainstorm possibilities for how to assess varied learning outcomes (applying Bloom's taxonomy) with world café</p>

Topic	Facilitator Activity	Learner Activity
Assessment (cont.)	L: Assessment: Applying the principles to practice SG/IA: Assessment re-design Invite participants to identify one assessment they want to re-design and ask for assistance from the group	SG: Assessment re-design Invite participants to identify one assessment they want to re-design and ask for assistance from the group
Closing	IA: Postcards from Beyond Participants to write an idea/reflection etc. they wish to remember ... be reminded of ... in the future LG: Circle: Invite participants to share one word to describe their experience and a "gift" for the group Facilitator: To read "Yay you!"	IA: Post cards from beyond Write in their postcards... IA: Circle

The materials for the workshop illustrate the relational orientation I have come to embrace, and the many scholars, and authors, that have shaped the silhouette of my praxis. Fondly, I see the legacy of both the academy, and popular writers, less scholarly perhaps but of significance to me nonetheless. Beginning with my studies in the Provincial Instructor Diploma Program, reinvigorated in my studies during my master program, and continuing to the present day, I have become enchanted with several skeins of the scholarship including dialogic pedagogy (Freire, 1970, 1972, 1978, 2000) , ethic of care (Noddings, 2005), transformational teaching (Slavich and Zimbardo, 2012; Anding, 2005), vulnerability and authenticity (Brown, 2007), reflection (Kolb, 1984), emotional intelligence (Cherniss & Goleman, 2003). These scholars and sages have endeared themselves to me; their words have informed and influenced who I have become as an educator.

Letters to a Young Poet

*I want to beg you, as much as I can, dear sir,
To be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart*

*And try to love the questions themselves.
Do not seek the answers,
Which can not be given you because you would not be able to live
them.
And the point is to live everything.
Live the questions now.
Perhaps you will gradually, without noticing it,
Live along some distant day into the answers.*
(Rilke, 1903, as cited in Smith and Merz, 2015)

5.3 Summary

The preceding pages of this part of the dissertation provide an overview of the curriculum of a course developed for educators, both faculty and instructional staff. In the design, development and delivery of this curriculum, I have attempted to share with participants the gifts I acquired through this personal inquiry process, introducing them to scholars, authors and ideas who have informed and influenced my pedagogy. The following pages serve as the conclusion to this dissertation, the stopping of this inquiry, a pause in my journey as an educator. In these final few pages, I reflect on my journey, narrate significant insights, and ideas for future practice, and offer suggestions, encouragements, and cautions to others considering engaging in their own autobiographical journey of inquiry.

PART SIX: The Pause

“There is no real ending. It’s just the place where you stop the story” (Herbert, 1969).

6.1 Searching

I began as every graduate student does, or so I think, awed, inspired and anxious. Eagerly awaiting the moment, yes, the moment, when suddenly I could claim membership in the academy. When, my pedestrian dollar store dictionary would suddenly be replaced, and retreat in the brilliance of my newfound scholarly vernacular of hundred-dollar words as information, citations, quotations, and the other “tions” of the academy tumbled effortlessly from my lips.

I’m still waiting.

And so a beginning, the beginning, my beginning, is at the end.

The end?

Yes, for today.

The end.

I now find myself searching to find the way, the words, to write, to author an end to this effort. And it has been an effort. An exhausting, exhilarating, exciting, exacting, inspiring, troubling, demanding, frustrating, interesting, and rewarding, effort. Although it is not unusual to read of references to graduate education as a journey (Beierling, Buitenhuis, Grant, & Hanson, 2014) characterization of their journey as a pilgrimage, resonated with my own with reference to embarking on a solitary journey in the company of others, each travelling the same road, on different paths, toward the same destination, a Doctorate in Education. Arriving to the threshold of the doorway to my first class on my first day I knew not what awaited me, nor could I have imagined the dissertation as it appears before you on these pages.

Although it is true I began this journey with intentions consonant with the purpose of the EdD program, to engage in scholarly discourse to enable understanding, critiquing, and improving of practice, it is also true the journey and its ending proved to be entirely unexpected. What I expected to do was engage in research and write a dissertation. I admit for reasons articulated in earlier pages, I was attached to engaging in an action research project likely continuing, and extending the research of my master's thesis on the efficacy of a dialogic pedagogy. I expected to document my research in a dissertation that would resemble many others in the academy, and include the expected abstract, introduction, literature review, methods, results, discussion, and conclusion consistent with traditional research. But what I expected to happen, did not happen.

What happened was I completed my comprehensive examination and began to read and write under the tutelage of Carl Leggo. And from him I drew inspiration, and with Shauna's support and encouragement, I began to envision a very different kind of inquiry and dissertation. Emboldened by the writings of a prominent few I encountered during my directed study with Carl including Natalie Goldberg (1990, 2004, 2005, 2013), Julia Cameron (1998, 2002), Annie Dillard (1989), Ann Lamott (1994), Brené Brown (2007, 2010), Glennon Doyle Melton (2013, 2016), Parker Palmer (2003, 2007), and Carl himself, I allowed myself to believe that perhaps I need only tell my story. Perhaps I had a story worth telling and writing worthy of reading? Perhaps too in writing this story and allowing it to be read not only would I acquire understanding but I might afford others' understanding of themselves as an educator. "Stories present possibilities for understanding the complex mysterious even ineffable experiences that comprise human living" (Leggo, 2010, p. 69). Besides, "we all have a dream of telling our stories, of realizing what we think, feel, and see before we die" (Goldberg, 2005, p. xii). Additional inspiration for the specific structure of this dissertation was provided by the poignant and illuminative writing of my cohort colleague,

Virginia Rego (2017). Adopting an autobiographical narrative methodology Virginia (2017) artfully explores her own mental illness, allowing the reader precious insights to her own experience and arguably, potentially those of others who also struggle with mental illness. Following in Virginia's (2017) footsteps I too elected to adopt an autobiographical narrative methodology for this inquiry, affirming Clandinin's (2006) attestations, "these lived and told stories and talk about those stories are ways we create meaning in our lives as well as ways we enlist each other's help in building our lives" (p. 44). And if that is not enough Anne Dillard's (1989) sharp rebuke pierces my ego's desire for anonymity "the impulse to keep to yourself what you have learned is not only shameful, it is destructive" (p. 79).

I have written many more words than appear on the pages of this dissertation. Snippets, stories, poetry, passages, thoughts, tales, reflections, and rants. Some are long forgotten, but live in previous versions, some have fallen from the page to the floor, forming piles with others also discarded, while still others were reluctantly removed from these pages. Nonetheless, seen or unseen, each, and all of the words that were laid along the way, paved the path to my understanding as it has now been written for you to read. As I travelled towards understanding along the path of writing, I detoured now, and again to explore other avenues to aid in my understanding of who I am as an educator. Eventually, I alighted on constructing collages as a meaningful medium, and elected to include three of these in this dissertation with an accompanying narrative to allow for you the reader insight into their meaning for me. I also unwittingly amassed a collection of quotes, and excerpts from the literature, and other sources of sentiments of pedagogical significance. Wanting to highlight and preserve these, I was eventually inspired to curate a selection of quotes and create a word weaving which, with an accompanying narrative, I also included. Assembled as one, this collection of work; of story, poetry, prose, collage and art as a means of

inquiring into, and documenting my identity and practice as an educator represents the possibilities that autobiographical narrative affords researchers.

How might this dissertation be judged? As Corbin and Strauss (2015) note, quality research is research that is substantive, insightful, creative, sensitive, evocative, provocative. Qualitative approaches, such as narrative autobiography should invite reflection and should resonate with readers. Bullough and Pinnegar (2001, p. 14-18) focus on teachers' personal inquiry projects and suggest they could be evaluated in relation to whether such accounts ring true; enable connections; promote insight, fresh perspectives, and interpretation; are honest and authentic; and engage with what makes someone an educator. I hope and have engaged with writing this dissertation in such a way that meets these criteria.

6.2 Emerging Wisdom

There is an oft cited adage in higher education, "faculty teach the way they were taught" (Oleson & Hora, 2013, p. 30). While I would not deny the influence of revered educators I have encountered as a student and their imprint on my practice, in the writing of this dissertation I discovered how I teach cannot be entirely explained by this simple maxim. Instead, how I teach and how I choose to teach other teachers about teaching is the consequence of a complex weaving of varied threads of experience. Experiences in and of my family, of early, middle, and high school, as an undergraduate student, as a mature student in a certificate program and later, a diploma program, as a master's student, a doctoral student, as a worker in community, as a consultant, as an administrator, and as an instructor, are woven into the fabric of my practice. Excavating my experiences through the writing of this dissertation allowed me to identify, unearth, and examine previously unseen influences on my practice. Reaching back in time I discovered the likely beginning of why it

is so important to me that my students experience me, my teaching, and our class as welcoming, inclusive, engaging, encouraging, and dare I write, inspiring. This inquiry has also served to illuminate, and affirm, the centrality of care, heart, and humanity in creating communities in classrooms conducive to learning. Finally, this inquiry, in its entirety has strengthened my conviction in the wisdom of Palmer's (1998) profession "good teaching cannot be reduced to technique. It comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher" (p. 10).

6.3 Future Implications:

What advice would I give to others who contemplate employing narrative autobiography for their inquiries? Like Godfrey (2013) who also selected narrative autobiography as the methodology for her inquiry into her praxis, I too struggled to persist. "This project has been difficult for me to complete and there were many times I wanted to abandon it for more traditional research" (Godfrey, 2013, p. 54). The urge to abandon for me was a consequence of several challenges I associate with this particular methodology. Unlike traditional methodologies, with narrative autobiography, I experienced a relative absence of prescribed structure and an attending obligation, to both author, and create the path of my inquiry. Initially, and intermittently, intimidating even overwhelming, it was also exciting, endearing and even, inspiring. Engaging with this methodology allowed me to expansively explore the topic of my inquiry utilizing not only the prose of more traditional research, but poetry, and art (collage, and weaving) also. For others considering this approach, the opportunity to use story, art and poetry or even other genres, and to experiment with different formats and structures, may be similarly inviting and exciting, yet also challenging.

This methodology requires a depth of vulnerability; it does also not allow the distance between self as the writer and the subject of the research, because you are both the writer and what is being written about. Agreeing to adopt this methodology both demanded, and nurtured courage, and confidence. I was very fortunate to be encouraged, guided, and supported throughout the writing of this inquiry by my supervisor, committee, dear friends, and my daughters. Without this, I do not believe I could have sustained my initial commitment to this demanding, albeit incredibly rewarding research methodology. And so, for others considering taking this journey, it is important to have the support of not only your academic advisors, but of family and friends.

I have gained precious insights into my practice as a consequence of embarking on the writing of this dissertation. Insights about who I am as an educator, and why it is, perhaps, I do what I do, and who it is I aspire to be and why. But I see the implications of this inquiry and the insights I acquired as having particular significance for me in my current role as the senior manager of educational development at a university, and for others similarly engaged in faculty development. The preceding pages suggesting the forming of my identity and praxis as an educator was influenced by varied experiences including familial relations, non-academic roles, experiences as a student, and experiences as an instructor, echoes prior research (Oleson & Hora, 2013). Newly cognizant of this conception of faculty development invites me to consider how it is that I, and my colleagues, could reconsider our current approach to educating our faculty colleagues. Unlike elementary and secondary educators, post-secondary educators are generally not required to complete any formal education in teaching, and learning. This is true for many if not most of my colleagues in my current institution. But lacking formal education in teaching and learning, does not equate to a lack of knowledge about teaching, and learning, it is just knowledge of a different sort, or sorts, and acquired from a different source, or rather sources.

This distinction has significant consequences for faculty development. Appreciating faculty as arriving to a professional development opportunity with tacit knowledge about teaching and learning acquired from their lived experiences encourages me to perhaps look critically at my assumptions about their expertise and look anew at opportunities to engage with their experience in our encounters with them. Faculty deserve to be regarded as “professionals who would benefit not only from formal training in educational theory, but whose knowledge about teaching and learning represents a rich body of practical experience that can be acknowledged and built upon” (Oleson & Hora, 2013).

I have also become intensely curious about the entirety of the experiences of my colleagues, and how the intersection of these have influenced the formation of their identity and practice as faculty. I recently created a new faculty feature for our monthly newsletter intended to both recognize and highlight faculty, and provide opportunities for faculty to beneficially contribute to the collective knowledge of our community. To aid me in the writing of this feature I interview a faculty member. I have become much more intentional and inquisitive when interviewing faculty in an effort to identify, explore and document the varied influences on their beliefs about themselves as educators, and about teaching and learning. By sharing their story, I hope to not only allow other educators to benefit from the lived experience and acquired expertise of the selected faculty but contribute to our collective understanding about how it is faculty have developed as educators. This is important information for those of us engaged in educational development.

6.4 Invitations

In addition to inviting me to reconsider and reconceptualise my orientation to and design of faculty development opportunities at the university, this inquiry also inspired me to create a professional development workshop for faculty. Designed for new/newer faculty the two- day session is intended to share with faculty what I have come to know, as a

consequence of experience, contributes to creating opportunities for adult learners to feel welcomed, included, engaged and inspired. Portions of the program's lesson plan were included in the dissertation to allow you the reader to access its content to both inform and dare I hope, inspire you. The program has been piloted twice to favourable reviews from faculty with faculty remarking, "I had no idea how important community was," "after 19 years of teaching I did not know how much I did not know," "I had never considered how to help my students know me," "I learned so much," and "I think I was doing some of this but I can do more and do more intentionally." The program will be delivered three or more times in the coming year through open registration and we have received some inquiries for departmental and faculty specific sessions. This is exciting. I am committed to sharing this curriculum with my colleagues in educational development in the spirit of collaboration and in hopes of encouraging the adoption of it in other institutions so that more faculty, and thus more students, can benefit from it. Aspirational, perhaps, but the intention nevertheless.

I have additional aspirations. I am in the midst of planning for the development of an initiative that would create opportunities for faculty to gather together to reflect on, and learn from their practice, and those of one another, through the sharing of stories. I am interested in inviting both instructional staff, and faculty, to engage, and envision a monthly event, held initially, in the Teaching and Learning Commons. Ideally, I will extend the opportunity for access to this event by facilitating both virtual and face to face participation. Experience within my institution suggests it may be prudent to begin, at least initially, with some structure to these gatherings with themes and/or guiding questions. Eventually I hope the educators themselves will lead the gathering. I have sought and received support from senior leadership to pursue this initiative for 2020/2021 and I am very excited to see how this will develop.

6.5 A final few words

We are all works in progress, We are all rough drafts.
No one of us is finished, final, done. (Cameron, 1998, p. 97)

It is late at night. One of too many late nights I have spent sitting on this couch fingers on this keyboard searching for the words to write to you dear reader. Sometimes the words have come easily, rushing to be seen on the page, my fingers getting in the way of one another as they reach for the next letter on the keyboard. Sometimes however the words are caught, tangled up in a thought. Eventually they straighten themselves out and hop onto the page. But some tangles are ornery and have to be wrestled with for some time before they are straightened out and onto a line. And there are times too when I want to try to stop the words from being written. I want the words to stay with me. Unwritten. Unsaid. Unread and unheard words can't hurt me. It is not easy to write about oneself. It's actually hard. Very hard. But the words, they know. They are awaiting reading and wriggle and squirm to set themselves free from me and onto the page.

And now, they are all there. All the words I could find to write to you. To share with you, dear reader, this wondrous journey of discovery I embarked upon all those years ago now seeking to understand why? Why, I am who I am, do what I do, and aspire to, as an educator. It is time now for me to stop. "How do you know when you are done? ... I don't quite know how to answer it. you just do." (Lamott, 1994, p. 93)

The End

We are at the end,
bittersweet,
stories shared,
unspoken affection,
scents the air,
caring eyes,
caress,
distressed souls.

There are no strangers among us,
naked we sit,

Unmasked.
Formalities forgotten,
friendships found,
the clock,
heralds good byes,
unwelcomed,
but inevitable.
Thank you.

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Appendices

Appendix A: References for Collage: Threads of the heart: A collage of praxis

1. "To teach in a manner that that respects and cares for the souls of our students is essential if we are to provide the necessary conditions where learning can most deeply and intimately begin." ¹
2. "Teaching and learning are relational experiences, between the teacher and the students, among the students in the class, and between the teacher and students and the course content." ²
3. "Presence is removing judgement, walls, and masks so as to create a true and deep connection with people or experiences" ³
4. "To perform with excellence and grace teachers must be totally present in the moment, totally concentrated and focused." ⁴
5. "As good teachers weave the fabric that joins them with students and subjects, the heart is the loom on which the threads are tried, the tension is held, the shuttle flies, and the fabric is stretched tight. Small wonder, then, that teaching tugs at the heart, opens the heart, and even breaks the heart - and the more one loves teaching the more heartbreaking it can be." ⁵
6. "The courage to teach is the courage to keep one's heart open in those very moments when the heart is asked to hold more than it is able so that the teacher and students and subject can be woven into the fabric of community that learning and living, require." ⁶
7. "The single most important realization has been the need to establish a genuine sense of community based on trust." ⁷
8. To begin, the professor must genuinely value everyone's presence. There must be an ongoing recognition that everyone influences the classroom dynamic, that everyone contributes. These contributions are resources. Used constructively they enhance the capacity of any class to create an open learning community." ⁸

¹ Schwartz 2019: 3.

² Schoem 2017: 23

³ Cuddy 2015: 23

⁴ Hook 2003: 4.

⁵ Palmer, as cited in hooks, 2003: 19

⁶ hooks 2003: 19

⁷ hooks 2003: 109

⁸ hooks 1994: 8

9. "I enter the classroom with an assumption that we must build "community" in order to create a climate of openness and intellectual rigor... creating a sense of community creates a sense that there is a shared commitment and a common goal." ⁹
10. It has been my experience that the one way to build community in the classroom is to recognize the value of each individual voice." ¹⁰
11. "Professors can dish out all the right material, but if people are not in a mind to receive it, they leave classrooms empty of that information, even though we may feel we've really done our jobs." ¹¹
12. "If students are not able to transform their lived experiences into knowledge and to use the already acquired knowledge as a process to unveil new knowledge, they will never be able to participate rigorously in a dialogue as a process of learning and knowing." ¹²
13. "Perhaps the most significant skill the teachers in our study displayed in the classroom, laboratory, studio, or wherever they met with students, was the ability to communicate orally in ways that stimulated thought." ¹³
14. "They interacted with students and encouraged and allowed them to interact with one another and with the material. They pulled each person in the room into a dialogue, offering gestures and body language that conveyed their desire to reach out to each student." ¹⁴
15. "Regardless of the size of the room, they spoke as if they knew and wanted to engage every student, including those in the back row." ¹⁵
16. "True hospitality is welcoming the stranger on her own terms. This kind of hospitality can only be offered by those who've found the center of their lives in their own hearts" ¹⁶
17. "Is it possible that true hospitality is not about perfect food or fancy furniture? Could the better part of hospitality be *listening*? ... Maybe hostessing is not really about the host, but the guest. Maybe it's a sacred spiritual practice because every single person who crosses our doorsteps is a gift ... and each guest has something to

⁹ hooks 1994: 40

¹⁰ hooks 1994: 40

¹¹ Hooks 1994: 156

¹² Freire 1970: 19

¹³ Bain 2004: 117

¹⁴ Bain 2004: 118

¹⁵ Bain 2004: 119

¹⁶ Melton 2016: 213

teach us if we're present enough to learn. ... Maybe it's just about soaking people in."¹⁷

18. "A pedagogy shaped by relational principles and practices requires a virtue not always found in university classrooms; hospitality. Learned spaces need to be hospitable places not merely because kindness is a good idea but because real education requires rigor. In a counterintuitive way, hospitality supports rigor by supporting community" ¹⁸
19. "Those of us who want to host conversations that are generative ... must be intentional about creating spaces that are hospitable to the human spirit as we make ourselves vulnerable to honest exchanges, new ideas, and hope for change." ¹⁹
20. "We are ethically called to do as teachers, is create a space in our schools and classrooms where all students can walk in and, for that day or hour... they can rumble with vulnerability." ²⁰
21. "Teaching is an interactive practice that begins and ends with seeing the student. This is more complicated than it seems, for it is something that is ongoing and never completely finished. The student grows and changes, the teacher learns, the situation shifts, and seeing becomes an evolving challenge." ²¹
22. "I want to build spaces where each person is visible to me and to everyone else., where students are known and understood, where they feel safe and valued. I want the context of student lives to provide a lot of the raw material for learning., and I want there to be an easy flow between there worlds." ²²
23. "Teaching is intellectual and ethical work, it takes a thoughtful, reflective, and caring person to do it well. It takes a brain and a heart." ²³
24. "Teaching holds a mirror to the soul. If I am willing to look in that mirror and not run from what I see, I have a chance to gain self- knowledge – and knowing myself is as crucial to good teaching as knowing my students and my subject." ²⁴
25. "Teachers possess the power to create conditions that can help students learn a great deal- or keep them from learning much at all." ²⁵

¹⁷ Melton 2016:s, p 217.

¹⁸ Palmer, Zajonc & Scribner 2010: 29

¹⁹ Palmer, Zajonc & Scribner 2010: 138

²⁰ Brown 2019

²¹ Ayers 2001: 25

²² Ayers 2001:58

²³ Ayers 2001: 141

²⁴ Palmer 2007: 3

²⁵ Palmer 2007: 7

26. "After three decades of trying to learn my craft, every class comes down to this: my students and I, face to face, engaged in an ancient and exacting exchange called education. The techniques I have mastered do not disappear, but neither do they suffice. Face to face with my student, only one resource is at my immediate command; my identity, my selfhood, my sense of this "I" who teaches-without which I have no sense of the "Thou" who learns." ²⁶
27. "Good teachers possess a capacity for connectedness. They are able to weave a complex web of connections among themselves, their subject, and their students, so that students can learn to weave a web for themselves." ²⁷
28. "As we learn more about who we are we can learn techniques that reveal rather than conceal the personhood from which good teaching come ... now we can use technique to manifest more fully the gift of self from which our best teaching comes." ²⁸
29. A teaching and learning space is composed from the complex interplay of considerations including "the physical arrangement and feeling of the room, the conceptual framework I build around the topic my students and I are exploring, the emotional ethos I hope to facilitate, and the ground rules that will guide our inquiry." ²⁹
30. "Design of the teaching and learning space is imbued with six paradoxical tensions: 1. The space should be bounded and open; 2. The space should be hospital and charged; 3. The space should invite the choice of the individual and the voice of the group; 4. The space should honour the "little" stories of the students and the "big" stories of the disciplines and traditions; 5. The space should support solitude and surround it with the resources of community; 6. The space should welcome both silence and speech." ³⁰
31. Learning demands community – a dialogical exchange in which our ignorance can be aired, our ideas tested, our biases challenged, and our knowledge expanded, an exchange in which we are not simply left alone to think our own thoughts." ³¹
32. "Hospitality in the classroom requires not only that we treat our students with civility and compassion but also that we invite our students and their insights into the conversation. The good host is not merely polite to the guest – the good host assumes that the guest has stories to tell." ³²

²⁶ Palmer 2007: 10

²⁷ Palmer 2007: 11

²⁸ Palmer 2007: 25

²⁹ Palmer 2007: 76

³⁰ Palmer 2007: 77

³¹ Palmer 2007: 79

³² Palmer 2007: 82.

33. "How on earth can a single word or phrase begin to capture the multilayered complexity of what it feels like to teach... Teaching is frequently a gloriously messy pursuit in which shock, contradiction and risk are endemic. Our lives as teachers often boil down to our best attempts to muddle through the complex contexts and configurations that our classrooms represent."³³
34. "Skillful teaching is a highly variable process that changes depending on any number of contextual factors. What does remain constant about skillful teaching is its being grounded in three core assumptions: 1. Skillful teaching is whatever helps students learn 2. Skillful teachers adopt a critically reflective stance towards their practice 3. The most important knowledge skillful teachers need to do good work is a constant awareness of how students are experiencing their learning and perceiving teachers' actions."³⁴
35. "Credibility, authenticity, modeling, full disclosure, and consistency are some of the characteristics universally appreciated in teachers."³⁵
36. "For teachers who prize participatory learning, discussion is the jewel in the crown of the engaged classroom. It appears to equalize student-teacher power relationships, to affirm the validity of students' opinions, to get learners used to grappling with diverse and sometimes contradictory perspectives, and to encourage students to take responsibility for the development of their own judgements."³⁶
37. "All ethically caring relationships involve engrossment, displacement of motivation, commitment and confirmation ... meeting the other as one-caring... stepping out of one's personal frame of reference and into the other's steadfastness to the relationship, even in difficult times... and asks the one caring to see the once cared for as he or she sees himself or herself in the most positive light, what potentially might be."³⁷
38. "I do not mean to suggest that the establishment of caring relations will accomplish everything that must be done in education, but these relations provide the foundation for successful pedagogical activity."³⁸
39. "Stated more simply, the question is not whether teaching is an emotional experience but whether we acknowledge or deny the emotions inherent in teaching."³⁹
40. "Applied to teaching and learning, growth fostering interactions and the experience of teachers and colleagues as intellectually and emotionally available may be one of the

³³ Brookfield 2015: 1

³⁴ Brookfield 2015: 17

³⁵ Brookfield 2015: 33

³⁶ Brookfield 2015: 115

³⁷ Noddings 1984, as cited in Hawk and Lyons, 2008: 319

³⁸ Noddings 2005

³⁹ Schwartz 2019: 8

most important and yet least recognized resources for the intellectual and emotional journey taken by students and teachers alike.”⁴⁰

41. “An intellectually safe space (meaning a space where one can try ideas without fear of ridicule of shame and yet feel motivated by challenge and expectations) is foundational for learning and for development.”⁴¹
42. “I propose real presence with students and small expressions of care and enthusiasm are what power our teaching exchanges and transform them from mere interactions to powerful teaching moments.”⁴²
43. “Like care, our enthusiasm also encourages students to explore ideas, take intellectual risks, and begin to see themselves as co-creators of knowledge and ideas regarding application, in turn reinforcing their motivation.”⁴³
44. “As a classroom community, our capacity to generate excitement is deeply affected by our interest in one another, in hearing one another’s voices, in recognizing one another’s presence... To begin, the professor must genuinely value everyone’s presence.”⁴⁴
45. “In Freire’s educational philosophy the first principle is that the conventional distinction between teacher as expert and learner as an empty bio-physiological shell is questioned. Education takes place when there are two learners who occupy a somewhat different spaces in an ongoing dialogue.”⁴⁵
46. “One of the most powerful dynamics of human interaction is when people feel as though they have been heard. Really heard. Hearing someone does not mean we necessarily have to agree with what has been said. Rather, it is working to understand where people are coming from and then going to a new place together.”⁴⁶
47. “Authentic teachers ... have a capacity to bring out vital connections between teacher and subject (teachers caring deeply about their subject), teacher and student, (teachers caring about students), and student and subject (students having been enthused about subject).”⁴⁷
48. “Authenticity in teaching involves features such as being genuine, becoming more self-aware, being defined by one’s self rather than by others’ expectations, bringing

⁴⁰ Schwartz 2019:15

⁴¹ Schwartz 2019: 34

⁴² Schwartz 2019: 33

⁴³ Schwartz 2019: 37

⁴⁴ hooks, b (1990) as cited in Schwartz 2019: 8)

⁴⁵ Freire 1970:P 8.

⁴⁶ Hunter 2004: 116

⁴⁷ Palmer 1998: 29

parts of oneself into interactions with students, and critically reflecting on self, others, relationships and context, and so forth. “

49. “Fostering transformative learning in the classroom depends to a large extent on establishing meaningful, genuine relationships with students.”⁴⁸
50. “Authenticity is “1. Having a strong self-awareness of who we are as teachers and as people; 2. Being aware of the characteristics and preferences of learners and others, including how they are the same and different from our own; 3. Developing a relationship with learners that fosters our own and their ability to be genuine and open; 4. Being aware of the contexts and constraints of teaching and how these factors influence what we do and who we are; 5. Engaging in critical reflection and critical self-reflection on practice so as to be aware of the assumptions and values we hold and where they originate.”⁴⁹
51. “Students receiving information from an authority figure whom they do not know as a person can easily accept or disregard that information. But when a person is engaged in a serious dialogue with someone he or she knows, likes, and trusts, the potential for the examination of previously uncritically absorbed values and assumptions is, I suggest, much greater.”⁵⁰
52. “To know how to teach is to create possibilities for the construction and production of knowledge rather than to be engaged simply in a game of transferring knowledge.”⁵¹
53. “When I enter a classroom I should be someone who is open to new ideas, open to questions, and open to the curiosities of the students as well as their inhibitions. In other words, I ought to be aware of being a critical and enquiring subject in regard to the task entrusted to me, the task of teaching and not that of transferring knowledge.”⁵²
54. “I have never ceased to try to create a pedagogical space in which joy has its privileged role.”⁵³
55. “It is fundamental for us to know that without certain qualities or virtues, such as a generous loving heart, respect for others, tolerance, humility, a joyful disposition, love of life, openness to what is new, a disposition to welcome change, perseverance in the struggle, a refusal of determinism, a spirit of hope, an openness to justice, progressive pedagogical practice is not possible.”⁵⁴

⁴⁸ Cranton 2006: 5

⁴⁹ Cranton 2006: 8

⁵⁰ Cranton 2006: 12

⁵¹ Freire 1970: 49

⁵² Freire 1970: 49

⁵³ Freire 1970: 69

⁵⁴ Freire 1970: 108

56. "Sometimes a simple, almost insignificant gesture on the part of a teacher can have a profound formative effect on the life of a student." ⁵⁵
57. "One of the hardest lessons to learn as a teacher is that the sincerity of your actions has little or no correlation with students' perceptions of your effectiveness. The cultural, psychological, cognitive, and political complexities of learning mean that teaching is never innocent... Things are always more complicated than they at first appear." ⁵⁶
58. "Perhaps the most often used and most successful building block of our transformational teaching is the use of dialogue ... multiple voices whether ordered as discourse or free flowing as dialogue, produce a symphony of ideas and lay groundwork that supports an environment where change is possible." ⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Freire 1970: 46

⁵⁶ Brookfield 2017: 2

⁵⁷ Cranton 2006: 57

Appendix B: Foundations of Instruction: References and Resources⁵⁸

Handouts and supplementary material:

Handouts:

1. HO: Find Someone Who
2. HO: Bingo
3. HO: On Assumptions
4. HO: On Curriculum
5. HO: On Reflection
6. HO: On Assignment Design
7. HO: Developing a Teaching Philosophy Worksheet
8. HO: Blooms Taxonomy
9. HO: Blooms Digital Taxonomy
10. HO: Course Alignment Worksheet
11. HO: Aligned Learning Outcomes
12. HO: Assessment Design
13. HO: Marilyn Taylor's Cycle of Learning

Videos:

1. Andragogy (Malcolm Knowles) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vLoPiHUZbEw>
2. Universal Design for Learning at McGill <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LjUKGBipJZA>
3. Myth of Average <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4eBmyttcfU4>
4. Anyone? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KS6f1MKpLGM>
5. Dr. D. Burns on Course Learning Outcomes at KPU
6. Dr. K. Dukewich on Constructive Alignment at KPU

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