

**UNDERSTANDING EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP ANEW:
ADULT EDUCATORS' STORIES IN CONVERSATION**

by

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to disrupt and expand “given” understandings of educational leadership by exploring particular leadership instances of the everyday practice of adult education. Seven adult educators, including the author, offer narrative accounts of planning, designing, teaching, managing, and creating programs for adult learners with a particular interest in the little examined dimension of practice – educational leadership. The author works with the conceptual resources of Hans-Georg Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics, primarily through the theoretical, evocative, and scholarly work of David Jardine.

Phenomenology and the corner of this philosophical field referred to as interpretive inquiry, seeks not to *explain* why or even how we may practice leadership within our educational practices, but rather to *understand* the phenomenon and its living manifestations through the particular. Narrative texts are interpreted hermeneutically through a constructed conversation that highlights both the common and uncommon understandings of what it means to be an educational leader. Through writing and reading each of these stories, a living and breathing notion of educational leadership is created. In dialogue with others, the author becomes more literate about the meaning of her own experience. Such a dialogue invites the possibility of recognizing the significance of teaching as leading, and educational leadership as leading conversations about what matters in adult education, and in doing so one gains a greater sense of one's own leadership capacity. Implications for the development of educational leaders are considered.

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CHAPTER ONE:

UNDERSTANDING EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP ANEW

I. Research Purpose

This research intends to disrupt and expand given understandings of educational leadership by exploring particular instances of educational leadership through the narrative lenses of seven adult educators, including my own; our practices are connected by the common thread of our involvement with planning, designing, teaching, managing, and creating programs for adult learners. The theoretical resources of David Jardine, a Canadian educational research scholar building on Hans Georg Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics, inform the research approach and interpretation of the findings. Several stories are highlighted that examine teaching-leading and educational leadership as initiating and sustaining conversations and actions about what matters in the education of adult learners. The overarching purpose of this research is to understand the subject *anew* through an interpretive inquiry of accounts of particular, situated, everyday lived educational leadership.

An interpretive inquiry begins by being “struck” by something; by being “taken” with it to the extent that it makes you look at things *anew* (Jardine, 1998). My journey into an interpretive inquiry of educational leadership began with such happenstance. After many years as an adult education practitioner, in 1998 I became a student in the UBC Educational Leadership and Policy Doctoral Program. It was in the first doctoral

seminar of the program that I was struck by the surprising assertion made by my professor about educational leadership. "Teaching is leading," he claimed. This unfamiliar notion caused me to think about what I understand as "teaching" and "leading." As an educational designer, program planner and media producer grounded in the adult and continuing education tradition, I am a facilitator and program planner first, a teacher or instructor second. Teachers, according to my preconceptions, belong to the world of young children. They are didactic; concerned with delivering content to empty vessels. In this world, learning is teacher-centered, while in the adult and continuing education world the teacher plays his or her role in a more Socratic or facilitative manner. Through the use of dialogue and questioning, a Socratic approach to teaching leads the learner through a process of inquiry. A facilitative approach creates the conditions for learning without seeking control of the outcomes. The facilitator is learner-centered. The word, facilitation, meaning "facile" or "to make easy," implies a supportive, egalitarian relationship with the adult learner; empowering and guiding them to reach their goals; teaching them to learn how to learn (Vella, 1994).

My teaching practice is at the facilitative end of this continuum. More learner-centered or subject-centred than teacher-centered, my work as an educational planner and instructional designer most often involves developing teaching and learning resources and processes for adult learners, many of whom are formally educated and skilled professionals themselves. Yet I was taken by what I sensed was the deeper meaning embedded in the notion that teaching is leading. This disruption provoked me to look to the origins of the word teacher or pedagogue and I was surprised to discover a definition that did not focus exclusively on the didactic dimension of teaching. "Ped-agogos,"

according to the Greek means “one who walks along side.” Further, the etymology of the root “agogos” is “agein,” meaning, “to lead.” The link between these two words “teacher-leader” was irrefutable, and although I was unable to articulate the significance of this twinned meaning, this notion resonated with the experience of my own practice. There was also another related definition of educational leadership that addressed me. This from the Maxine Greene, who suggests that educational leaders are those educators who intentionally seek to generate incisive and inclusive dialogue about what is going on in education (Greene, 1994). Intentionality and dialogue figure prominently in this conceptualization.

II. Absences and Opportunities: Educational Leadership

The educational leadership literature is embedded in the traditional leadership discourse from psychology, management, and business within the context of organizations. This section briefly looks at some of the main paradigms from traditional leadership literature, highlights current thinking in educational leadership theory, and then proposes an alternative perspective on educational leadership.

A Brief Overview of the Traditional Leadership Literature

The leadership approaches of the past century have been dominated by a command and control paradigm of the industrial age. Mumford, writing in the early 1900s, defined leadership as ‘the preeminence of one or a few individuals in a group in the process of control of societal phenomena’ (cited in Bass, 1981, p. 7). A belief in leadership as being embodied in a few elite men with natural abilities and talents characterizes the great man theory. The main assumption of this theory is that leaders of

organizations or nations are born, ordained by the gods, not made. In the 1920s, trait theory posited that leaders are differentiated from their followers by their bravery, intelligence, strength and capabilities. In other words, they have “the right stuff.” In the 1950s and the 1960s behavioural theory focused on the behaviour of leaders in two key areas: their consideration for subordinates, i.e., the degree to which they demonstrated friendly behaviour toward subordinates; and the ability of leaders to initiate structure, i.e., the degree to which leaders structure their roles and those of their subordinates in order to complete the group’s goal. The Ohio State studies and the University of Michigan studies produced what is considered seminal research on behavioural leadership (Komives, Lucas & McMahon, 1998). Both studies suggest “effective leaders show high concern for people and production” (Komives, Lucas & McMahon, 1998, p. 39). However, inconclusive results of this research then led into situational contingency theory. This approach suggests that how a leader operates will depend on the personal traits of the leader matched to a particular situation. Situational leadership (Hershey & Blanchard, 1982), substitute for leadership, and cognitive resources theory (Fielder, 1967) all examine the relationship between leader and followers. Charismatic leadership theory, or influence theory, rose to prominence in the 1970’s (cited in Komives, Lucas & McMahon, 1998), and much like the great man theory, minus the endorsement from the divine, emphasis is on motivational skills of the leader through the use of powerful rhetoric fitting the particular culture (i.e., iron fist or sensitive protector). Transformational leaders are those who successfully implement organizational change for the benefit of both leaders and followers. The needs and goals of both leader and followers are in alignment (Kotter, 1996). Ghandi, John F. Kennedy,

and Martin Luther King are often referred to as transformative leaders. Big change, rather than small incremental change, is emphasized. Adaptive leadership theory (Heifetz, 1994) focuses on the need for leadership through times of complex change looking to the leaders' ability to communicate inner strength directly to help people find new ways of thinking to match changing circumstances.

Rost (1991) suggests that these 20th century leadership theories are limited because they are:

...structural-functionalist, management oriented, personalistic in focusing only on the leader, goal achievement dominated, self-interested and individualistic in outlook, male oriented, utilitarian and materialistic in ethical perspective, rationalistic, technocratic, linear, quantitative, and scientific in language and methodology. (Rost, 1991, p. 27)

In this paradigm, moral issues are replaced with attention to excellence.

Transformational and charismatic leadership (Bass, 1990; Conger, 1992; and Kotter, 1996), inform approaches for understanding and implementing change in organizations. This theory is informed by research like the Gallup Study (Buckingham & Coffman, 1999) that surveyed 80,000 managers from over 400 companies to determine what great business leaders have in common. The study found, across sex, race, age and style that successful leaders hire and develop key employees based on talent rather than qualifications and experience. They build on the strengths of high performers, define outcomes and expectations clearly, demonstrate encouragement and care, recognize good performance, and value their employees' opinions. And according to this recent research, competence, responsibility, trustworthiness, fairness, and integrity are key components of leadership. More recently, Gardner (1995) has stressed the communicative and educative functions of leadership and suggests that a good leader is able to create a story – a mental

representation – to affect the thoughts, behaviours, and feelings of a significant number of people.

These concepts of leadership have been critiqued in light of a more relational, social process and alternative ways of thinking about leadership, i.e., the new quantum leadership as a “force field” that shapes and guides individual and organizational behavior (Wheatly, 1992). Moving away from the command and control concepts of leadership include servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977) and leadership as stewardship (Sergiovanni, 2000), which shift the emphasis in leadership from control and persuasion to service of others and moral authority.

The new leadership theory plays down the preoccupation with organizational hierarchy and prescriptive behaviour (Donaldson & Edelson, 2000) and looks through humanist and post-modernist lenses at leadership as relational and episodic. However, traces of these traditional theories still pervade the educational leadership literature that pays most of its attention to the functions of those in formal roles of organizational management, not to educators and education.

Educational Leadership: A Broad Field

The Jossey Bass Reader on Educational Leadership (2000) discusses and theorizes educational leadership primarily from the perspective of organizational leadership, claiming to mark “what we know about educational leadership and where the field is/should be headed” (Fullan, 2000, p. xx). Leadership as stewardship and leaders as authentic role models are two themes explored outside of the organizational leadership spotlight. There is one article on teacher leadership in the K-12 context. In the recent edition of the *Adult and Continuing Education Handbook* (Wilson & Hayes, 2000), one

chapter only addresses leadership, and that is written from the perspective of administrators in post-secondary institutions.

There are so many dimensions to educational leadership that it makes a foundational, comprehensive, or universal definition untenable. Rost (1991) has listed 221 definitions of leadership, each one building on some aspect of a previous definition while sharing the common denominator that leadership is a process, act or influence that in some ways gets people to do something.¹ Educational leadership is also dissected in a variety of ways (Apps, 1994; Bolman & Deal, 1993; Belenky et al, 1986; Blackburn, 1994; Coulter & Wiens, 1999; Dean, 2001; Gardner, 2000; Greene, 1978; Lambert, 1995; Murphy, 2000; Ramsden, 1998; Sergiovanni, 1992; and Wheatley, 1994). Yet lists of processes, traits, or behaviours are limited in their ability to deepen our understanding of educational leadership. With so many definitions and theories about what leadership is within this broad and overlapping leadership research, there is significant value in exploring the lived experience of adult educators within whose day to day practices are significant acts of situated educational leadership. Such moments of educational

¹ A traditional view of leadership is based on assumptions of people's powerlessness, their lack of personal vision and inability to master forces of change, deficits, which can be remedied only by a few great leaders... The new vision of leadership is based on subtler and more important tasks; leaders are designers, stewards and teachers (Senge, 1990). Three interrelated definitions of leadership are heuristic: interpersonal, transactional and transformational. A fourth definition "community leadership" provides a heuristic distinction as well.

- Interpersonal leadership involves influencing relationships that meet the needs of the parties involved.
- Interpersonal influence is exercised in a situation and directed, through the communication process, toward the attainment of a specified goal or goals (Hobbs and Powers, 1976 cited in Blackburn, 1994).
- Transactional leadership occurs when one person takes the initiative in making contact with others for the purpose of an exchange of things that may have economic, political or psychological value. The leader-follower relationship is contractual and is the most widely used form of leadership (Vonder, 1989 cited in Blackburn, 1994)
- Transformational leadership occurs when one or more persons voluntarily engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality. The intent is to improve conditions for the group. The purposes of leaders and followers while distinct at the onset, become fused as each transforms the other. Transformational leadership is sometimes practiced in social movements, in teaching, and in volunteer organizations.
- Shared or "community" leadership is defined as a "a consensual task," a sharing of ideas and a sharing of responsibilities, where a leader is a leader for the moment only, where the leadership exerted must be validated by the consent of the follower and where leadership lies in the struggles of a community to find meaning in itself (Foster, 1989 cited in Blackburn, 1994). Leaders and followers exchange roles whenever it serves the best interests of the community. Shared leadership is advocated and practiced in many environmental, peace, and women's organizations and more recently in coalitions and other collaboration-based groups (Blackburn, 1994).

leadership are pedagogically rich and deserving of attention within the adult and continuing education discourse. It is in the complexity of narratives told of lived experience with educational leadership (as it is interwoven with other dimensions of teaching and planning and administering educational programs) where we are most likely to find “life crackling beneath its surface” (Jardine, 1998) and where it becomes possible to see the familiar in a new way and the unfamiliar in familiar ways.

Situated, Episodic, and Relational Educational Leadership: An Emerging Understanding

Smith and Deemer (2000) point out in their chapter *The Problem of Criteria in the Age of Relativism* in the 2nd Edition of the *Handbook on Qualitative Research* that “we all approach a piece of work with something in mind” (p. 889). In this research my attention is focused on two interwoven notions of educational leadership: 1) Teaching is leading and 2) Educational leadership involves intentional dialogue about what matters in education. What is of interest is how these *emerging* notions, within the traditional educational leadership field challenge a traditional understanding of educational leadership, an understanding that continues to be dominated by functional-structural conceptions of leadership and concerned with positional power in educational organizations.

In one corner of the new leadership theory where leadership is firmly connected with education in equal measures, Coulter and Wiens (2000), building on Arendt (1958) and Greene (1978), suggest that educational leadership involves initiating and sustaining dialogue where meaning is created about what matters in education. The implication of this concept is that educational leadership is a dimension of all educators’ practices and as such can be found in any site where planning, teaching, and learning occur, i.e., in

classrooms, at planning tables, or in policy meetings. According to these notions, educators are leaders when intentionally engaged in forging a common direction under conditions of diversity and who recognize the need to publicly justify their actions on the basis of "goodness." They recognize that their role of "teacher" or "facilitator" goes beyond the facilitation of learning. What I refer to as an *emerging* understanding of educational leadership in adult and continuing education is not limited to those in the formal roles of authority, i.e., dean, director, administrator, manager, or supervisor. Leadership is not solely located at the top of educational institutions or organizations, but is a dimension of educational practice connected to practitioners' theories and practices of learning and teaching. This notion of educational leadership emphasizes the power and human agency necessary to "read" complex situations, make sound judgements, and take wise action (Shon, 1983). An assumption of this notion is that there is an inherent capacity of people at various levels to be knowledgeable and active in exercising options within complex environments (Giddens, 1982). Educational leadership is not something possessed by certain people; it is a social practice intertwined with the practice of adult education. This capacity for knowledge and action is like a stance or mindset that anticipates and leads from whatever level the educators is located in a community or organization. It is not a static role but part of the interior life of all educators. This notion of stance is succinctly portrayed in the film, *Mr. Holland's Opus*. Glen Holland (Richard Dreyfuss) is a new teacher who would rather be earning a living as a composer. His principal, Mrs. Jacobs (Olympia Dukakis), challenges him, in this conversation:

Mrs. Jacobs: "Mr. Holland, just the man I was looking for. We're forming a textbook committee for the next year's curriculum, and I would like your ideas and suggestions. We meet next Tuesday in the library."

Mr. Holland: "Oh, I'm very sorry, Mrs. Jacobs. I'm very busy on Tuesday night."

Mrs. Jacobs: "You know, for a good four or five months now I've been watching you, Mr. Holland. I've never seen a teacher spring for the parking lot after last period with more speed and enthusiasm than his students. Perhaps you should be our track coach."

Mr. Holland: "Mrs. Jacobs, I get to school on time every morning. Don't I? I'm doing the best job I can."

Mrs. Jacobs: "A teacher has two jobs! Fill young minds with knowledge. Yes. But more important, give those minds a compass so the knowledge doesn't go to waste. Now, I don't know what you're doing with the knowledge, Mr. Holland, but as a compass you're stuck."

The teacher-leader stance is significant. It breaks with the organizational language that pervades the leadership discourse. It recognizes the human agency located at all levels of an organization; and suggests that constructing and interpreting are actions within the role of the educator. Such a stance seems to involve a recognition of the moral basis of educational practice, putting the needs of the students first, demonstrating standards, and matching words with action (Manthey & Thompson, 1999). It reconnects leadership to education.

Educational leadership is centrally about facilitating learning, yet this connection often seems lost or disconnected. For example, in the process of reviewing the adult education literature for enlightenment on matters of educational leadership, with the exception of Apps' work on educational leadership (Apps, 1994) who calls on the educator to recognize the importance of the moral, poetic and spiritual dimension of leadership, I found that the literature does not adequately address educational leadership in everyday adult education practice. The notion of educational leadership as a situated dimension of adult educators' practice was noticeably absent. Within this space I found

an opportunity for an organized way of inquiring if the traditional notion of conflating leadership with rulership meant disregarding the leadership dimension of educational practice and, in so doing, overlooking the possibilities of learning and developing leadership capacity within the context of practice. I wonder too, if other adult and continuing educators experienced this same disorientation.

From this adult and continuing education literature review I stitched together a heuristic framework from various scholars that brings a closer link between the language of leadership and learning (Sergionvanni, 1992). At this intersection I found a number of scholars who offer insight into the deep complexity of teaching, leading, and learning. Educational leaders are open and responsive to change (Apps, 1994); they approach adult education as a vocation (Collins, 1995); they are involved in rethinking teaching practices and enhancing learning strategies (hooks, 1994); they connect teacher's identity and integrity, as well as challenge received ideas and mentalities (Palmer, 1998); their moral authority is based on articulated ideals (Sergiovanni, 2000); they intentionally create "force fields" or other "spaces" where people can learn (Wheatley, 1994); and they understand educational leadership as leading conversations about what matters in education (Greene, 1978).

With this framework in mind to orient my inquiry, and in the phenomenological tradition, I began a process of re-examining my everyday lived educational practice for some traces of this emergent sense of educational leadership. My aim was to capture and articulate the complexities of these experiences through the development of a series of narrative accounts. Studying personal experience is an approach considered by many scholars to be of particular value for reflecting critically on practice (Arendt, 1958; Cole

1989; Clandinin & Connelly, 1998 & 2000; Bateson, 1989; Brookfield, 1995; Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Fischer & Forester, 1996; Gergen, 2000; Jardine, 1998; Kolb, 1984; Palmer, 1998; Polkinghorne, 1988; and Tompkins, 1996). Writing narratively about several experiences has provided access to a dimension of my own practice I have not intentionally laid claim to in spite of having managed numerous complex projects and programs as an educational media producer, program planner, and trainer of trainers. Writing, reading, and reflecting on these narrative accounts brings into sharper focus the leadership dimension of the endeavours in which I am engaged.

This interpretive inquiry has also contributed to creating a new mindscape (Sergiovanni, 1992) of educational leadership.² This emergent mindscape of educational leadership supplants the traditional, univocal image of the leader as embodied in the strong, determined, goal-setting, command-and-control policy-maker in a position of authority. In its place is a more situated, episodic understanding of educational leadership that stresses the importance of power and human agency as well as the dialogic construction of reality. This rupture has opened up possibilities for reflecting on the imbedded acts of educational leadership in program planning, such as facilitating dialogue, fostering democratic conditions, attending to power imbalances and recognizing and responding to the ethical challenges that have characterized my work for the past 15 years. There were other events that also provoked my interest in an interpretive inquiry into educational leadership.

² A mindscape refers to "theories of practice that leaders develop over time, and with their ability, in the light of these theories, to reflect on the situations they face" (Sergiovanni, 1992, p. 7).

Intimacy and Understanding

In a graduate course in Narrative Inquiry taken while I was in the midst of developing my doctoral research proposal I was struck again by a particular instance of educational leadership. It began when I read the article "Living our gendered lives: composing narratives out of tears and fears" (Norman & Leggo, 1995), in which student and professor reconstruct a series of troubling events that occur in a graduate level course on Gender Studies. The professor recounts with frankness and humility his inability to resolve a series of troubling events that lead to a profound conflict of views and acrimony among the students. In both the reading of the article and my participation in a classroom discussion that followed the reading, I was taken by the honesty and intimacy of the story.³ I experienced this sharing of a messy, unresolved and complex experience as a powerful example of educational leadership. This intimate portrayal of experience from the perspective of the educator communicated both strength and vulnerability. One surprising outcome of this story was learning something about how to be intimate with my own teaching-leading experiences that involved unresolved conflict. I turned my attention to a past experience, hitherto invisible, in which I was both a character and an observer.

Vulnerable Leadership

In the early 1990's I had a number of projects with the health department. One involved facilitating a community action project with a group of community people concerned about the issue of adolescent substance abuse. We formed a motley crowd of 15 or so - recovering addicts

³ The word "intimacy" comes from the Latin *intimatus*, which means to make something known to someone else. This original meaning has to do with the willingness to pass on honest information rather than to be emotionally close.

(young and old), employee assistance professionals, a hair stylist looking for a career in local politics, a teacher, some parents, a youth worker, and myself, "the consultant" an educational planner and video producer. We all had our reasons for being there; all of them particular to our experience with substance abuse and the pain it creates. By this time I had produced a number of films and publications on community prevention approaches. I was thrilled to be invited to facilitate this process. We were committed to action, but we needed time to get a plan together. Many were impatient to get going. "Soon," I promised them, "first let's spend some time getting to know each other. Let's figure out what we have to offer and how we might marshal our talents and passion."

In time we developed a speaker's program for the school and organized a small group of young adults in recovery to speak to students about their addiction experiences. The sessions were very moving. Michele, a recovering alcoholic at 19, was one of the speakers. Foster care, neglect, sexual abuse, addiction to drugs and alcohol, and eventual recovery beginning at age 14, her story was sad, hopeful, and absent of sensationalism. The silence of her audience was still and deep as the students listened to a story profoundly marked by loss; loss so great that even the drugs or the alcohol could not console her any longer.

Another project we developed was a community event for youth. We called it "The Wall." Among the food, live music, tie dye t-shirts, kick boxing and trick bike demonstrations at Ambleside Park, we set up a large, blank paper mural, supplied paint brushes and paint, and invited youth to write or paint their thoughts on it. We conceptualized 'The Wall' as a place to express yourself, to break down the alienation between the self and the community, between the youth and the adults in authority. We argued that the inability to express yourself and to be listened to was a contributing factor in youth substance

abuse. We wanted to provide a forum and a celebratory setting where young people could express themselves through words and images - poems, rants, observations, missives, critiques, about love, life, war, politics, violence, whatever. Hundreds of youth participated. Their visions and thoughts covered the 500-foot long mural on both sides. Our little group of volunteers had succeeded in putting youth on the map doing something positive. Articles and photographs appeared in the local paper documenting our efforts.

Meanwhile the local treatment center had also taken notice of our work. Substance abuse prevention is a part of their mandate, but one they give very little attention to. Who has time to prevent people from falling in the river upstream when you're absorbed with hauling people out down stream? I hear that one of the board members was asking about who is in charge of the group. At the next community meeting one of the board members from the treatment centre asks me what my role is.

"What kind of credentials do you have for undertaking substance abuse prevention?"

I list the academic and practical proof of my competence, but the way she raises the question riles, no, it offends me. I am indignant. Not because of my own discomfort, I am happy to demonstrate that I have a good understanding of the issues and dilemmas. No, I am angered on behalf of the group who may not be formally trained, but collectively has a rich experience and a willingness to be thoughtful about what they can contribute.

I suggest to Jennifer, the Director of Health Promotion at the health department that this kind of innuendo of a community-based group is disrespectful and not in the spirit of fostering community participation. She agrees and calls a meeting with the treatment centre staff and board members. We sit in a big circle - the community people, included. Jennifer doesn't mince words and straight away challenges the assumption implied in their questioning that only professionals should undertake substance abuse

prevention. Even worse, perhaps only professionals of their own choosing. They refuse to back down, calling into question again our right to have a voice in the matter, citing the need to be "professional." By questioning the expertise of the people involved they are challenging the rights of people in recovery to participate in substance abuse prevention activities. Passion, commitment, thoughtfulness appear to be irrelevant. The science of substance abuse prevention is the only measure. Never mind that science is far from offering certainty about what must be done about the problems.

Jennifer is incredulous. "These people," she says, referring to our group, "have carried out wonderful work in this community and you show them no respect with these questions." As she speaks I see tears rolling down her face. She chokes back a sob and the treatment centre people look away, unmoved. At the time no one in the group says anything about what has just happened.

* * *

At the time I didn't know what to make of this encounter. The group and myself were both heartened and angered by this meeting. On the one hand, Jennifer's heartfelt emotional response to injustice drew our attention to a cold, detached, and "professional" bureaucracy that treats community volunteers with disdain. These tears made us feel cared for and resolved. On the other hand, the encounter knocked the wind from our sails. Did we care too much about what these board members thought? To me it raised questions about what kind of leader responds in this way. Was this a "good" response? What I do remember now is that Jennifer responded like a human being, a vulnerable leader working with other human beings – not a clerk, manager, or administrator dealing with a group of customers. Her humanity and her tears pointed to the care and commitment she felt for this project, and also, I suspect for the many marginalized members of the community for whom she felt compassion. Looking back, it seems now

that our group “misread” the meaning of those tears. Rather than defeat, as perhaps we understood them, they should have opened a space for the possibility of pushing past our differences with the Board members. A beginning, not an end. But that did not happen. We never spoke of them and their meaning was unclear.

In Max Depree’s book, *Leadership is an Art* (1989), he suggests that there are many moments when to weep is a sign that we are intimate with our work; that we should weep over admirable actions and deplorable ones, over triumphs and over tragedies. He asks: “What makes us weep? Superficiality; a lack of dignity; injustice; great news; a word of thanks; separation, arrogance; betrayal of ideas, of principles, or quality; jargon, because it confuses rather than clarifies; having to work in a job where you are not free to do your best; people who are gifts to the spirit” (p.138). Weeping is a sign that we are in touch with reality, that we are intimate with our vocations.

Retelling this story as I remember it brings together matters of intimacy, vulnerability, and educational leadership out of the privacy of memory and offers opportunities to evoke and invite others to reflect on a particular dimension of educational leadership rarely the focus of scholarly attention. As I look at this moment over my shoulder (Tompkins, 1996) and within the context of the “Tears and Fears” account, this instance is rich with lessons about caring and vulnerability as dimensions of leadership. Both episodes get at something absent from the adult education leadership literature, with the notable exception of Palmer (1998) who writes on the paradox of vulnerability and strength and the importance of living with the tension rather than living with the outward mask that pretends there are no tensions. As well, the anthropologist Behar (1996), in *The Vulnerable Observer*, foregrounds this as the central dilemma of

social science researchers – balancing the tough-minded with the tenderhearted. My research attempts to open up some of these tensions and dilemmas of educational leadership—these often indiscernible and undiscussable dimensions of educational practice – and offer new stories that add to a fuller, more complex and perhaps more ambiguous, understanding of educational leadership.

In this search for understanding educational leadership from a narrative perspective I have moved hermeneutically from the particular instance to the general theory, to the literature on leadership, adult education, phenomenology, and back to narrative experience, to constructing and reading and rereading the narrative accounts of other adult educators interviewed. Following the anthropologist, Clifford Geertz (1995), I have elected to put myself in the way of specific experiences with the hope that the meaning of these stories, constructed into texts, “bodies forth and enmeshes” me while also enriching the way educational leadership is currently understood.

III. Overview of the Research

In Chapter Two I set out the basic tenets of Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics, primarily through the work of Jardine (1998) and briefly highlight a few key concepts including: effective history, pre-understanding, understanding as a fusion of horizons, risking tradition, the criteria for hermeneutic interpretation (focusing on three notions of “openness”), the significance of conversation as an interpretative approach, and the place of narrative in phenomenology.

Chapter Three is a prologue to the stories of six adult educators interviewed for this research whose individual stories I have constructed into a “conversation.” In this chapter I introduce these co-narrators and discuss the importance of listening for stories,

present criteria for developing “good” stories and interpretations, and provide some parameters for leading an interpretivist conversation.

In Chapter Four I present the first of two chapters foregrounding the stories of the co-narrators in conversation. This chapter focuses on the imprint of teacher-leaders on these co-narrators through which their practical theories of educational leadership emerge.

In Chapter Five the co-narrators continue their conversation by offering a series of specific educational leadership instances. These stories highlight a range of tensions, complexities, and challenges in everyday practice including: reluctant leadership, creating safe and challenging educative spaces, leading conversations that connect and provoke action, freedom and loneliness, orchestrating diversity, and responsibility. The connection is explored between understanding and courage and what it means in educational leadership.

In Chapter Six I bring together the threads and themes of the stories in conversation. The chapter begins with a summary of the key points of the “stories in conversation” and offers two of my own narrative accounts, one as an example of the importance of conversation in educational leadership. The other, “Street Phronesis,” is a site for reflection and learning of situated educational leadership. The chapter highlights implications for action learning for educational leaders.

CHAPTER TWO:

HERMENEUTICS AND THE INTERPRETIVE TRADITION

Phenomenology involves turning attention to life as it is actually lived “with all the ambiguity that life entails” (Jardine, 1998, p. 6). Phenomenology is generally concerned with the description and analysis of conscious experience. It centres on giving voice to the living text of experience and “reawakening us to everyday life” (Jardine, 1989, p. 12). In this research I draw primarily on the evocative and scholarly work of David Jardine, a Canadian professor of education whose work in phenomenology and hermeneutics provides access to the interpretive inquiry tradition, and particularly the work of one key figure, Hans-Georg Gadamer. Central to interpretive inquiry is the playful exploration of what can be “made possible” by understanding the particular. Particular instances are taken up as “texts” and then read and reread for the possibilities of understanding that they evoke (Jardine, 1998). Although I frame this research primarily drawing from Jardine’s work in phenomenology and hermeneutics (1998), I refer also to the work of Arendt (1958), Collins (1995), Greene (1995), hooks (1994, 2000), and Palmer (1998).

I. Gadamer’s Philosophical Hermeneutics

Gadamer (1979), following his teacher and mentor Heidegger, asserts that one’s knowledge and experience, what he refers to as “effective history,” are the basis of one’s “horizon of understanding.” This metaphorical horizon is “the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point” (Gadamer, 1979, p. 143). He argues that we bring the prejudices of our historicity to all encounters and that

these prejudices and pre-understandings cause us “to approach things [e.g., objects and texts] with expectations of what they are like” (Linguist, 1996, p. 3). In other words, we bring to each situation “some aspect of our past experience which we bring to bear on a new problem” (Collins, 1995, p. 259). These expectations, “pre-understandings,” or “prejudices” are present in all our encounters.

Language and the Hermeneutics of Understanding

We are the bearers of tradition, says McIntyre (1984), whether we like it or not:

What I am, therefore, is in key part, what I inherit, a specific past that is present to some degree in my present. I find myself part of a history and that is generally to say, whether I like it or not, whether I recognize it or not, one of the bearers of tradition. (p. 221)

When we understand something, we do not grasp it as the thing is itself, but through the accumulation of “effective history.” Our understanding is enabled and conditioned by our pre-understanding and at the same time our understanding is limited by the overall “horizons’ of our outlooks” (Moran, 2000, p. 252). With the acquisition of language comes a set of “traditions” or set of concepts that shape the way we perceive the world. To have a tradition is to have a certain way of looking at the world. This worldview, with which one interprets the world, shapes one’s “horizon of understanding.”

Understanding, according to Gadamer, is an event brought about by language. Gadamer says, “the possession of a language is not only a necessary condition of our being able to experience the world, but the particular language we adopt will affect the way we experience it” (Linguist, 1996 p.4). Understanding is the process of fusion of horizons, but does not require relinquishing one’s own horizon.

The attempt to understand the other must begin with the recognition that we are separated by different horizons of understanding, and that mutual understanding comes through overlapping consensus, merging of

horizons, rather than through abandonment of one of the interlocutors of his or her initial horizon.” (Moran, 2000, p. 252)

Hermeneutics is a practice of interpretation of texts based on the premise that human reality – the way we think about, discuss, represent, and convey possibilities – is embedded in language, both written and spoken. Rather than being a method of inquiry per se, hermeneutics is the practice of interpretation of texts that moves dialectically from the particular to general (the part to the whole) and the general to the particular (the whole to the part). The interplay between “the whole” i.e., what we already comprehend, and the “new parts” i.e., that which surprises and challenges us, is described as the “hermeneutic circle” (Kerdeman, 1998). The interpretation of a text involves letting the world of the text enlarge the horizon of one’s self-understanding by putting these pre-understandings at risk with the view of “fusing horizons.” Understanding is the fusion of past and present horizons; a blend of something new, a new vantage point, or an expansion of possibilities.

Interpretive inquiry is deeply pedagogic and involves the “transformation of self-understanding” through experiences that confront our prejudices. Such an experience is “genuine” in the Gadamerian sense, when it wakes us up to something anew. To be awakened signifies that one is “open to the other” and through social interactions or genuine conversations one learns ways to draw new meaning from experience within the context of an unfolding cultural tradition.

Putting Traditions “At Risk”

It is not possible to escape our cultural traditions, however Gadamer (1994) does highlight the importance of recognizing that while investigating something, the

...process of fusion is continually going on, for the old and new are always combining into something of living value, without either being explicitly fore-grounded from the other.” (Gadamer, 1984, p. 306)

The central point of Gadamer’s hermeneutics is not that we understand something once and for all, but that by putting our own horizon or stand point into “play” and thereby putting it at risk, we open ourselves to what the other says, thereby making understanding, or a “fusion of horizon” possible. As Gadamer argues in *Truth and Method*, we “always already” confront all interpretation with a horizon of understanding (the array of pre-understanding or prejudices that constitute our stance toward interpretation in the first place). To move beyond the pull of our personal horizon of understanding involves engaging with the “text” in a genuine dialogic relationship.

Conversation as Interpretation

Literacy in interpretation involves a process of reflecting on instances, thereby “raising up” particular experiences in order to “allow us to read our individual lives as fully participant in the shared and contested, generative work of humanity as a whole” (Jardine, 1998, p. 46). As such, dialogue or genuine conversation figures prominently in Gadamer’s hermeneutics. What emerges in a dialogue or genuine conversation with and between these instances is “an expansion of the contours of the story each one of us is living out” (Jardine, 1998, p. 47).

The author of a text is not the final authority on its meaning. Putting the expressions of experience into a text and into dialogue with others is central to interpretation. In the back and forth of dialogue our diverse horizons of understanding may be brought into light, tested, and perhaps changed.

...The process of questions and answer, giving and taking, talking at cross purposes and seeing each other’s point, performs that communication of

meaning which...is the task of hermeneutics. This is the characteristic of every true conversation that each opens himself to the other, truly accepts his point of view as worthy of consideration and gets inside the other. (Gadamer, cited in Burbules 1996, p. ix)

Interpretive dialogue is not a method, but a flexible and adaptable practice, one that does not follow a recipe or an algorithm (Burbules, 1996, p. xi). An interpretive dialogue may have an intended goal, such as answering a specific question, or it may be open-ended and divergent.

II. Criteria for Interpretation

How is a "good" interpretation of a phenomenon defined? Critical analysis or interpretation of texts is central to the hermeneutic process. This process does not have a fixed set of rules or norms to be applied to the text. Rather, it involves interpreting the text based on its context (i.e., the time, place, topic, the characters present and not present) and its parts. The intention of hermeneutics is not to accumulate new information about a subject, but to regenerate given meaning and to disrupt the "old, established and familiar" (Jardine, 1998). The focus is on understanding "anew." Understanding anew refers to the multiple and open-ended possibilities of interpretation. According to this perspective, a "good" interpretation is not definitive and final, but is one that "keeps open the possibility and the responsibility of returning, for the very next instance, and might demand of us that we understand anew" (Jardine, 1998, p. 46). The goal of hermeneutics then is not to establish definitively what the experiences might mean, since "decoding, counting and recounting the surface signs [of text, of experience] are not enough. Rather, as we unearth the signs of life crackling underneath the surfaces we become more literate [and] we may become less literal, [less] stuck in the case without a vision of its soul"

(Hillman, 1983, p.28 cited in Jardine, 1998, p. 46). A good interpretation offers a kind of literacy of meaning.

The interpretation of individual instances is not a linear process. Making meaning that is reliable from instances in educational leadership involves “play” in the sense of putting a given meaning “at risk.” Gadamer refers to play as being much like the relationship one has with a work of art when it is experienced and understood. This understanding comes about when the art addresses one, confronting one’s assumptions, one’s pre-understandings. In such an encounter, truth emerges through genuine confrontation. “Play goes beyond the notion of subject and object. In playing, we have to learn to lose ourselves in order to remain true to the game” (Moran, 2000, p. 284). For Gadamer, in a world of competing interpretations, truth making is the process of comparing and contrasting interpretations. Meaning emerges through dialogue between the author(s) of a text or texts and the interpreter.

A good interpretation involves openness. Hermeneutics is a way to hear and welcome “the other” (Caputo, 2000) with a sense of openness. This openness may begin by being awakened or confronted by the other. And through such a confrontation with the strange or different what is familiar is called into question. In conversation between the self and other – the texts or living persons – meaning is created.

Between the Familiar and the Strange

Interpretation involves “making an object and all its possibilities fluid” (Gadamer, 1989, p. 367). It makes the novel [e.g., incidents of educational leadership] seem familiar by relating them to prior knowledge, and makes the familiar [e.g., what we already have

understood as educational leadership] seem strange by viewing these instances from a new perspective (Jardine, 1998).

Interpretive work doesn't simply read the instance into a "pre-given," closed, and already understood "past," but with the help of the instance[s], makes what has been said of [educational leadership] in the past readable again by reopening it to new, generative instances... Without these living instances, [educational leadership] would no longer be a living feature of our lives; it would no longer be something that concerns us, that provokes us, that entices us. ... It would be a lifeless concept or name of some object, which "stands apart" from the life we live, couched in some textbook, an object of indifference. (Jardine, 1998, p. 42)

Jardine refers to this as "the fecundity of the individual case":

The instance transforms what are the traditional understandings [e.g., of educational leadership]. The shared and contested understandings in which we live are "called into account" by the instance, made to "speak," change, accommodate, and, so to speak, "learn" through this encounter." (p. 42)

Through the individual case or instance both the strange and the familiar are brought forth. What is familiar comes into question in light of the strange. The true locus of hermeneutics is this space between the familiar and the strange. In this intermediate space *understanding* arises, and this understanding is transformational. "We understand in a different way if we understand at all" (Gadamer, 1960, p.237).

Invitational and Open-Ended

The risk of interpretive inquiry is that we "get lost in the flurries of sense that make up our lives... and the danger is in never reaching a conclusive understanding" (Jardine, 1998). As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, interpretative inquiry neither offers a linear methodology nor the hope of a conclusive summing up of the inquiry. The strength of Gadamer's project lies in an open and invitational "dialectic logic of question and answer that awakens the reader to new ideas" (Moran, 2000, p.

285). The intent of this research then is not to establish the extent to which the phenomenon of leadership in adult educators' everyday practice is widespread, but rather, what educational leadership *is* and what it *means* as a feature of human life (Jardine, 1998).

Throughout this study I work hermeneutically, moving back and forth in conversation from the particular to the general, from the parts to the whole, between the literature, my own experience and that of other adult educators seeking "a genuine dialogue [which makes] truth manifest beyond the subject" (Moran, 2000, p. 249). Particular experiences written in narrative accounts provide the phenomenological instances of "teaching-leading" through which data is generated to explore interpretively.

III. Narrative Inquiry – Making the Past Visible

Inquiring narratively and interpretively has awakened me to the topic of educational leadership as "a fresh understanding of something already understood" that has "opened up something that seemed 'over and done with'" (Jardine, 1998, p. 40). In light of these disruptions and awakenings I continue to construct narrative accounts drawn from my own practice as an adult and continuing education program planner, media producer, and reluctant educational administrator. These narratives are offered as evidence that narrative instances, rendered into texts, have the capacity to challenge "pre-understandings" of educational leadership, and offer generative possibilities for learning. I have attempted to work narratively in this introduction, "telling my story" of the actual events of the past (historical truth), but more importantly, attempting to offer a good story (narrative truth) that becomes "my experience," "my problem," "my challenge," and inviting the reader to join me in working interpretively with this narrative (Gergen, 2000;

Reissman, 1993; Polkinghorne, 1988). By including my own story "Vulnerable Leadership" and the other narrative accounts, I attempt to show through the events leading up to this inquiry my confrontation with the subject of educational leadership,

Beyond Subjectivity

An interpretive inquiry within the tradition of phenomenological hermeneutics does not begin and end with the subjectivity of personal experience. It places the narrative text of personal experience in conversation with the traditions within which it is imbedded and it "plays" with the possible meanings of the text through dialogue. It is in this spirit that I met and interviewed six other adult educators about their "teaching-leading" experiences. It was in this spirit, too that I transcribed the conversations generated in these interviews into "field texts" (Mishler, 1986) and found them to be full of narrative telling, rich in metaphor, theorizing, questions and answers, and arguments related to educational leadership. These texts are the central feature of this study.

Narrative inquiry is moral work. The essence of a narrative moment is where "a teller in conversation takes a listener into a past time or 'world' and recapitulates what happened ...to make a point, often a moral one" (Reissman, 1993, p. 3). The narratives included in this study are replete with moral content. They capture moments of tension in a particular time and place when questions arise about what happened, what ought to have been done, and what it means to the narrator. This research does not dwell in broad generalizations or theories of educational leadership. Rather I have elected to focus on a few particular instances of educational leadership – as time and space permit within the constraints of this study – lived and experienced everyday by adult educators from a variety of educative settings. From these instances I move backwards and forwards

between the particular and the general, the practice of educational leadership and the theory, looking for a fresh and living understanding of educational leadership

Hermeneutics means beginning “where we are with our situatedness, in the pre-given fix in which we find ourselves” (Caputo, 2000, p. 55). Creating narrative accounts of such situatedness puts these beliefs and practices and these pre-given meanings “at risk.” However, as Arendt (1958), Schon (1983), and Collins (1995) suggests, it is difficult to understand an event while in the midst of it. Reflection on practice is thus a key element of phenomenology and hermeneutics.

As a rule, we do not grasp the meaning of an action while we are caught up in its performance. Rather we turn back in reflection upon the flow of action to capture its meaning. In order to understand the meaning of my experiences, I have to pause, as it were, and glance backward on my action. Through a deliberate process of recollection and retention, immediate experiences overlap with those of the past. (Collins, 1995, p. 265)

As both the author of a story and its interpreter I have become acutely aware that narratives offer meaning beyond the original intentions of the author. As Gadamer points out in the introduction to *Truth and Method*, on the subject of intentionality, understanding is more than representation of authorial intent. To interpret “means precisely to bring one’s own pre-conceptions into play.” In the story that follows about how I taught myself to sew when I was a young teenager, I illustrate how “understanding anew” begins by risking pre-conceptions. This story was written as part of a narrative inquiry course assignment to “write about your vocation as an educator.” I initially began with a description of how I approach my program planning process, but finding myself bogged down trying to capture my theories and philosophy rather than a true

notion of vocation, I remembered a presentation that I made on experiential learning that explored how I learned to sew. This story is now a story within a story.

Learning to Sew

I am 13 years old and my friend Debbie and I are each experimenting with sewing a dress from a pattern. There are no "sewers" in my household so all I know about sewing comes from my own muddling around with scissors, needles, fabric, pattern instructions, and my little Singer sewing machine. One of my first sewing projects is a "shift" - it's a simple, sleeveless A-line dress made of cotton fabric with a Paisley motif. I have just finished sewing the facing around the arms and the neck and putting in the little zipper in the back. The zipper is a bit puckered but it opens and closes easily and you can hardly notice the uneven sewing because of the pattern of the fabric.

When I show my handy work to Debbie she thinks it's great. "A beautiful job," she says. I offer to help her with her dress. "That'd be fun," she says. At that moment her mother, a very accomplished sewer, walks in the room. Her mother smiles slightly at me, at my shift, and says, "That's ok, I'll show her."

I am telling this story to a group of colleagues with the intention of illustrating how people approach learning in different ways. My learning style is to immerse myself totally in the experience and try to figure things out from the inside. But as I tell the story, I unexpectedly feel like I'm 13 years old again and I experience a profound sense of humiliation for what now appears to be a mess of a sewing job. Until this very moment I had never thought of this sewing project as a mess. My voice cracks as I speak, I feel the rush of colour in my cheeks, and I am painfully conscious of telling a story that is revealing myself in a way that I don't want in front of this group. I tell the group later as a postscript to the story that I became an

accomplished sewer in my late teens in case they thought
I'd gone through life sewing zippers in badly.

* * *

At the time I first told this story it was about participatory learning styles. When I wrote it up as a text, it became a story about the dangers of storytelling and how writing and telling stories may reveal things about ourselves in ways we may not even be aware. The process of writing this account brought my pre-understandings about what a good educator should be like into "play." The shock of such a confrontation with my own experience is testament to the deeply rooted traditions in which I am immersed. Obviously I believed that a "good" educator should be professional and highly competent in the subject matter in which she or he is engaged in facilitating. There is no room for the amateur seamstress in this definition. One mustn't offer to help another, or work things through together until one is an expert. But the truth is, even now when I teach or facilitate, I continue to learn from such experiences. Learning and teaching in this story is relational. It is a process. And it is messy and iterative.

While telling the story initially to a group of colleagues it aroused in me feelings of shame and discomfort. What I considered a simple and light autobiographical tale took on another, darker meaning in the telling; intertwined in the narrative lingered something about the dangers inherent in telling stories. The interpretation of the story was out of my hands. It was not only my interpretation that mattered. If I was to understand the full contours of the story I needed to involve others, i.e., other texts and readers, where I might learn from a more wholistic interpretation, and perhaps reach a new understanding of this story's meaning. Experiencing this loss of control led me to

consider the importance of telling and learning from such experiences in “respectful educative spaces”⁴ where it might be possible to create and tell and interpret stories of vulnerability and uncertainty with others in the spirit of dwelling together⁵ in the possible meanings they hold.

A good interpretation of this story is not definitive and final. I have revisited this story many times since this first public telling and talked about it in conversations with friends and colleagues. A colleague who was present the first time I told the sewing story remarked to me the other day how well she remembers the way I was taken aback, clearly confronted with a new interpretation through the eyes of my colleagues. When I reread the story in light of Michael Collins’ (1991) work on adult education as vocation, I was struck anew by yet another interpretation. This interpretive “play” or “happenstance” (Jardine, 1998) led me to understand that the story was no longer just about learning styles or unintentional dangers in storytelling; it was also about my vocation as an adult educator – about friends educating friends, in the spirit of equality and caring. Collins’ work examines what he refers to as the crisis in adult education “professionalism” and advocates the return to the roots of adult education as a social movement when the

⁴ The notion of space refers to a number of interrelated factors including the physical set up, the conceptual framework of the educator used to explore the topic under discussion, the emotional ethos that the educator is aiming for and the ground rules that guide the educational inquiry. Such educative space holds paradoxical tensions. The space is both bounded and open; hospitable and “charged”; it invites both the voice of the individual and the voice of the group; it honors the “little” stories of the learners and the “big” stories of the disciplines and traditions; it supports learners seeking solitude and surrounds them with the resources of the community; and finally the space welcomes both silence and speech (Palmer, 1998.).

⁵ Habermas (1979) defines ideal speech conditions as the context for practical, genuinely democratic decision-making among groups of people with common concerns. To create ideal conditions for communication and genuine democratic discourse, identifiable distortions and coercive structures that impede rational discourse must be recognized and attended to. Rasack (1993) and Fraser (1992) contest the assumptions embedded in this ideal that there are educative spaces where inequality and or difference between person can be eliminated or where people can let go of their own particular interests. Wlodkowski & Ginsberg (1995) offer concrete suggestions for creating the conditions for learning where people have that intrinsic motivation to engage in learning – the focus is on creating positive attitudes about the setting, the instructor, and the subject matter; creating belonging and connection; making the content relevant and tied to one’s own life as possible; and building opportunities to develop feelings of success and competence.

interests of the educator were closely aligned with the learner. "Friends helping each other," he says, "is a necessary antidote for the cynicism, resignation, and self-centred progressivism of the hard-edged 1980's, which have left their mark on the literature and everyday practices of adult education" (Collins, 1991, p. xii).

Interpreting "Learning to Sew" as a story about vocation offers an example of what Gadamer means when he suggests that interpretation is to make an object (the instance) and all its possibilities fluid. The possible meanings are many. This story shows the familiar (i.e., learning to sew as an illustration of participatory learning style) made strange (by casting it as a story of vocation made readable again from this new perspective). Rather than being humiliated by my limited skills with needle and thread, this recasting has left me with a sense of pride in that 13 year old girl, her dedication, caring, and willingness to help others with their projects and goals in spite of her own limitations and imperfections.

I had found a genuine vocation story imbedded within this story. Autobiographical storytelling and hermeneutics in this instance, assisted reflection on my experience without abstraction or conceptual analysis, revealing more about my vocation than I was able to recognize on the first or even second reading.

This hermeneutic experience provoked me to wonder if there were not more such moments, instances, or episodes of educational leadership worthy of telling, re-telling, and interpreting; rich in meaning and resonance for ourselves and other educators. By making these stories explicit they become discussible and their meanings become open for further interpretation through dialogue. This "understanding between persons"—this dialogue between "I and You" (Buber, 1958), this inter-subjective meaning making

process – is the work of interpretation and is central to hermeneutics. As I discover and as Jardine (1998) points out, a “reliable” interpretation takes time, is open-ended, and tentative.

Producing a “reliable” interpretive reading of [an] instance requires living with [the] instance for a period of time in order to learn its ways: turning it over and over, telling and retelling it, finding traces of it over and over again in what you read, seeing the nod of heads and faint smiles when it is used as an example in a class, scouring the references colleagues suggest, searching my own lived-experiences for analogues of experience, asking friends if they have ever experienced anything like this before, testing and re-testing different ways of speaking and writing about it to see if these different ways help engage and address possible readers of the work to follow. It takes time to dwell with such an incident and allow the slow emergence of the rich contexts of familiarity in which it fits. (Jardine, 1998, p. 45)

While working through the interpretive process of writing and reading and rereading texts of my own narrative accounts of educational leadership, and through the stories gathered from conversations with my adult education colleagues, Jardine’s description above resonates strongly. I am heartened and humbled by the possibilities of such an inquiry process and alert to the risks. “Understanding is an adventure and, like any other adventure, it is dangerous,” says Gadamer (1983). Jardine, following Gadamer, cautions that:

Involvement in interpretive inquiry runs the risk of getting quite lost in the flurries of sense that make up our lives. It faces, too, the dangerous insight that, so to speak, “getting somewhere” in understanding one’s life is never finished – understanding “always must be renewed in the effort of our living.” (Jardine, 1998, pp. 110-111)

Interpretation: Regenerative and Pedagogical

There are no simple methods or prescriptions for “doing hermeneutics.” The primary interest of hermeneutics has to do with how we understand ourselves in relation to the meaning that comes from a particular instance ontologically. The particular stories

of educators of adults – our struggles with power, speaking up, being vulnerable, acting courageously, moving out of comfortable zones of practice, and acting with insight and authority – once spoken, may all be familiar to other adult educators who have a kinship with what we are talking about. That in itself may be quite useful and interesting to explore; however, questions remain about what the task of educational inquiry is with respect to such stories and how to do justice to the particular instances of particular educators in their particular time and place (Jardine, 1998). How do the interpretive disciplines understand and address the powerful “fecundity” (Gadamer, 1989, p. 38) of such incidents? Hannah Arendt, the political philosopher, has much to contribute on this point:

Understood interpretively, such incidents can have a generative and re-enlivening effect on the interweaving texts and textures of human life in which we are all embedded. Bringing out these living interweavings in their full, ambiguous, multivocal character in the task of *interpretation* (concerned as it is with the generativity of meaning that comes with the eruption of the new in the midst of the already familiar) and *pedagogy* (concerned as is with the regeneration of understanding in the young who live here with us in the midst of an already familiar world). (Arendt, 1969, cited in Jardine, 1998, p. 34) (italics added)

The story’s fecundity is in its generative and re-enlivening effect on understanding. As Arendt underlines, interpretation is fundamentally pedagogic. As we learn and are transformed, or altered in the telling and retelling of particular instances, our understanding changes, which in turn, has implications for our actions. Wenger (1998) suggests that our designs and actions are held hostage to our understanding; how we act is intimately connected to how we understand. And this understanding is linked to language. Wittgenstein (1968) quotes from St. Augustine in the *Confessions* to illustrate the link between language and the process of meaning making:

...Thus, as I heard words repeatedly used in their proper places in various sentences, I gradually learnt to understand what objects they signified; and after I had trained my mouth to these signs, I used them to express my own desires. (p. 3)

Words in their proper places about educational leadership fix the assumptions we make about what educational leadership means. Words can limit our ability to see and think, and thus directly shape and limit the action we imagine and eventually choose. This notion is explored in the following narrative account from an instance early in my career. The story also illustrates the powerful use of narrative to construct and reconstruct experience and to involve others in our search for meaning and understanding. My reading of the text remains ambiguous; it is open to continuous interpretation.

Frozen in Bogotá, Colombia, September 1982

It's early morning. I am sitting at my desk in the United Nations Development Program offices. My office is sparsely furnished; I have a standard issue brown desk and a hardback oak swivel chair. Another chair for visitors faces my desk and behind it is a wall of filing cabinets. The room is tiny, about 200 square feet. Behind my chair is a window looking out onto a residential neighborhood in mid-town Bogotá. My desk is piled high with reports and background documents and I am slowly working my way through the stack, all the while wondering what I should read first to help me get oriented to my new job as project officer for the World Food Programme. I'm drinking strong black Colombian coffee from a China cup, just brought to me by the lady who serves coffee to over 50 staff members in the building.

I'm 28, just out of graduate school with a Master's of Education, and a couple of years of development work experience in Bolivia. Yet in this new position, this new country, and this new organization, to say I feel somewhat "at sea" about what is expected of me would be an

understatement. My boss, Blanca de Paredo, is a Bolivian woman in her late 50s, a nutritionist by training and I think, politically well connected in her home country. She's out of town at the moment, as she has been for most of the month since my arrival. When she is here, she doesn't seem to know what to do with me and has ignored me as much as possible. Does she think that a "Gringa" is of little use in Latin America? I have a sense that she sees me as a threat and I have allowed her to intimidate me by staying quietly in my office. It's still months away from my active engagement in field trips to the rural development projects where we have numerous small business development initiatives, long before I know any of the Coffee Grower Federation people, or my other counterparts from the Ministry of Agriculture and Health, or before I meet the people who live in the communities where the projects are underway, the beneficiaries, as we call them. Staring at the jumble of reports, my heart is heavy - heavier even than the sacks and sacks of flour and rice we ship to the villages - and even though it's only nine in the morning, and I have just thrown back a strong Colombian espresso, I am drained and long to rest my head on my desk.

At that moment Norah, the program administrator knocks at my door and enters. Norah is my lifeline. She is Colombian and has worked for WFP for 15 years and knows the projects and the organization inside out. She has helped me find an apartment; fill out the paper work demanded of my posting, get my banking organized, find the grocery store. When she came to pick me up from my hotel on my first day of work and I was wearing a cotton skirt and a blouse with sandals - accustomed as I was to the very relaxed dress code in Bolivia-she told me to change and put on a jacket, stockings and shoes. Norah is endlessly helpful, efficient, and friendly.

"Joa," Norah whispers to me loudly in a way that has me leaning forward anticipating some interesting piece of news. "There are some people here to see you from Cordoba Province."

"People?" I say, panicking. I look at my appointment book, which is still very blank. Do I have an appointment that I've forgotten? I wonder. "What do they want?" I ask.

"They want to talk to you about why WFP did not approve the project in their village. They're here to talk to someone about it," says Norah.

"What can I tell them? I have no idea why they weren't approved. This was before my time and I have no background information on this. Why don't you talk to them? You have more perspective on this than I do," I plead.

"But they want to speak to someone from WFP. Someone with authority," says Norah firmly. I have about enough authority to fill a bottle cap, I think to myself. I feel totally unprepared to speak with them.

"Norah, please tell them I'm too busy to speak with them."

"Joa, you really should speak with them," says Norah.

"No, I can't. I don't know what to say to them. Tell them I'm tied up."

Norah shrugs. "Okay, I'll tell them." And she walks out of the room and closes the door behind her.

I can tell by Norah's face that she does not agree with my decision. I hear her speaking with the people briefly in the office reception area. At lunchtime I emerge from my office sheepishly and relieved that I didn't have to deal with their anger, their sadness, or their questions.

* * *

What is this story asking of me, I wonder as I write this years later with a lingering sense of embarrassment and discomfort? Each time I reread the above text, it's powerful grip on me is loosening and I am becoming less hard on myself for failing to act, more forgiving of my lack of courage, less shamed by my actions. Shauna Butterwick, one of my advisors, remarks that even though I say that the grip is loosening, the ghost of an old interpretation persists and my evaluative language sticks out

everywhere. “Failing” to act, and “lack” of courage, even the title “Frozen in Bogotá” – these words reveal the ways I see myself not measuring up to my deeply held notions of what leadership should be. Rather than leap ahead to consider what I should have done differently and offer practical solutions, which is my first tendency, Palmer (1998) suggests dwelling more deeply in the dynamics of the situation. And so I consider what might have frozen me, looking for the insight that comes in such moments of vulnerability – to stay open to the possible interpretations. What can I learn about myself from that moment? What beliefs and practices do I put “at risk” in this experience? What does this instance wake me up to? How do I understand this particular instance anew? What is the soul of this story and how can I become more literate about its meaning?

As I consider the experience now, I remind myself that I was new on the job, left to my own devices, without a mentor, and “at sea” concerning the details of the decision-making process in a hierarchical organization. I had tremendous respect for Norah and if any one could answer the questions, she was much better positioned than I was to offer a response. In retrospect, though, I see that even if I hadn’t been properly briefed I could have listened to the villagers’ story, and given them an audience. And I agree with another of my advisor’s observations that “the story suggests that part of leadership is to be held accountable even for those decisions that were made by others and to listen to those who are unhappy with the decision” (Personal communication November, 2001).

Was I operating from the belief that to take effective leadership, in this case, meant I had to have an answer or solution to the situation even before it was expected or reasonably possible? I suppose I thought that the simple act of listening was not enough in this situation. Again interpretation is useful: “It also makes me think that another

aspect of leadership is to be respectful of others... interacting with the villagers as the “authority” is a sign of respect for them.” Yes. This seems true. I didn’t have a sense of my own authority yet. And I was shy of facing their anger, hostility or their sadness and disappointment. I can see now that listening to them did not imply a promise, an obligation, or a solution. It would have simply demonstrated respect for their experience. Within the hierarchy of this unfamiliar organization, with very explicit and rigid norms for protocols, policies, and procedures, had I inaccurately determined that I did not have the authority to represent the organization during my apprenticeship phase? Had I put myself into a straightjacket of my own making? Was Norah’s advice right? As I negotiate the meaning of this instance, I am alert to these pre-understandings, situated and yet “amenable to being awakened and critically examined” (Gadamer, 1963, p. 302). In fact, as Razack (1993), points out in her research on the role of story in the construction of knowledge: “There are landmines strewn across the path wherever story-telling is used...it should never be used uncritically” (Razack, 1993, p.56).

How can I raise this story out of the “burden of its specificity”? I am prepared to reflect and re-think my understanding of this experience (Griffith, 1995). For me this story reveals now that my pre-understanding of what acting like a leader, like an “*officio de proyectos*,” should look like at that time informed the actions that I took (or didn’t take). The story opens up another possible interpretation about the value, respect, and significance paid to the act of listening as an element of leadership. Creating spaces for deep listening as a practice of educational leadership is a theme that is taken up in many of the stories of adult educator.⁶ In this particular instance I see, retrospectively, that I

⁶ Bickford (1996) suggests that listening is an undervalued dimension of political life.

didn't recognize my own authority to act and "take charge" of the situation, nor did I even remotely consider that listening was a significant leadership action. I just didn't understand what was possible within my role. I had much to unlearn, yet I lacked the language, the "proper words" to understand what was happening.

Herein are also important implications for orientation and mentoring of new recruits.

Telling and listening to stories such as this one opens up the possibility of sharing practitioners' experiences of far from perfect responses to complex or challenging situations and deepens our understanding of our selves, our responsibilities, and our capacity to act in the world (Kegan, 1994). Through such stories my knowledge and judgment are challenged as I test my "reading" of an ambiguous and complex situation (Schon, 1983) and contribute to my own reflective practice (Jarvis, 1999).

This narrative reflection and interpretation has the capacity to "unfreeze" past, incomplete and distorted understanding and offer interpretations that are more subtle and complex (Conle, 1999). Perhaps others who read this account will have other interpretations. Perhaps this story will be generative of other accounts of being "at sea" or of ill-fitting notions of leadership that limit rather than support wise action. The value of stories like this one lies in their ability to evoke or elude a response that strikes the reader as being familiar in some way (Barone, 1992). Stories that "show" through narrative, rather than "argue" from data (Ellis & Bochner, 1996), offer a powerful way to reflect on practice in a manner that is direct rather than second-hand, abstract, conceptualized, categorized, or theorized. The interpretation of this particular story is very much open-ended, partial, and ongoing.

Instances of educational leadership intertwined with the day-to-day practice of adult educators are most often unrecorded and unacknowledged; thus opportunities for reflection and learning are missed. As busy practitioners, we are often so focused on simply trying to respond to the demands of the work. Organized reflection is often undervalued, too, in the professional development of adult educators, in favour of the certainty of applying and/or testing a framework, model, or theory of practice. Kingwell (2000) express this importance:

Reflection is conceptually distinct from theory. It is much more modest in its aims and aware of the intellect's shortcomings – but also much more searching and powerful in its potential effect. Reflection involves the always incomplete attempt to make sense of who we are and what we are up to, trying all the while to do that most difficult of things – to live better. Theory believes it provides answers. Reflection knows that it merely pursues questions and does that often enough only tentatively or in the midst of perplexity and sadness. (p. 216)

This systematic search for truth and understanding of educational leadership is concerned primarily with “a passionate and disciplined process of inquiry and dialogue itself...” (Palmer, 1998, p. 104) beginning with the everyday experiences of adult educators. Throughout this research process I have shared Jardine's experience that:

Living with [these instances of leadership] and following [their] ways and engaging my own life and the lives of others in an attempt to understand [them], changes who I am and what I understand myself to be. New possibilities of self-understanding [are] opened up; old ones [are] renewed and transformed and rejected. (Jardine, 1998 p. 49)

Participating in and leading this research has transformed my own understanding of adult education practice and unearthed this important dimensions – leadership. My aim is for this interpretive approach to awaken new understandings in the reader about educational leadership.

In the next chapter I describe the context in which I began to engage with the co-narrators of this research – the telling, transcribing and interpreting of instances – the troubles, ambiguities, and the stumbling and surefooted action – of everyday educational leadership.

CHAPTER THREE:

EVERYDAY LIVED EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP: A PROLOGUE TO STORIES IN CONVERSATION

Educational leadership is intimately embedded in our everyday practices as adult educators. Regardless of job title – vocational facilitator, choreographer, dance educator, painting and drawing instructor, artist, business manager of re-training programs, educators of adult educators, nursing instructor, university degree completion and contract services program director, media producer—educators in various roles engage in acts of educational leadership. The leadership dimension is important to raise into view, for without such awareness the insights we may have about what we do and who we are as educators are undiscussible if they remain embedded, unrecorded, and unacknowledged. Couched in a textbook or a checklist related to characteristics of leaders, or tasks of leadership, how is it possible to learn from them? Telling and retelling personal narratives opens up the possibility to play with their interpretation, to dwell in the possible meanings they carry, and to generate new understandings of educational leadership with a view of enhancing and transforming our actions. By placing such instances of educational leadership into play as “stories in conversation” this dialogic encounter makes new understandings possible.

I. Dignifying the Everyday

Last summer while in London, I had the opportunity to visit the Vermeer exhibition at the National Gallery. A celebrated Dutch artist from the city of Delft, Vermeer painted throughout most of the 17th Century. What drew me to the exhibit in the

first place was his subtle depiction of domestic scenes; figurative paintings of everyday life; daily activities carried out in quiet interiors. Such moments, so often unnoticed and unrecorded, were dignified by his attention. The small, singular details of his portraits – a woman pouring milk from a jug at the window, the light reflecting on a pearl earring worn by a kitchen maid – reveal the essence of a moment and capture an approximation of truth. These dignified moments, executed beautifully, confronted me with their simple beauty. This experience reconfirmed my belief in the importance of foregrounding the everyday educational leadership stories from daily practice. I was inspired and resolved by the master artist's spirit of looking within a moment for the quiet dignity and its potential to communicate a kind of truth. This is what I sought to bring alive through featuring moments of educational leadership in this research.

In keeping with the tradition of phenomenology I chose to engage in individual conversation with a small group – six other educators of adults – people whose practices I am familiar with and whom I respect and admire for a number of reasons. Each of them generously agreed to sit down with me and talk about their challenges and accomplishments as educators, planners and managers of educational endeavours. From these stories told to me in the relative comfort, privacy and safety of a one-to-one conversation, I selected key stories and placed them side-by-side in a kind of conversation with each other. Why not just invite the group together to tell their stories? My experience of facilitating group conversations has taught me that among people who do not know each other well, it is much more challenging for people to speak openly and frankly, to take up the air space of the group if they are quiet, or to sit quietly and listen if they are accustomed to dominating formal groups. I wanted to create a space (one-to-one)

for a dialogue where the participants would not be concerned with stating their opinions and positions but rather with sharing their experiences. Whether the experience of one had anything in common with the others remained to be seen.

II. Initiating the Conversation

I began this research by writing and reflecting on a series of autobiographical instances from my own practice, interspersed with reading and critiquing selected literature from narrative inquiry, leadership, and adult education. I then conducted six semi-structured interviews or conversations with each of the participants or “co-narrators” as I have come to refer to them. In this initial conversation I focused on the participant’s everyday experiences, explored their mindscapes of educational leadership, and their own leadership experiences within the context of the education programs and processes in which they are involved. A transcript of each of these conversations was produced and returned to each of them for their review and further reflection.

Working with the transcripts of these interviews I then constructed a master text or conversation between the co-narrators, highlighting specific stories and linking them according to similar themes. I also returned this text to the co-narrators for review and included a letter inviting them to write their comments and reflections in the margins of the text. I communicated with each person via phone and email during this process to the extent to which they were interested and available and some of these written comments and suggestions provoked further changes to the text. One of the co-narrators wrote after reading the constructed conversation, thanking me for the opportunity to see her experience through another lens and in contrast to other educators. “I can see now,” she said, “that there are many things that I assumed about what educational leadership

means.” And so through dialogue our isolated experiences began to generate a more complex and layered understanding of the meaning of educational leadership. Through dialogue we began to know something of the soul of our stories and our reflection becomes less literal and more “literate.”

An Invitation to the Others: The Interview Questions

To generate the interview conversation with each of my co-narrators I worked from an interview guide with six questions and several supplementary probing questions (although I am beginning to wonder if almost any question can generate a narrative if you are willing to listen for one and patiently coax it out). More or less, in a similar way, I asked each person the following questions (the aim of each question is indicated in brackets):

1. Describe a typical workday and something that challenges or excites you in work these days (Aim: to build rapport and establish context for stories);
2. Tell me a story about a personal interaction/experience with a teacher, mentor or significant person (Aim: to explore individual formation of leadership identity);
3. Describe an interaction you have had with someone when you were acting as an educational leader, i.e., Leading a conversation, challenging assumptions, dealing with conflict, teaching a class, developing a curriculum, etc. (Aim: to get at specific instances of educational leadership);
4. Tell me a story about a time when you faced a dilemma in your educational practice and what happened. Who was involved? How did you feel? (Aim: to use emotional recall to reach deeply into experience);
5. Can you recall an instance when you felt you lacked knowledge about what to do in a situation? (Aim: to encourage exploration of “less than perfect” performance in complex conditions);
6. Describe a time when you experienced an intense emotion in relation to your teaching or learning. (Aim: to evoke specific details of a scene).

Our talk revolved around several storied accounts of specific instances when educational leadership was highlighted. I have worked with these stories as wholes, not wanting to tear them apart or rip them from their context for fear of losing the shape of the individual story. The dilemma was to select a number of stories and maintain their wholeness and their integrity, while finding a way to weave them together with the others.

To begin this process of constructing the conversation I read and reviewed carefully each transcript and selected two or three stories from each of the interviews that show the range of settings and situations in which educational leadership is embedded within educational actions. In an effort to be respectful to the stories told to me by these co-narrators, I have attempted to focus, limit and balance the ones selected in order to do justice to the lessons that they hold. Interspersed throughout the conversation, written in the margins and between the lines, I have added my own reflections and built bridges and transitions between the stories, drawn out some details and implications with the eyes of an interpretive researcher. Following each instalment of the conversation I worked hermeneutically to “play” and connect the stories to each other, to the relevant literature, and to my own observations.

The Co-Narrators

Our biographies are the source of considerable knowledge and distinguish our uniqueness and location in the world (Collins, 1995) and this personal history, this “effective history” has a decisive influence on the way we deal with day-to-day matters and what we bring to our practices. The adult educators – the co-narrators of this study – were invited to participate in this research for a number of reasons. Firstly, I know all of

the individuals professionally and personally and am familiar with their work to a greater or lesser extent. Secondly, I respect these individuals for the commitment, creativity, and energy they express about their work. Thirdly, while each of the individuals share a concern and commitment to the education of adults – they express these concerns from distinct locations – program planner, curriculum designer, college instructor, vocational facilitator, innovator of a degree completion and professional development university programs, manager of private-public partnerships, and artistic dance director. Finally, I invited them to meet with me because I anticipated learning from them and the particular horizons they might bring to the contours of a conversation on educational leadership. I begin now with brief introductions to each of these co-narrators next before presenting the constructed conversation itself. I have given them pseudonyms to ensure their confidentiality.

Pamela is an adult educator of educators and nurse educator, and in her volunteer capacity she is also a committed environmental and peace educator and activist. She moved to Canada from California in the early 70s. She has just turned 50 and carries herself lightly and gracefully with the strength of the long distance swimmer that she is. Short cropped blond hair frame alert, clear blue eyes and smiling mouth.

Murray is the Regional Manager of training programs for social assistance recipients in the hospitality industry. Formerly a successful restaurant owner, he has an elegant and dignified presence. When we first met to talk he was gracious, hospitable, and business like, formal but not distant.

Jane is a vocational facilitator in a fishing and logging community and a former schoolteacher. She has a down to earth manner of speech compatible with her friendly

and pragmatic English woman's sensibility. We drank hot coffee and ate freshly baked carrot muffins while we talked.

Jennifer is the Artistic Director of a contemporary dance company, a choreographer and dance educator in schools and the community. In her mid 40s, she has a dancer's long, lean frame and salt and peppered, waist length hair. As she speaks her hands move constantly. She sits straight, but not stiffly, in her chair and seems poised to jump up at any moment.

Anya is a painting and drawing instructor in a community college, and a figurative painter, born and trained in Ireland. Just 40, she has dark red, wind swept hair and a wide smile. Her hands are paint stained and elegant. They move constantly to support and emphasize her words. A grand storyteller in the Irish tradition complete with the Gaelic turn of phrase, in two beats she roars with laughter over the absurd and as quickly become somber and thoughtful.

Murdock heads an innovative program at a university that consults with and plans university programs for businesses and community organizations. He is formally a program director of a degree completion program for working adult learners and in a previous life, was a building contractor for 10 years. Mid 40, tall, and lanky with the frame and intense manner of the marathon runner that he is, he speaks thoughtfully, precisely, in carefully modulated tones.

Working with the Interview Transcripts

During the individual interviews I invited each person to share their stories about particular challenges and successes in their practices. Rather than present these stories in fragmented extracts to support my own arguments and theories about educational

leadership, I began the interpretive analysis (Mishler, 1986) by putting these stories into play in such a way as to bring out their common themes, points of disagreement, and the conclusions that might emerge. The conversation is built around questions concerning educational leadership and progresses in such a way as to create new understandings of the subject brought about by the conversation itself. As an expression of praxis rather than a technical method, following Burbules (1993), I understand genuine conversation or dialogue to be based on mutual and reciprocal communicative relations:

...involving two or more interlocutors, marked by a climate of open participation by any of its partner...Dialogue is guided by a spirit of discovery, so that a typical tone of a dialogue is exploratory and interrogative. (Burbules, 1993, p.7-8)

Gadamer suggests that a genuine conversation or dialogue performs the task of hermeneutics when the participants open up to each other, truly accept each other's point of view as worthy of consideration, and "through the give and take of question and answer, [and] talking at cross-purposes ...gets inside the other" (Burbules, 1993, p. ix).

The conversation about educational leadership begins with introductions and touches on the co-narrators pre-understandings of educational leadership. Each of the co-narrators has, to a greater or lesser extent, their own tacit theory about educational leadership that comes to light during the interviews, and later, is highlighted in the construction of the conversation. Through this interaction with the transcripts and the construction of the stories in conversation my own mindscape of educational leadership was still emerging. "Teaching is leading" and leadership as the "initiating of conversations" was the basis of a heuristic theoretical framework I had in mind as I listened for stories about lived experiences with educational leadership. I listened for stories about what I considered *traditional* and *emerging* notions of educational

leadership, I selected those stories that struck me as illustrative of the link between “teaching” and “leading” as well as those stories that foreground “conversation as leadership.” I have interwoven the narratives; weaving and stitching and trimming the stories while staying mindful of their essence. The bumps, rough edges, and puckers are pressed and smoothed, not to make the story seamless, flawless, or false (Behar, 1993), but to bring out the essence of the experiences. Working through hundreds of pages of transcripts, of stories and opinions, theories and descriptions I approached the data as a designer with an emergent and generative process. I did not know where I would end up, but I did know that I wanted to create a conversation between these co-narrators without tearing apart their stories. As one of my advisors suggested, I held the image of the “usefulness” of these conversations as contributing to an expanded notion of educational leadership. To illuminate, she added this engaging story of her own:

I have a piece of fabric that I bought when I was in Thailand - it was a wedding cloth - an uncut length of silk that I believe was worn by the man during the wedding ceremony. It's a beautiful piece of warm reds and soft greens which I'd like to use somehow - perhaps as something to wear or around the house. But I cannot cut it - every thread needs to be included. I have yet to find a 'pattern' or 'image' or a 'product' that would allow me to use the fabric in all of its beauty - an inclusive design. Right now it's in a drawer waiting...its essence, at least my interpretation of it, is something I want to maintain, and is the most important criteria for what I create with it. But I do want to 'use' it...(Personal communication, 2001)

Themes

The conversation that follows attempts to capture stories most like those told informally between friendly colleagues at a break at a conference, after a lecture, or walking home from a movie; those moments seldom spoken of or written up in the adult education or leadership literature. In all, there are more than 20 short stories in this conversation. The interpretive process began the moment I began transcribing and

ordering and clustering the stories that share a “family resemblance” (Wittgenstein, 1958). By bringing these particular stories into relation, I strive to create a living conversation “between equally respectable parties who care deeply about the outcome of philosophical conflict because it has real implications for their own lives, and the lives of their students” (Kegan, 1994, p. 48). The conversation is organized around three key themes: How educators are shaped or influenced by other educational leaders or teachers in their practice; instance or moments in practice that reflect the challenges and tensions in teaching, learning and leading; and educational leadership as leading conversations about what matters in adult education.

Creating the conditions for such a living conversation depends on an important foundation: Listening.

III. Matters of Listening

I suggest at the onset of this research that the everyday lived experiences with educational leadership are not widely represented in the adult education or the leadership literature. Making this dimension of adult education practice visible involves attending to this gap, this silence, and learning to listen.

Listenership

The importance of listening or “listenership” (Tannen, 1989) is a kind of listening *for* stories that is quite different from listening *to* stories. From time to time while I was deep in conversation with my co-narrators, I struggled with an inner voice that questioned whether I was “getting” what I needed: “Is this a story she’s telling me or another abstract generalization and summary of what happened?” I had to manage my distraction during

the interviews, to concentrate fully on what each educator was talking about, to clear a space for each to speak about their experience in their own unique way, yet keeping the conversation from straying too far from the topic of discussion. In this sense listening *for* stories is very much a form of active participation. Forester (1980) suggests that listening is moral work:

We can be responsible for listening or failing to, and we can make a difference as a result. Listening is an activity of being attentive; it is a way of being in a moral world... Hearing on the other hand, has an object, a message sent and being received. Hearing subordinates the uniqueness of the speakers to the formal meaning of her talk, her utterances; listening understands the meaning of what is said in the context of the speaker's life. (Forester, 1980, p. 219)

In this research listenership continued well beyond the initial conversation. It involved listening for possibilities and working and reworking them to follow their meaning during the transcription and the construction of the conversation. Listenership involved being tenacious and focused about uncovering what is not usually spoken. It evoked discomfort and confusion at times (mine and the co-narrators as I stumbled around with my questions); it often lacked certainty, requiring time for returning again and again to the story – its time, location and characters, its emerging themes and possible meanings and implications for action. I continued to listen for the stories as I edited the constructed conversation, reordered and, in many cases, edited each story. And although the conversation itself, in part is a creation of imagination and editing, I try to capture the artful storytelling of my co-narrators and am mindful of not betraying their trust in me by maintaining the integrity of the stories in a way that captures the essence of their experiences.

Listening to the Self

Listening to others invariably involves attending to one's own response, one's pre-understandings. The writer Annie Dillard (1982) remarks in *Teaching a Stone to Talk* and Parker Palmer (1998) points out in *The Courage to Teach* that when we encounter the unfamiliar or the surprising it is important to teach ourselves to listen, and to practice respect rather than fit what is said into a pre-given framework. The openness of an exchange is marked by this kind of listening. This openness to differences of horizons challenge pre-understandings and is the basis of learning (Gadamer, 1976). In the stories told by the co-narrators about freedom and isolation in teaching adults, for example, I had to remind myself to dwell in the story and not to assume that I knew what they were really talking about. I had to resist leaping to interpretation as I was listening and tried simply to be present in the interview and immersed in the person's point of view. I attempted to listen for the absences – hollows, centers, caverns within the talk and not assume I understood the meaning of particular words. I also tried to listen to the co-narrators' moral language, their evaluation of themselves as they told their stories. When one of the co-narrators said, "I felt like such a failure" or another said, "I am not a leader" I tried to hold these statements carefully so that I could hear the story from the speaker's point of view, from their "horizon." Not to rush in with theories (Fischer & Forester, 1996) to explain, but to dwell with the boundlessness of the meaning Jardine (1998); to listen for what is there and what is missing, to listen for the spaces between and behind the words. To listen well I need to "hold in abeyance the theories that told me what to hear and how to interpret what these educators had to say" (Anderson & Jack, 1991). Listening with "the third ear" (Reik, 1948) does not mean abandoning the familiar in

favour of the unknown or the strange. It means being awake and present, staying open to the possibilities of the limitations of our knowing and being, thus making it possible to explore alternatives and examine our pre-given stances (Kerdeman, 1998).

Throughout the research process I had a sensation of being caught in a cross current – as I set aside old theories about educational leadership and took up a more situated notion of educational leadership. I wondered, as I listened, if the co-narrators were speaking from a traditional educational leadership paradigm or if at times they too were opening up to a new understanding. I also worried during the interview process that the co-narrators were not telling me stories,⁷ yet I found during the transcription process an abundance of narrative accounts that dig into experience in sometimes subtle, sometimes provocative, and often evocative ways.

IV. An Interpretivist Conversation – Some Parameters

An interpretive question is posed to generate inquiry, without holding a correct answer in mind. In this same way, an interpretive conversation among seven individuals has many twists and turns around stories, theories, and concepts that contribute to making the subject of educational leadership one that “lives and breathes” (Jardine, 1998). What is said about educational leadership builds on the ideas of the other speakers. There is an inherent logic to the conversation. When a question is posed, or a comment offered, the next response builds on and adds to what came before. Where the conversation goes is

⁷ The classic story structure, according to Aristotle's *Poetics*, has a beginning, middle, and an end. A narrator makes a plot out of disordered experience thereby making sense of particularly complex or difficult experience. Polkinghorne (1995) defines these stories as a kind of narrative that signify a succession of incidents into a unified episode. Bruner (1990) refers to them as actions and encounters to which the narrators give particular meaning.

open and boundless, although the intention is that the outcome focuses around the central idea or object from which emerges a new understanding or appreciation.

According to Lambert (1995) and Burbules (1993), there are four key phases of such a conversation: initiating, sustaining, constructing, and closing. *Initiating* involves getting people to come together to bridge the meaning making from their personal experience to a shared understanding. This phase may begin with a reflective question or begin with metaphors or stories. *Sustaining* the conversation involves demonstrating a mutual respect and openness to diverse viewpoints; multiple responses helping to break from deeply held ideas and to entertain new ways of thinking and acting. *Constructing* involves a certain amount of ambiguity and uncertainty from which emerges a more complex understanding of the question at hand. Questioning assumptions, values, and beliefs takes the process to another level. *Closing activities* create communities of memory and commitment. Lively discussion can lead to information overload that can lead to forgetting. It is therefore important to summarize, find patterns that connect, that create metaphors, and generate new questions and commitment to action. Honoring a lack of consensus and agreeing to continue the process are equally important. It is also important to be able to shift from group meaning to personal meaning which is essential to establish commitment (Lambert, 1995). After constructing the conversation I found that I had intuitively included these four phases to a greater or lesser extent (i.e., initiating, sustaining, constructing and closing), but returned again to the text with this framework in mind to tune and refine the conversation.

The particular experiences of each co-narrator brought together in conversation holds possibilities for a greater understanding of the whole. Issacs (1999) puts it like this:

If there is any one thing that dialogue has to offer above all else, it is a process and method by which the awareness and understanding that you already possess may surface in you and be acted upon. This is what it means to take wholeness seriously. (p. 385)

To take wholeness seriously involves honouring and paying attention to the small moments and their significance for action.

Genuine dialogue creates conceptual fields that deepen or shift thinking. Lambert (1995) observes that when group members become excited about the emerging relevance of the conversation, the group self-organizes around the emerging concepts. Together groups negotiate meaning and labor toward new understanding. The leaders of such conversations do not control by telling participants what their experiences mean, but they actively and intentionally assist in meaning making by asking questions and rephrasing ideas to help others create common maps from which to act. The conceptual field created by the conversation serves as the medium for the reciprocal process of understanding and meaning making. "[These] few simple rules can frame, deepen, and move the conversation to facilitate the construction of meaning" (Lambert, 1995, p. 105).

"Conversational moves" are important for creating and maintaining coherence, structure and focus.

Conversational Moves

As the researcher and constructor of this conversation, I have, upon rereading the constructed conversation, discovered that quite unconsciously or intuitively I have used what Burbules (1993) refers to as "conversational moves." These moves are communicative acts intended to shape the substance of what is being said by each of the co-narrators and to strengthen the connection among and between each person in the conversation. Some examples of these "moves" include: using analogies to resonate with

what has been said as a way of restating; using internal cross references (i.e., referring to what has already been said earlier in the conversation by one of the co-narrators that is similar to what is being discussed); using vivid imagery (i.e., suggesting a metaphor or titles for each story attempts to capture the images the story evokes); using humour (i.e., on many occasions laughter breaks out and moments of levity punctuate often intense and serious stories); and by volunteering significant new information (i.e., adding my emerging understanding of educational leadership to the conversation, references to the literature, and my own personal experience).

In reviewing my own comments and reflections throughout the conversation I noticed my words of encouragement, expression of gratitude, and explicit statements of agreement. More than just comments on the substance of the discussion, these statements are attempts to “create and maintain the bond of mutual concern, trust, respect, appreciation, and affection that are crucial to a successful ongoing dialogue” (Burbules, 1993 p. 136).

Meta-statements

Participants in an interpretivist conversation build on each other's comments and in so doing generate new ideas about the topic under discussion and create the opportunity for the truth about the topic to emerge. Meaning comes out of a subjective interchange between people through speaking and listening. In the pause between the telling of a story and the reflection on what is being said lies the possibility in that same moment, for the speaker, to arrive at a new place of understanding. Gluck and Patai (1995) refer to these meaningful statements as meta-statements. Several such “meta-statements” occur throughout the conversation. For instance, when Jane, the vocational

counselor, states that she does not see herself as an educational leader (in the traditional sense) and then provides several specific instances where indeed she is very much taking leadership (in an emerging sense). Jennifer, the choreographer, reflects on her past collaborative leadership experiences by referring to this approach as passive as opposed to her current approach that is more intentional. Pamela, the “educator of adult educators,” talks about wanting to be authentic and “real” with the learners, yet according to her definition of educational leadership she does not think it is appropriate to “show the cracks” (the imperfections or uncertainties) in her practice. As she thinks aloud about the courage to teach as being “real” about showing the cracks, she seems to recognize in the space between these two notions a shifting of her own per-understanding of educational leadership. These examples of meta-statements seem to occur at moments when the co-narrators are taken by surprise or stopped up short as they encounter their assumptions head on. Such moments are of profound pedagogical significance and are what Gadamer (1993) refers to as “an encounter” that results in understanding over and above our wanting and doing.

Good Stories

In the telling of stories and sharing them with others in conversation “they make a claim on us and open up and reveal something to us about our lives together” (Jardine, 1998, p. 40). It is in the particular instances of these stories where we become more intimate with our practices. Bringing the individual, particular, and private stories into conversation is an opportunity to speak, listen and learn from each other. Genuine conversation involves not only trying to convey one’s own understanding to another, but also involves listening to another’s words and responding to how one understands their

meaning. Becoming literate in this sense involves not only telling or listening to the story but also looking for a vision of its soul, its meaning. The story is not limited to belonging to the co-narrator, but, as Gadamer (1989) suggests, through conversation and through interpretation, it is raised out of "the burden of its specificity."

After finishing the last of many edited versions of the conversation, I e-mailed a friend of mine who is a screenwriter and who has also been my editor on many print-based curriculum projects I have written over the years. I was seeking her feedback on the way the following stories of the educators "read" and what I might do to make them more engaging to other readers who, unlike me, are reading these stories for the first time. I sent her this note to entice her to read these stories and offer her thoughts, impressions, and responses:

The following is a "constructed conversation" between myself and six educators telling stories of their "lived experiences" with educational leadership. I have become too attached to each and every word they utter (even though I have edited pages and pages from the original transcripts and from this current form, rearranged, tightened and loosened dialogue, cleaned up grammar and syntax and strengthened the narrative structure). Still I wonder how to use fewer words and be more engaging without losing the individual voices of each co-narrator or the essence of the stories. At the moment there are more than twenty stories in total – some are a paragraph long and others are two to three pages. In the discussion following this conversation, I explore individual and theme related interpretations of the stories and the possible meanings they offer.

As I wrote and edited this note I was struck by the realization that a conversation itself – the questions and answers, the give and take – is the task of hermeneutics. Genuine conversation *is* interpretation. Writing the conversation, choosing the stories, ordering them and clustering them in just the way I have, I have created something that wasn't there before. Through this process my understanding of educational leadership is shifting, blurring and coming into focus again – it's not a sharp demarcation and I do not

claim to have a universal definition – but I have fully entered into the exploratory and interrogative spirit of the conversation. The note continues...

In the conclusion I gather these stories into themes and draw out the implications for teaching and learning about educational leadership. I am using a hermeneutic process of creating meaning from the "texts" through "play" and "happenstance" – two terms used by Canadian scholar, David Jardine (1998) – not always as much fun as these terms may imply.

Yet this process does yield surprising findings as I have already highlighted in Chapter One and Two in the interpretation of the stories, "How I Learned to Sew", "Frozen in Bogotá," and "Vulnerable Leadership."

The stories are in the "family" of educational leadership but address educational leadership as a "living subject" rather than a bunch of abstract theories and concepts on leadership or traits about leaders found in the literature." (Personal communication, 2001)

My screenwriter friend wrote me back: "So that sounds fine, constructed conversations, lived experiences, interpretive inquiries, et alia; I look forward to seeing it." She really knows how to get to the point.

Many possibilities for understanding are created with the telling of and listening to storied accounts of practice. These possibilities entice, inspire, and provoke further intentional reflection and learning. The stories of these co-narrators have not been told before; they lay imbedded in experience and as such, have not been exposed to daylight, their generative potential untapped. Nor had they been exposed to the others horizons of understanding. In some cases there are multiple story lines woven together and some loose threads are picked up from one speaker to another then raised later in the conversation, built upon, and expanded.

The RITES Framework

Following the constructed conversation I continued to interpret the narratives guided by Leggo's heuristic framework referred to as RITES (Read, Interrogate, Thematize, Expand, and Summarize).⁸ I flesh out individual stories by highlighting what strike me as the salient points and the narrators' intended meaning and then consider the interpretation in light of related literature, my own experience, or another story in the conversation. Leggo offers a cautionary note regarding the difficulties and limitations of sticking too closely to this framework or to any one strategy.

I once proposed RITES as valuable at a conference on oncology. It might be useful as a general framework, but, of course, it only provides the bare skeleton of an approach...perhaps we do not "do" hermeneutics; perhaps we write and read and listen and imagine hermeneutically; perhaps hermeneutics is about attending to intricacies, gaps, spaces, relations, etc. So, you might find RITES useful here and there, but I do not recommend that you use it too zealously. And certainly be ready to vary your use of any strategy. (Personal communication, 2001)

He also added that he likes the constructed conversation because the reader becomes a participant in the conversation. I hope so. That is my intention. But as I have alluded to in earlier chapters, there is often a very big gap between the intended impact or effect and what is actually experienced and what meaning is made from the experience.

In the conversation to follow, Jennifer, one of the co-narrators, speaks of this dilemma in terms of her choreography production about the life of Emily Carr. She has a particular intention, but whether the audience shares in that meaning or experience in the way she intended is always open for discussion. "It's about hermeneutics," she said to me

⁸ RITES: Read, Interrogate, Thematize, Expand, and Summarize. Read – read the whole narrative to gain a general sense of the story; Interrogate – the researcher asks basic questions of the narrative – who, why, where, when, how, so what? Thematize – the researcher re-reads with a focus on a theme and spells out the parts of the story that relate to the theme. Expand – the researcher expands on the theme by reflectively and imaginatively drawing connections and proposing possible meanings; and Summarize – the researcher summarizes the theme in a general statement or two in order to indicate clearly what is learned from the narrative.

at the beginning of our interview. A promising start, I thought. Another of my advisors reminds me about the dilemmas and challenges of working hermeneutically and the need to be careful about “imposing any rigid structure on 'doing hermeneutics.’”

Navigating the Stories: Creating Structure and Coherence

After constructing the conversation I returned to it, placing tentative titles for each story that suggest the story’s theme. These titles, now in the borders of the script, operate as a kind of navigational tool that give the conversation shape and structure – further acts of interpretation. In some cases a working title was revised or changed entirely as my understanding of the text changed after various readings or at the suggestion of one of the co-narrators. The titles, the camera angles and moves, the cutaways and flashbacks included in the first instalment of the conversation are not intended to limit the possible meaning of each story, as such an act of naming can often do, but to engage the visual and emotional senses of the reader. I do this at the risk of interrupting the flow of the conversation, fragmenting it in a disruptive or distracting way rather than providing structure and boundaries around the possible meaning. In the midst of several stories, I thought it important to maintain some structure and coherence. Such boundaries seem necessary to navigate the individual interpretations.

I turn now to these stories “in conversation” to lead us through the messy educational leadership language landscape, where we might dwell in their possible meanings and interconnections. In doing so I hope to avoid dry, dusty, or lifeless theorizing on educational leadership.

CHAPTER FOUR:

STORIES IN CONVERSATION ON EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

I. Imprinted by Leaders

FADE IN

INT. MEETING ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

(SEVEN ADULTS SIT AROUND A TABLE IN A SPACIOUS MEETING ROOM, FIVE WOMEN (ANYA, PAMELA, JANE, JENNIFER, JOANNA AND TWO MEN, MURRAY AND MURDOCK. AGES RANGE FROM LATE 30S TO LATE 50S. IN THE MIDDLE OF THE TABLE IS A CLEAR GLASS VASE WITH A BOUQUET OF ROSES, POPPIES, SWEET PEAS, AND HOLLYHOCKS. THROUGH THE WINDOW IS A PANORAMIC VIEW OF A DOWNTOWN CITYSCAPE. THE MEN AND WOMEN GLANCE AROUND THE GROUP EXPECTANTLY. ANYA TAPS THE TABLE LIGHTLY WITH HER PENCIL, JANE IS RUMMAGING THROUGH A LARGE BLACK PURSE, WHILE JOANNA SORTS PIECES OF PAPER IN FRONT OF HER AND LOOKS UP AND AROUND THE GROUP, SMILING ENCOURAGINGLY.)

Introduction

JOANNA

Thank you for joining me in this inquiry into educational leadership. This conversation offers a way to break from my individual reading, reflection, and creation of narrative accounts of educational leadership to learn through conversation with you about your experiences and stories. I have found that working on my own stories of leadership in education has stimulated me to rethink my taken for granted beliefs (or pre-understandings) about the nature of leadership and its relationship to education. In particular, I am taken with the ways that teaching is leading and leading is teaching and all the complexities that such a conceptualization entails. I invite you to share some of your leadership stories - stories from your

everyday experience that are sure to breathe life into our understanding of educational leadership.

Let's begin with a brief introduction from each of you -- to situate your educational practice -- of what you do and what a typical day is like for you.

MURRAY

Sure. I am the regional manager of a pilot program between the tourism industry and the government itself. It's one of the first private and public partnerships with the provincial government. This program takes people who apply for income assistance or who are on income assistance and provides training for them or gets them job ready, or if they are job ready, then we get them a work placement. It's a program that's extremely successful from the standpoint that we have found 6000 people jobs in the last year and we will save the taxpayers 55 million dollars in the next two years. Ours is a provincial program that is connected with all the different colleges around the province.

My job as regional manager is to oversee the West Coast region. So a typical day for me can include anything from dealing with the Ministry of Social and Economic Development to make sure that we are getting enough referrals, to travelling to one of our regional offices to meet with staff or to dealing with the local ministry personnel to make sure they fully understand the program.

JANE

I've been a career facilitator on Vancouver Island for 8 years, working on short-term government contracts. I began a new job in January and am in charge of setting up group programs for people who are looking for work and have an attachment to Employment Insurance, for example, "The Job Finding Club" and "Career Focus Week." We help clients develop interview skills, prepare resumes and job hunt. A typical day would involve driving 35 minutes through

Cathedral Grove and past Mt. Arrowsmith providing my spiritual lift and grounding. I interact with the staff over a quick coffee, then prepare for my group. We are together from 9.30 - 3.00. The remaining time until 4.30 is taken with appointments, client follow up, administrative work and program development. I then have a 35 minute journey home when I can debrief, compose and re-energize.

ANYA

Okay. I get up at about 5:30, go for a run, have a piece of toast, and am in the car at seven. From my house to the college is an hour's drive. When I get to the college I sort out my mail and have a cup of tea. I teach two studio classes a day, back to back from nine to three with a break between each class and 15 minutes break during each class. This semester I'm teaching a whole range, from "Beginning Drawing" to "Advanced Drawing" and "Beginning Painting" to "Advanced Painting". My advanced painting usually includes a number of slide presentations, lots of talks and then a lot of individual attention. Basically my students always want to get on with their work, so I talk while they are sitting down working. With a slide presentation you can see their eyes glaze over after about ten minutes so I have to move on.... Once they're engaged in their work it becomes a lot more real for them and they don't have to listen to me talk about doing art, they're doing it. I walk around the room, giving them individual instruction as they go along.

JOANNA

I understand that the class is made up of all ages.

ANYA

That's right. All ages. Some students are straight out of school at 18 years of age to the oldest person I have in my class is about 57. So a range. And with a lot of the younger students it's hard to tell what age they are. There are a couple of students who have done time.

JOANNA

Time in prison?

ANYA

Time in prison, so they are now getting back on their feet. One of the guys is 30 years old and he's been in the justice system since he was 13. Now he's just trying to stay out of trouble and work really hard.

(ANYA LOOKS OVER AND SMILES AT PAMELA, THE BLOND WOMAN WITH SHORT CROPPED HAIR.)

PAMELA

I see myself mainly as a contract worker in adult education. For example, for the last ten years I have had the job of doing professional development for the Continuing Education Department at a community college, where I have been a nurse educator for many years. I also teach in an instructional skills certificate program. My responsibility and my privilege is to look for the new thinking in adult education. My main interest is transformative learning. I am really attracted to this approach to learning because it gets at the reasons why we teach, what our beliefs are, and what we are communicating to our students subliminally through our style and the stories we choose to tell, and the focus that we have in our classes. Quite different from a technique oriented course and I love that.

JOANNA

The college invites you to do that?

PAMELA

(SMILING, SHE LOOKS AT MURDOCK, SITTING ON HER LEFT. HE RETURNS THE LOOK WITH A THOUGHTFUL NOD AND RAISED EYEBROWS.)

They invite me to do that!

JOANNA

What about you Murdock? You have been involved in university based continuing studies for many years.

MURDOCK

My current activities have mostly to do with providing services to outside organizations from the university. We work with companies and other kinds of organizations like non-profits. We do two kinds of things with them, one is consulting and planning - those kinds of activities - and the other is providing educational programs that are designed to meet whatever objectives are agreed upon.

JOANNA

So not all are degree completion programs for university credit?

MURDOCK

No. But some of them are. As you know I have been involved in quite a variety of activities that include programs like the degree completion program but also include Acting Dean of continuing studies, and a director of programs. In these roles I have been involved in organizing various kinds of educational undergraduate programs in our downtown campus, looking at the policies at the university in terms of how they serve the part-time students and deciding whether or not they need to be revised in light of changing circumstances.

JOANNA

A wide range of activities within the university all related in some way to the adult learner. Jennifer, what about you? What are your days as the Artistic Director of a modern dance company like?

JENNIFER

Currently I am working on the choreography for a dance performance, "The Brutal Telling," a kind of musical

theatre about the life of Emily Carr. This piece is really about hermeneutics -- it's about interpretation and how meaning is made between the dance and the audience. We are constantly trying to figure out, "How will this story be communicated?" "How will this be understood?" "The Brutal Telling" has a narrative line but as dancers we are not accustomed to dealing with words, which we inherently mistrust. For us what the body can say is closer to the truth than what words actually communicate. We are constantly wrangling with the words. We don't want to be tied down by the words. We wonder if movement can elucidate another possibility of meaning. So the desire to educate is really about the value of how dance can express something at a very deep level.

(JENNIFER WAVES HER ELEGANT HANDS AS SHE SPEAKS. HER VOICE IS MELODIC.)

JOANNA

Dance education, vocational education, art, teaching skills, degree completion and professional development courses, and training for the hospitality industry- such a wide range of subject areas and so many possibilities for the adults involved in your educative spaces.

JENNIFER

My office is a big empty room and when you go into this big empty room you know that what happens there is of your own construction. It's a constant reminder of meaning because whatever you make up that day - there is no paper bridge in dance, we don't write it down - it may not be the same the next day. The work disappears in the space. So there's a sense of dance being invisible, being visible only as we make it and then invisible the moment after. It's left in memory; it's left in your visual memory; it's left in our physical memory. It's a little like the Balinese who spend long hours preparing delicate, intricate decorations for the temple ceremony out of fresh things and after they have

the ceremony, after arduous preparations, then they just take them down.

CUT AWAY - (TREES OUTSIDE THE WINDOW SWAY IN THE WIND AND SHAKE LOOSE THE CHERRY BLOSSOMS WHICH SCATTER LIKE PINK SNOW FLAKES. THE GROUP LOOKS OUT THE WINDOW AS WE HEAR JENNIFER SPEAK.)

JOANNA

The flowers of the temple ceremony - - beautiful - - and fleeting. So much preparation and then it's over, only the memory lingers. So much like the performance of dance, it's meaning is left in memory. I wonder how others conceptualize their practices? What about you Jane, is there a metaphor that captures what you do?

JANE (VOICE-OVER)

In the community where I work - not a city like this one - - we are really, really struggling with the jobs, and layoffs. It's a mill town, a logging town, and it was a fishing town. Of course a lot of those things are now disappearing yet some people still have the mindscape that if they wait long enough, it'll come back. But it's not going to. People come in here and their self-esteem is low, obviously they are job hunting and it's a horrible roller coaster. By giving them a little helping hand, even just helping them with their resume, you can see the growth in their own independence. They become willing to take the risk again and you can see them start to believe in themselves again.

(AS JANE SPEAKS SHE SITS NOTICIBLY TALLER IN HER CHAIR. OUTSIDE THE WINDOW TWO MEN ON A CONSTRUCTION SITE OPERATE A CRANE. ONE SITS IN THE CAB HIGH ABOVE, THE OTHER, ON THE GROUND, OPERATES THE RIGG. THE CRANE SLOWLY RAISES THE CAB AND IT SWINGS OUT OF VIEW. A YOUNG MAN WALKS SLOWLY ACROSS THE PATH BESIDE THE SITE.)

JANE (ON CAMERA)

These days we have to be extremely accountable about what we are doing. We have to get a lot of feedback and evaluation from the clients. All the time. Everybody who comes through the door has to fill out an evaluation sheet. But more important, you get the feedback by seeing these same people being prepared to put themselves on the line; by seeing them walking tall. Somebody, who didn't want to give out resumes, suddenly I'll notice that he is willing to get out there and do that. I think that happens by doing the group work. Sometimes it is very lonely for people and having a connection to a group gives them strength in numbers. There's a great gain in coming back everyday to check in with people and share with them that little bit of success - that you've given out a resume or that you've contacted someone for a reference. To be able to share this success or struggle is a really positive thing.

JOANNA

Walking tall... A vivid metaphor for what you do and the standards you set for the work.

PAMELA

These days I tell people that my biggest goal in teaching, in being an adult educator of adult educators, is to effect society in positive ways - to develop life long learners, to develop people who are interested in other ways of thinking and, you know, we're building world peace, one little classroom at a time (Laughter).

JOANNA

What happens when you tell people that?

PAMELA

Oh, some respond to that and for some it's just (gestures hand over head) what? But it really feels good being this open about my intentions. It's not about techniques and

everybody doing the same thing, its about being authentic, having teaching and learning principles, but doing it in your own unique way and knowing that that's the best way.

JOANNA

I understand the notion of being authentic to mean literally, to be your own author, not acting on the uninterrogated direction of someone in a formal position of authority. I have always admired you as someone who tries new things, always tests the waters, so it surprises me to hear you say that only recently, "these days" you have become more explicit about your intentions.

The Gift

(SMILING WIDELY, PAMELA REACHES INTO HER BRIEFCASE AND PULLS OUT A BOOK.)

PAMELA

Not that long ago, at the annual meeting of our instructional development program that I have been teaching in for more than ten years, the program director gave everyone a copy of this -- Parker Palmer's book *The Courage to Teach*.

JOANNA

That's a wonderful book.

PAMELA

To get that book was a big shot in the arm for me. His giving us the book communicates to me: "You do what you believe. Be yourself out there because being yourself is the biggest gift you can give your students. To show courage by being true to yourself, and demonstrating integrity and consistency with what you really believe." That just really merges what I do outside work and what I do inside work. And I say, "Thank God we can go in this direction."

For me, at work I have kind of been withholding some of my deepest beliefs and what I think of as really important, things about affecting society in a positive way. My paid contract work in adult education has always felt like it lagged behind my volunteer work, where I could directly work on peace and environmental issues and activism; engaging people in writing letters about important issues, and sitting in dialogue and learning to communicate in a different way. That happened outside work and now it feels just really great to be given Parker Palmer's book. It gives me the freedom to bring what I really care about into work, to talk about critical philosophical issues with people when I teach them to teach.

JOANNA

Not to simply deliver content to people, in order to make them more knowledgeable, but to raise their consciousness.

PAMELA

I talk about the power we have as educators to create cultures of respect and connection - the meta-curriculum, such as communication, teamwork, respecting diverse perspectives and opinions. Those are every bit as important as what ever the content matter is, in my opinion. So because I am in a position of teaching teachers, not teaching a subject matter besides good teaching, I have the privilege to pay a lot of attention to what overlays all of teaching. There's the content, and then there's the process that we use to teach. The process speaks as much or more about what matters.

(PAN RIGHT AND ZOOM IN ON THE WALL BEYOND PAMELA TO A HAIDA MASK THAT IS HANGING.)

JOANNA

The book was a meaningful gesture, one that seems to have encouraged you to take off the professional mask - - to be yourself.

(ZOOM IN ON VASE - - AS A ROSE PETAL DROPS TO THE TABLE. THE CAMERA P.O.V. VASE, PANS AROUND THE TABLE AS ALL EYES FIX ON THE FALLEN PETAL. THE CAMERA SWIRLS AND LANDS ON PAMELA AS SHE SPEAKS HER FINAL WORDS.)

PAMELA

Before that it felt a little like I was a heretic or something. Palmer's work and being given his book, represents to me and it affirms to me the transformational nature of education; transformation as a kind of gradual unfolding - not as a dramatic epiphany - but really a gradual transformation. I just notice one more little petal open. And as individuals blossom, they become increasingly capable of making greater contributions to society.

JOANNA (VOICE OVER)

The opening flower, one petal at a time. The open face, without the mask. A quiet opening of the mind, and with it the possibility of change. That moment of being given a book by a respected person in a formal leadership position seems to embody what you hold to be most important in education on so many levels.

PAMELA (Quietly, her voice full of emotion)

Yes, that moment was important for me.

JOANNA

Is there a moment of educational leadership that stands out for you?

PAMELA

If you ask me to highlight a particular moment of leadership in my own practice it's difficult because I

honestly see myself as a leader in that role all the time. It's a funny paradox because my biggest intent when I teach instructional skills is to make us a community of learners on an equal footing. However, I am aware that I am very much modeling a respectful manner that people respond to with appreciation and lots of people have said to me, "I want to do it like you." So I am aware of the power of modeling, not in a kind of standing up and taking over, but in an attempt really to create equality I have a strong leadership role. It is an interesting kind of paradox.

JOANNA

You are quite aware of your position and responsibility, and the power that it holds.

PAMELA (VOICE OVER)

FLASH BACK - THE KINDERGARTEN PLAY

(FIVE YEAR OLD PAMELA HOLDS HANDS WITH TWO OF HER CLASSMATES AND NODS TO THE GROUP OF CHILDREN ON STAGE TO BOW TO THE APPLAUDING PARENTS. THEY EXIT IN AN ORDERLY MANNER, PAMELA LEADING THE WAY.)

Yes, I think I have been aware of that for a long time actually. I think part of it is my personality. Having had the childhood and family situation that I did, I developed a fair amount of self-esteem and an ability to articulate myself. People would ask me to speak for them and take a leadership role. And you know, the more you do it, the more you get comfortable, so it really has been quite natural. I have pictures of me leading the kindergarten class across the stage.

BACK TO PRESENT DAY

JOANNA

From an early age that was part of your identity - -

PAMELA

Ah, yes. And giving the speech at the high school grad and being the class president, I mean this is ancient history.

JOANNA

Yet in your own adult education practice you have stayed away from the traditional leadership positions, the role of director, or dean or program head within an organization. You haven't been drawn to a more formal position of leadership?

PAMELA

(ZOOM OUT -- TWO OLDER MEN IN NAVY BUSINESS SUITS WALK ON THE PATH OUTSIDE. ONE APPEARS ANGRY AND GESTULATES WITH A FIST. THE OTHER LISTENS, HIS HEAD AND BODY COWERS.)

Those positions seem to me too constrained by tradition and it is really important to me not to do what somebody else thinks I have to do. I guess I make assumptions, but I think that those traditional leadership roles are too scripted. I'm not sure and I may be wrong, you know, but I've always thought you'd have to sacrifice too much to do that.

* * *

JOANNA

What about you, Murdock? What was your own formation as an educator like? Is there a particular person that you have looked to as a mentor or teacher that has had an impact on you?

A Family of Educators and a Mentor

FLASHBACK - INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHTTIME

YOUNG MURDOCK SITS COZILY AND CONTENTEDLY ON A LARGE, OVERSTUFFED SOFA, HIS LEGS DANGLE, AS HE LOOKS UP AND BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN THE TWO ADULTS SITTING ON EITHER SIDE OF

HIM WHO ARE IMMERSED IN AN ANIMATED CONVERSATION OVER HIS HEAD.

EXT. LAKESIDE - DAYTIME

YOUNG MURDOCK RUNS TO THE BANK OF A LAKE EXCITEDLY, HOLDING A LONG STICK, HE DROPS TO HIS KNEES AND PEERS INTO THE REEDS, PROBING GENTLY WITH THE STICK.

INT. UNIVERSITY LECTURE HALL

THE MATURE MURDOCK GATHERS HIS LECTURE NOTES FROM THE PODIUM. A DISTINGUISHED MAN APPROACHES AND GREETES HIM WITH AN AFFECTIONATE PAT ON THE SHOULDER AND A SMILE.

MURDOCK (VOICE OVER)

I can't think of that question without thinking about my family. As you know, my father and mother are both involved in educational activities - they have been all their lives basically. Growing up, I was surrounded by people in my home who were the acknowledged leaders in adult education in Canada. There were people around all the time and they were always talking about educational issues. But in terms of my own practice in education, well the former President of the University is one person who I have reported to for some time and who I admire and who is clearly an educational leader. He has set the tone for my educational practice particularly in the areas that I have been involved in - with part time adult learners at the university.

BACK TO PRESENT DAY

JOANNA

Can you think of anything in particular that he said to you that really had an impact or made a difference in your own thinking?

MURDOCK

Well, he did stress to me on various occasions that it was important that one not shy away from conflict in institutions and I think that's quite important. Institutions get settled and calcified and they need people to keep poking at them if there is going to be any life to them. So that was one thing he said that stuck with me that I think is important.

He also developed a kind of ethos at the university. A lot of the work at the university involves scrambling for money to be able to do things that you want to do - whether it's commercial or whether it's community projects. He encouraged a very healthy view about that. He'd say, there were always many things that were worthwhile doing, whether or not they could pay for themselves. On the other hand there was no excuse for being sloppy about the way money was handled. So if you could figure out a way to get the money to do something different, that was great. But just because a project was worthwhile you still had to go into it with a carefully built budget and in a business-like way. And this was just as important for a community-based activity as it was for a commercial activity.

JOANNA

Don't shy away from conflict - a liberating message to have from the highest authority in the institution - and carry out your work with professionalism and attention to detail. Not one or the other.

* * *

INT. CLASSROOM - DAYTIME

(Three young teens dressed in school uniforms gather around a desk. The girl in the middle has a glossy art book open. The others peer at the pictures of Rubenesque figures. They titter slightly at the sight of the exposed female forms. A kind faced teacher with curly red hair notices their

laughter and she walks over to the group and gestures toward a detail in the picture. The girls turn to her, their faces full of wonder and affection.)

The Exuberant Mrs. Gillen

ANYA (VOICE OVER)

For me, a rare person was Mrs. Gillen. She was this wonderful, wild haired woman; the art teacher I had in high school and she was the first person that told us back in 1974 that aerosols were damaging what was called "the ozone layer." We didn't know what she was talking about at the time. It was a Catholic nun's school and there in the midst was Mrs. Gillen - so flamboyant, with a large family herself. She was terribly enthusiastic about her subject and basically until then I never saw a nude picture in my life. Never. So basically the nearest you got to nudity was Christ on the cross, you know? But she would jump on you if she caught you snickering at a painting. Back to present day.

JOANNA

She wanted you to have the right spirit?

ANYA

Absolutely. She was marvelous, brilliant, and so encouraging. She really was. When I think of the other teachers that I could have had. Like Sister Bernadette, sweet Jesus, you'd never... But Mrs. Gillen was like this wild Bohemian in the middle of all these nuns and she was into the charismatic movement and she was into the environment, and all of this was years before anybody was ever talking about these things. She was this broad minded, wild haired, classic extroverted art teacher.

JOANNA

When you think of an interaction with her, how did she make you feel?

ANYA

Marvelous. She made me feel marvelous and really I just wanted to be like her. She was so positive and so expansive. The other teachers were encouraging as well, you know. I mean, I can think of the English teacher, but for me art was extremely romantic and an extremely desirable profession to be in. And you know I was good at it. Mrs. Gillen helped me put my portfolio together.

JOANNA

That was the beginning of your art career?

ANYA

That was the beginning... Yes.

JOANNA

The impact was...

ANYA

Huge. She had a huge impact - - and then when I went to Belfast to do my Bachelor's - - and there was another teacher, David, who was so positive, so positive. They both had a huge influence, they did. They were interested in us, in what happened to the students and they taught us the craft... the making and the doing of art. You see one of my biggest quips with some instructors is that they're more into the concepts and the critical thinking part of it, and the work that is produced is, to my mind, of a very low standard. The technical craft skills are lost. Painting is not taught the way it was taught to me. You get those labels in academia, that "Painting is dead," "This is dead," "That is dead," "It's a lost art." And so painting and drawing are not taught anymore. And I know that that's one of my strengths; I have a lot of skills that were taught to me.

* * *

JOANNA

Are there other stories about leaders or teachers that left their imprint?

What Leadership Is Not

JANE

For me, I have difficulty thinking of leaders who have had a positive influence. What comes to mind is the reverse. Can I flip that question and talk about a couple of people who have taught me how not to be a leader?

JOANNA

Of course.

JANE

This person I'm thinking of was the head of our vocational counselling and placement organization. When the organization started it was very small. She was very comfortable with that and when it grew larger and larger and larger, I think it just became too much and she tried to control all areas, too much and she wasn't able to delegate. She had to keep control. It was a control issue and eventually it just imploded on her. She had a lot of very capable people underneath her and she tried to break it down into various areas, teams and that kind of thing, but unfortunately she wasn't able to have the faith in the teams to let them evolve. So what happened was that people became frustrated. We all just said, "What is the point? No matter what we do, she's still going to have the ultimate word." She wasn't really listening anyway...

JOANNA

So you felt a kind of false sincerity in her, saying one thing while holding on tightly to her power?

JANE

Very much so. It was very difficult. On the flip side of that there was another person where I worked on a contract and she was totally different. She was much more people-focused, client-focused. There the onus was on us for responsibility, almost the opposite way. Sometimes it was almost too much; sometimes you wished there were a little bit of tightening in responsibility.

JOANNA

Tightening?

JANE

Tightening. When staff people weren't doing what they were supposed to be doing, that there was a sort of limit to what the staff could get away with. This director would stretch and stretch and give people chances and more chances when it would have been better to have a limit. But the line kept moving and moving and moving and there was a certain frustration that one or two people would bend the rules. People got lazy and pushed things, did not get their work done on time or they came in late.

JOANNA

So a lack of standards and structure? Accountability?

JANE

Yes that's right.

* * *

It's About Creating Something New

JOANNA

Interesting stories about specific people in formal leadership roles who obviously did not meet your standards for good leadership. What about acts of leadership that are less to do with formal roles but leadership that is

embedded and intertwined with acts of teaching or planning - the kinds of things that go into creating and sustaining educational environments and programs?

MURDOCK

Well in that sense educational leadership is redundant.

JOANNA

Redundant?

MURDOCK

It seems to me that leadership is about creating something new.

JOANNA

I have in mind the notion that educational leadership is tangled up with our work as educators, involves actions of framing problems and initiating and sustaining conversations about the value and purpose of what we do as educators of adults. And yet so much of this action is embedded in our everyday practice - indiscernible and undiscussable. Parker Palmer suggests that educational leadership is the intentional act of creating the conditions for dialogue about the "what," the "how," the "why," and the "who" in education. It seems to me that there are some particular benefits to locating these instances of educational leadership so that we can learn from them and become, if necessary, more intentional in our actions and more accountable. This is, for me, a new way to think about my practice and one that has some benefit - to think about what we do in terms of leadership and not just good pedagogy. The two are intertwined so closely.

MURDOCK

I think there is something meaningful in thinking about educational leadership that goes beyond the normal teaching practice. Are you looking for something like that...where

somebody does something new or something that would set an example for other teachers to follow?

JOANNA

Yes, very much so. I am interested in exploring everyday instances - - a conversation, a gesture, a moment that happens and goes unnoticed and therefore is lost to further discussion and understanding.

MURDOCK

Well, as I said, for me leadership is concerned with developing something new -- I don't mean just a new iteration of some kind of an existing program -- but a new kind of program that does something that previous programs hadn't done. So developing "The Degree Completion Program" was probably the best example of a success. The elements that go into making that a success I would say are having a strong team involved, including academics and programmers and staff support and external partners who were committed to bringing this thing off and who cared about the employees/students in the program.

The results were inspiring because you had these adult students in the program, many of them who had some long standing feeling of inadequacy or grievance that they hadn't been able to do their education at a younger age and they had been held back in their careers or looked down upon or they felt within themselves inadequate in conversations with other people who did have degrees, and they built up "degrees" as a kind of mystery, or rather something that had a lot of status. And this was finally an opportunity for them to get to learn what it was they didn't know that had been holding them back or to get that credential.

And you could see them in the course of the three years in the program, you could see them go through real stages where they would say, "You know when I came into the

program I saw everything in black and white. Now I see that it's a bit more complex than that, there are shades of gray." "I thought that knowledge was much more certain and definite and that people knew a bunch of stuff or had a bunch of answers that I don't have and now I realize that that's not the case. Many of them when they act that way were really just talking through their hats or they may actually be over simplifying greatly." And so to understand that and you could see their confidence grow and blossom, and they were thrilled and their kids were thrilled when they graduated -- almost all did graduate. In the first group of 33 that began, 32 graduated, 31 were on time. So it was a very successful program from that point of view. And it did create opportunities for them, where people came out of the program and competed successfully for positions and got new jobs that they wouldn't have gotten before.

JOANNA

Making huge differences...

MURDOCK

...really substantial difference in people's lives.

* * *

I Don't See Myself as a Leader

JOANNA

What about moments of leadership within your own practice in vocational education Jane?

JANE

This is new to me. I don't really think about my own leadership or see myself as a leader, I see myself more as a facilitator. In other words, I am the middle person to get this person from A to B and so I have never really thought of myself as being in a leadership position. It's

not where I see myself. It's a new concept. I am client focused and client based.

In my years of experience I have learned that you don't have the answers, you simply have to pose the questions and put it back to the person. And they have to make their decision eventually. You really have to walk a fine line. My philosophy is that people have to make their own choices. You can't make the choices for them and I think that's where there is a difficulty. If you're not careful, and because you want to do the best for the clients, you tend to start to put them into a mould and say this is how they fit... I feel very strongly that you have to empower them to make their own decision. You can give them all the options and sit and talk with them forever, but eventually it has to be their choice. So I can tell you things about clients but I have to take a step up or back or step sideways to think about me being in that different role.

JOANNA

Well that's interesting. Empowerment. Is this another word for leadership?

JANE

I use that word a lot. And guiding. That to me is the leadership - allowing the people to have their own choice. They have to feel that at the end of the day, they did it, not me. I have been a success if people say "You motivated me," or "You gave me the support," that kind of thing. This is in my role.

* * *

II. Reading the Texts: Imprinted by Teacher-Leaders

Each of the previous stories relates to the way other teacher-leaders have left their imprint on these educators, and for some like Murdock and Pamela, they also speak about how their own leadership leaves its traces on others. Such traces permeate our ways of approaching educational practice and shape and define what is understood as educational leadership. What are the implications of not raising these influences out of the burden of their specificity?

The Gift

Pamela tells the story about the time she is given a copy of a book *The Courage to Teach* from the director of a provincial program in which she is an instructor. For her, this gesture by a respected leader recognized and affirmed her deeply held beliefs about teaching with integrity and authenticity. It also communicated powerfully to her that she can bring these beliefs into her teaching practice rather than withholding or “sneaking into” the curriculum what she sees as the most important dimension of teaching teachers: the authentic self. The gift is a symbol that cultivates commitment, loyalty and hope (Bolman & Deal, 1993) and validated and supported her desire for a more open and intentional approach to teaching teachers. This symbolic gesture reconfirmed her belief that she too, in her leadership role, has a tremendous power to influence the practice of many adult educators. The story of the gift offers an example of the many ways in which educators may hold themselves back from fully engaging in their teaching based on their “reading” of the environment where the implicit norms of “good teaching” are communicated. Pamela’s director demonstrated his leadership symbolically by his

articulation of more liberating and holistic teaching as is represented in Parker Palmer's book. In turn, this gesture empowered Pamela to be more intentional in her own leadership, more open about her aims.

This story opens up the possibility for reflecting on the degree to which our practice settings constrict or support personal agency, motivation, commitment and caring by unspoken yet understood norms of behaviour and relations. Structures have a powerful delimiting effect on personal agency and work to either constrict or enhance the individual educator's sense of empowerment. Later in the conversation Pamela remarks that traditional leadership roles seem to require acting according to someone else's "script" and appear to involve a great deal of sacrifice. This perception has implications for educational institutions whose policies and procedures may limit and constrict the authority of an educator's leadership capacity. Enthusiastic and committed educators who demonstrate their leadership in teaching and learning contexts may become disenchanted, discouraged, and demoralized within organizational cultures that denigrate or devalue, or simply make invisible those who seek to take leadership actions without positional authority. Educators who might normally use the power and resources that are embedded within their educational positions may withhold an important dimension of themselves. What are implications of holding outmoded definitions of leadership for the approaches to teaching? And in an era of organizational down-sizing how might finding ways for sharing power and responsibility among educators at all levels of the organization (including teaching faculty, administration, and contract instructors) make a significant difference in the lives of the learners who participate in these programs? The gesture of "The Gift" encouraged Pamela to bring her approach to education intentionally and

transparently in and outside her classrooms. It invited her to express her desires with a language that she already possessed.

A Family of Educators and a Mentor

Murdock's description of his family and the words of his mentor reveal his understanding of leadership as inextricably intertwined and profoundly shaped by the kind of environment he grew up in and the university where he has worked for many years. Educational leadership, for Murdock, is embodied in the two people closest to him – his parents. Throughout his young life his parents, both educators, communicated to him that education and all its concerns and possibilities was central to life. Surrounded as he was by educational thinking and the presence of the best and brightest in adult education in Canada, established a norm for discussion and debate about the “who, what, why, where, and when” of education. In addition, Murdock's pre-understanding that educational institutions are locations where conflict will inevitably exist between resources and priorities was a helpful message offered by a respected educational leader, the President of the university where he works. This message “on more than one occasion” set a tone for his workplace where certain norms flourished such as independent, resourceful thinking and responsible and accountable program planning. Within this context the message that conflict is inevitable influenced Murdock's mental map of the organization, one that allows for conflict and does not try to smooth it over and force it underground. The message communicated and understood in this brief statement is that conflict is an inescapable part of institutional life and must be faced squarely, albeit wisely, if one wants to resist the tendency toward becoming “settled and calcified.” Rather than understanding this as a negative message, Murdock interpreted

this as an empowering one. Conflict reflects the ongoing political tension between conflicting demands for limited resources and, handled well, generates energy and renewal. This political dimension is raised again with respect to Murdock's involvement in the setting up of the Degree Completion Program for working adults, not the primary "customers" of the university, but none the less, an important population. The importance of challenging received wisdom, trusting your own authority, and being accountable and responsible are integrated parts of this story. I wonder if someone like Pamela, who is highly suspect of the limitations of formal leadership positions, would be heartened by such a message from this respected and empowering positional leader, perhaps making institutional life more appealing, more human, more welcoming. Murdock's story is also concerned with emphasizing that no matter what the source of conflict or how worthy the cause, it is still very important to take care with the organizational details, to be accountable. If you want to effect change, the story cautions to do so in such a way as to demonstrate attention to professionalism and administrative detail. This is a reoccurring theme in many of Murdock's stories.

The Exuberant Mrs. Gillen

This story told by Anya, the artist and college art instructor, speaks of a high school art teacher and the impact this teacher had on her as a young Catholic schoolgirl growing up among the nuns in Ireland. What makes this teacher particularly important is her approach to teaching a deep appreciation for art as well as a sense of connection to the world surrounding these young students. Mrs. Gillen also communicated a genuine interest in Anya as a young art student who was to become a talented painter in her own right as well as a teacher herself. Mrs. Gillen's expansive and enthusiastic approach to

her subject and her care for her students has had a life long impact. In many ways Mrs. Gillen is the embodiment of Pamela's commitment to personal integrity, to the self as a powerful force for change. Mrs. Gillen, "this broad-minded, wild haired, classic extroverted art teacher," was a woman with a full life outside of teaching, working in the midst of Catholic nuns, who taught Anya to believe in her abilities and to care about and be responsive to the world around her. This is the moral dimension of Mrs. Gillen's practice and one that was instilled in Anya. Mrs. Gillen's educational leadership modeled and provided language to talk about what mattered in the world. Briskin (1990) suggests that this is how educators teach leadership to their students. By naming, negotiating, and trying to change power relations in the classroom highlights the learners' "capacity and responsibility to act as change agents – and as leaders – in the world outside the classroom" (p. 452).

Later in the conversation Anya tells a story about the assaulted student where this moral stance is acted on with considerable courage. Mrs. Gillen demanded a respectful appreciation for the arts and she pointed out her concerns for the ozone layer, thus connecting personal actions with environmental impacts long before such a connection was easily understood. To this day, the imprint of Mrs. Gillen's leadership on Anya is indelible. She embodies spirit, exuberance and generosity, respect for tradition and craft in fine arts and a questioning of accepted wisdom.

What Leadership is NOT

Jane is at a loss. She has no story about leadership or about leaders that have had a positive influence on her educational practice as a vocational facilitator. She is, however, quick to respond with two stories about what she understands leadership is not. Both of

these examples are of people in more formal leadership positions where traditionally we look for particular “attributes.” But they reflect, I think, Jane’s tacit theories about leadership, which later in the conversation she reexamines as more situated. Her first tale is of the head of an organization that did not delegate or share power in any way. This particular program manager’s inability to communicate her trust in the capabilities of others led to a demoralized team of educators who worked at this particular vocational center. This program manager set the agenda without the involvement of or apparent regard for others. Worse, it seems that she did not listen. Jane’s second brief story tells of a program director that appeared to have no vision for the team, but instead demonstrated limited expectations and non-articulated standards of staff performance. There was no “tightening,” as Jane puts it, no sense of limits or boundaries against which the staff could measure themselves and define their standards of performance. This story connects to Murdock’s comment about educational leadership being concerned with establishing an ethos for professional standards. As he remarks, “There is no excuse for being sloppy.” This particular leader, Jane recounts, “... would stretch and stretch and give people chances and more chances when it would have been better to have a limit. But the line kept moving and moving and moving...” Regardless of the clients or learners involved, all educational leaders, these stories seem to be saying, must be accountable for their decisions and their actions. These stories offer what Pamela, Murdock and Jane consider to be dimensions of “good” educational leadership in both the sense of effective and morally good.

Pamela being given the book *The Courage to Teach*, Murdock being told by a respected organizational leader “not to shy away from conflict,” Anya being inspired by

the enthusiasm and care of a high school art teacher, are all stories that still live within the co-narrators. These stories comment on how educational leaders set examples for others through modeling, their actions and demeanour reflecting an embodiment of their honesty and trustworthiness, their competency and expertise, and their inspiration and dynamism. These stories also evoked a related interpretation from Shauna Butterwick, one my advisors:

...I found myself thinking about how several of the stories about leaders who had influenced your co-narrators seemed to be speaking to the importance of leaders who were clear, even transparent in their philosophical approach. This came out even in the story about 'how not to be a leader' because it was a description of someone who did not share or create a vision. A related theme seemed to be that of trusting others and giving them space to make their own meaning of their work. (Personal communication, 2001)

Each of these leadership stories are interpretations of the actions and words of mentors and teachers whose influence or imprint was lifelong and lives on in the practices of these educators. Parker Palmer (1998) suggests that the teachers and mentors who make a difference in our lives provide us with an imprint of how we learn to lead. Such people in our lives are able to draw out our best qualities. They empower us. Pamela raises an important issue concerning power. She speaks of the paradox of sharing power without abdicating the expertise and authority of the teacher. Evidently Pamela has not fallen prey to what Friedman (1985) speaks of as a problematic in feminist theory.

In our eagerness to be non-hierarchical and supportive instead of being tyrannical and ruthlessly critical, we ...often denied ourselves the authority we seek to nurture in our own students. (p. 206-207)

hooks (1988) highlights the importance of acknowledging the role of teacher as a position of power over others and that power can be used in ways that diminish or enrich.

These stories trigger a memory of my own encounters with various mentors and educators who are imprinted in my own educational leadership but little examined. One obscured memory, re-membered now, brings this notion to life.

A Winter in Winnipeg, 1973.

Stories told about teachers and mentors who left their mark remind me of my winter in Winnipeg. At 17, newly graduated from high school in Vancouver, my parents thought I would do well (as would the rest of the family) to spend a year away in their hometown of Winnipeg. As it happens, my parents' friends had adult children and their friends, in their late teens and early 20s, would also be living there that year. They had a small house and I was invited to live with them. Little did I know how much that short year would change the course of my life. These adult children, Debbie, Jimmy, Michelle, Chris and Francis, had been living in a commune in Ontario they called 'The Farm', complete with a geodesic dome, solar power, teepee, goats, chickens, and crops of barley and hay.

They had come to Winnipeg because of Daniel Berrigan, a Jesuit Priest who had recently served time in prison for acts of civil disobedience in protest of the Vietnam War. A professor of theology at Cornell, he was spending a semester as a guest faculty at the University of Manitoba. I registered for his classes: Introduction to Theology and An Interpretation of the Book of Revelations. Along with my group of friends we attended his lectures, poetry readings, and seminars and we became his core of student supporters during the fall semester. He came for dinner on a number of occasions to our little house on Spence Street, a block from downtown Winnipeg. When the hospitality workers at the university went on strike, in a jet black Lincoln Continental Town car borrowed from Jimmy's mom, Daniel Berrigan rode with us through the snow packed roads to deliver coffee and donuts to picketers. Later we sat in a coffee shop and talked about his Vietnam protest

experiences, his travels to Ireland as part of the peace process, his training as a Jesuit, his brother Phillip, also a priest who had worked many years in Guatemala, who had married a nun and left the church to start an outreach program in the inner city of Baltimore. And much more.

He was a magnificent storyteller, humorous; personal and scholarly, and was equally attentive, interested and encouraging of our newly formulating questions - about the role of the Catholic Church in developing countries, about social activism, about spirituality and social responsibility. We talked about the theology of liberation in Latin America, about his relationship with Thomas Merton, about the farm workers in California and the leadership of Caesar Chavez whom I later met and photographed in farm worker union meetings in San Francisco and on the picket lines in Delano, California.

A highly educated, sophisticated world traveler, teacher and poet, Father Berrigan, or Dan as we called him, seemed to enjoy our company as much as we enjoyed his. He introduced us to the constant stream of visitors who traveled from around the world to see him, including Daniel Ellsberg, famous for his involvement with the Pentagon Papers.

Witty, intelligent, outspoken, and interested. No mask, no distance, no pretense. He never betrayed our trust in him, never cut us off. This teacher leaves an imprint still. After that year I returned to Vancouver to begin an undergraduate degree in Communications and Latin American Studies. Later I went to Toronto, to study for a Master's in Adult Education, still continuing to seek work in the margins - with homeless youth, newly arrived immigrants, political refugees, adult literacy students. Then later I moved to Bolivia and then to Colombia on assignment with a number of development agencies.

As Maxine Greene (1978) says, we become who we are by the kind of community we live in. That year in Winnipeg was my first experience with a learning community that shaped my world and opened up a path that I was to travel

literally and figuratively for years to come. That's what educational leaders do with their words and their beings. They indicate directions, and then leave us free to interpret the signs and act on their meaning.

* * *

It's About Creating Something New

According to Murdock, educational leadership refers to educators who set an example for others to follow; who develop something new; who see possibilities. In this story Murdock describes the degree completion program he was instrumental in developing for part time adult learners at the university and the kind of impact it has had on the adult students who participated in the program. This story illustrates what Murdock means by creating something new as "not an iteration of an existing program." Likewise Murray recounts in greater detail in the next instalment of the conversation the start-up of the hospitality industry-job placement program as a response to an emerging problem in the industry using a new private public model. "Creating something new," says Murdock, "is to have a huge sense of possibility." These are possibilities within the structures and in the lives of individuals. Murray in a later story also gets at this idea of seeing something that isn't there yet when he mentions how during the program entrance interview he looks for the "flicker of possibility." To see such possibilities requires imagination – a critical element in educational leadership. Emily Dickinson says it poetically: "The Possible's slow fuse is lit/By the Imagination." Like Dewey and Arendt, Dickinson suggests that it is imagining things being otherwise that may be a first step toward acting on the belief that they can be changed. "A space of freedom opens before the person moved to choose in the light of possibility; she or he feels what it signifies to be an initiator and an agent, existing among others but with the power to

choose for himself or herself" (cited in Greene, 1995, p. 22). Seeing things that currently do not exist, noticing what is missing, then taking action to create something new are themes running through these stories of the degree completion program and later, in the social assistance to hospitality industry job placement programs.

I Don't See Myself as a Leader

Jane's initial response to my question about moments of leadership resonated strongly with my own experience. "This is new to me," she said. "I don't see myself as a leader." For Jane, educational leaders are people in charge of the organization and the notion of teaching as leading is not a construct she had previously considered. Yet as she continued to think out loud about her personal philosophy and vocation and tell stories of how she guides and supports her clients, many of whom are struggling with uncertainties about their capacities to find work in a shifting economy, her educational leadership philosophy was quite evident to me and I think it became evident to her as well. Her stories show that her approach to her clients is based on respect. This respect is communicated not just with words, but also with her self, her manner, and her non-verbal presence. She demonstrates her respect for her clients' autonomy and the need for them to make their own decisions based on their understanding of their experience and the best available information that she provides them with. To do this, "I walk a fine line," she says concerning this balance between guiding the client and their own self-discovery. By raising questions, providing information and thinking about each client in terms of their unique qualities and circumstances, she doesn't treat them as if they were all the same. She sees the possibilities in each of them.

As Jane says in a later story, "It's My Love," she asks herself a series of questions that help her navigate the self-exploration process and action planning involved in her work as a vocational facilitator. "What are their talents?" "What are their skills?" "What are they hiding?" "What do we need to do to help them find the skills and talents?" "What conditions can we create together?" The answers to these questions help guide her. She walks this fine line by framing the conversation with each client with information gathered about their worldview, their history, and their perspective. She has learned over the years when to speak and when to remain silent and how to listen to what is said and not said, and how to draw the client's attention to his or her capability to act on his or her own behalf. This is Jane's understanding of empowerment and it is inextricably tied to her understanding of her own leadership. She says, "I have been a success if people say "You motivated me," or "You gave me the support," that kind of thing. This is in my role."⁹ Her story begins with the initial claim that she is not a leader. She then proceeds to talk about her systematic and conversational approach to her practice and she ends with the statement, "...what it's all about is ...to give the person a helping hand when they need it and [then] they run with it." As I read and reread her story her shifting perspective struck me. From another angle she becomes able to see her thoughts and actions in terms of leadership, but she says, "I have to take a step up or back or step sideways to think about me being in that different role." In fact, within her practice there are multiple roles and as she takes a step sideways or backward through the telling of this story she bumps into her own leadership identity which she discovers is very much

⁹ Shrewsbury (1987) suggests: "leadership is a special form of empowerment that empowers others...The goal is to increase the power of all actors, not to limit the power of some." Briskin (1990) notes: "elitist practices associated with conventional forms of leadership have led many feminists to reject leadership itself." (p. 486). Jane makes reference earlier in this conversation to two such examples of poorly executed conventional leadership that she experienced as demoralizing, constricting, and alienating.

central to her practice but so enmeshed in her daily actions as to be taken for granted, invisible, imbedded and indiscernible.

About the interpretation of her stories I wrote to Jane with these reflections on our conversation:

What strikes me is your deep commitment to the growth and empowerment of people and their inherent right to be treated with respect and as autonomous people. This seems to be the basis of your philosophy and what makes you so effective at what you do...it's not the techniques you use but the sensitivity and timing of your interventions. This approach (or as the Greeks call it "practical wisdom") when you talk with colleagues or clients in the midst of complex issues seems to me to be a huge part of educational leadership.

Your comments on what is not, in your view, educational leadership are also interesting. Both those who control and dominate with their agendas and those who have no boundaries or limitations, as you point out, seem to indicate a lack of awareness or self-knowledge. From what you said, this self-awareness is central to your abiding philosophy.

I notice that you talk about the importance of non-judgement and I too have this belief in the need to be accepting of others as they are and giving them the support they need that is suited to their particular needs at the moment. I have been puzzling over the idea of 'judgement' as an important dimension of educational leadership (not in the sense of being disapproving but in the sense of sizing up a situation and figuring out what ought to be done). It seems to be fundamental to educational leadership to make judgements explicit and therefore defensible and discussible with others (clients and co-workers and funders alike). It seemed like both leaders you talked about did not express their vision, expectations, or reasons for doing things publicly and therefore they did not seem to be accountable for their actions.

I love the image that comes to mind of what you do as supporting people to begin to 'walk tall'. It is such a powerful metaphor for your vocation. You also talk about the importance of the group is really insightful – the importance of group support and this delicate balance of providing a safe place for people to regroup but also making this space challenging and empowering of others to take action. Not an easy task.

There is a quiet courage and humility in the way you seem to go about your practice. This love and respect for people in need seems like a fundamental dimension of your leadership as is working with intuition and inner authority (the blue quality!). I wonder if our mental pictures and

cultural traditions of the strong male leader are what prevent the soft spoken woman from recognizing herself as a leader in her own right? There's a lot in this. (Personal communication, 2001)

CHAPTER FIVE:

TENSIONS AND CHALLENGES IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

I. From Reluctant to Intentional Leadership

JOANNA

Jane, you seem to have a clear personal philosophy that you draw on, that makes sense to you...

Leading from Within

JANE

Yes, it is something that I have worked on. People want you to be calm and objective and to keep a clear understanding about what's happening. This is how I am able to help them. It doesn't mean that you don't empathize with them, very much so, but by stepping back you have a better view of the situation. At close to 60 years old, I find I am very intuitive. I work from my gut. This is something I have worked at for a long time and this is positive for other people. I can accept them and let them be who they are without having to change them. Without saying, "Well this is what you are and this is what you have to change" because I am comfortable with who I am. It's not something that 20 or 30 years ago I would have done.

JOANNA

That is interesting for younger people coming in, and what it means for their approach and perhaps the tendency to say, "Here, this is what you should do." You know, being very directive.

JANE

And that is what is a scary part in education and social services. I like to lead by example and what ever I do in my own life, in my working with people and dealing with

clients and with coworkers, I hope that that will bring something. Rather than saying, "This is what you should be doing," I say, "This is what I am doing." If you like the way I'm doing it and if you see this works for me then maybe you'd like to...' If people want advice, that's fine, well then I will say something but I really don't say 'look, you should do this...'

JOANNA

You must be tempted sometimes! Some things must seem so clear to you...There are often so many gaps in our understanding, you can just see the potential in someone that they don't see themselves. But as you say, there are many ways to begin...

JANE

(NODS IN AGREEMENT)

...Well you have to have that magic moment which is so important when, yes, there is a person that you'd really like to talk to but going up to them out of the blue, isn't the way to approach them. When the teachable moment is there or the magic moment, then yes. For example, there is a person at work who tends to panic in certain situations and he tends to pull back and he's got lots of skills but he tends not to use them. Instead he tends to play it safe. This is the person who is in charge of the resource center. He can do a really good job but finds that his comfort zone is to work at the computer rather than being out there with the clients. Because he is stuck out there in the open, he is right there in the room when you walk in and he's very noticeable, so I have had some talks with him about what he is comfortable with...

JOANNA

Kind of raising his awareness of what's possible?

JANE

That's right.

JOANNA

Drawing his attention to what he might do, what his skills are...

JANE

Yes...for me, by focusing on the positive, I do this with my clients as well, by talking about what you've got, not what you haven't got, emphasizing the positive. "You do these things so well, wouldn't it be great if you were able to do this and this...and you can because you have this, this, and this...you have these wonderful talents and you need to use them and develop them." That kind of conversation.

JOANNA

You are having a great impact on a lot of people's lives.

JANE

Well, yes. Scary...(laughter). Not really scary though. People who started through us, who then went back to school and then they got the training and then they have been hired ...that's what it is all about. They run with it. You give the person a helping hand when they need it and they run with it.

* * *

Putting Prejudice "At Risk": From Reluctant to Intentional
Leadership

INT. DANCE STUDIO

(JENNIFER IS STANDING ALONG SIDE THREE FEMALE DANCERS. SHE INDICATES TO ONE TO MOVE HER BODY JUST SO. THE DANCER REPEATS THE GESTURE. THE OTHERS WAIT FOR THEIR CUE, AND THEN BOTH RUN AND LEAP WHILE THE OTHER WATCHES QUIETLY.)

JOANNA

Jennifer, what about you? You spent years in New York as a student with the choreographer Merce Cunningham. How did this experience influence you?

JENNIFER

That was the most inspiring tradition to me but that's not how I began in dance. I went to a university and did six years of Graham technique beforehand. But it was through the people that were experimenting and on the edge of dance and Merce Cunningham--at the time that I was training in the early 70s--was already the patriarch, so it was through the people, the generation after him, they were the people who inspired me.

JOANNA

Well as the choreographer you are in the natural leading position and have the final authority to make the changes.

JENNIFER

Not necessarily. Because of the tradition that I come from; you see Cunningham would hire a composer and let them do their work and then he would do his work and wouldn't say, "I want you to make this match." And he'd often do a season and have a new composer every night and they'd just come and play their music. It was for the audience to make the correlation between the music and the dance. I have intentionally avoided being too literal, too directive.

But I have realized recently that I have a very passive approach when I collaborate with artists. In so far as I understand, "They are an artist and I am an artist, I'll do my work and they'll do their work. Perhaps I don't need to understand what they do or why they do it." But this has been changing and I recently collaborated with a filmmaker and I wanted to understand what he was doing even though he also came from this same tradition of working independently, not trying to make what we do "match." He

was doing his work and I was doing my work, it's just that we are in the same place together doing it. I realize as I am saying this that I am now making a change by the fact that I consider that passive, as opposed to, before it was simply respecting them as an artist and letting them do their work. But now I want collaborations, in some sense, I want to know "Why did you do that?" "How do you do that in your form," and "Let's figure this out how we do this and this?"

JOANNA

To articulate some of the thinking...?

JENNIFER

To get us both on the same page. I realize because I am beginning to have questions that I want answered. You see the whole thing about interpretation seems to be a study of vision. I have some ideas about the end result that I'm after and making the piece is then simply doing what you need to do to get the end result. More and more I seem to be able to have a sense about what the end result is and therefore I need to become more of a leader and take the people with me to the result that I want, if I want to get that result. That's a change in terms of leadership. With dancers as well, I often just step back and see what the dancers bring because I feel that if I direct too much then they can't get there. They shut down.

JOANNA

Knowing and not knowing. To define the vision and be open to the contributors. This back and forth, this tension is truly a dance in itself.

Naming the Dance

JENNIFER

It's a complete dance. It's a complete dance. In terms of being a leader, there has been a huge reluctance in myself

to being a leader. I have consciously been asking myself "What is a good artistic director?" "What makes a good artistic director?" and "What is the leadership involved?" and I see this reluctance. Because it is clear that in dance anyway, that when I know something, I know something. It's also clear that it's the nature of the form that when you begin, you begin with humility. That you don't know anything (laughter). You can know specific things but you don't know everything. So you can't, in many situations, make decisions too quickly. I just have to sit there until the decision is ready to be made. And because of the speed at which we work, we have to make a decision, because the deadline was yesterday, it's difficult to sit out until you really know what has to be done and how.

JOANNA

You have to act.

JENNIFER

I learned that you always have to have the title of the dance before you begin the piece. You need it for the press release. For example there were two dance pieces, one of them was called Smashed Carapace. I worked with another choreographer and we spent a whole afternoon talking, even before going into the studio, we just talked about what we wanted to explore through this dance. Smashed carapace felt like that was it. You take off the crust and get down to what is really going on inside. That's what it felt like. So we named the dance "Smashed Carapace" and while we toured she hurt her back and the title realized itself in this very twisted way. Then there was another dance called "No Picnic" and the process really was no picnic. The dancers all got really sick and the piece was hard to work with and everything was against it, so I became leery about making the title, other than a really innocuous title before hand, because I didn't know enough and the title would mock me and twist me, and in some way turn back and leer at the project.

JOANNA

Did the project turn out all right in the end?

JENNIFER

I don't know what all right is. (Laughter)

FADE TO BLACK

* * *

FADE UP

EXT. BEACHSIDE - DAYTIME

(THE GROUP WALKS DOWN THE BEACH TOGETHER; THE WAVES BREAK ON THE SHORE AND CREATE A LOUD CRASHING SOUND. JENNIFER AND ANYA CARRY THEIR SHOES, THEIR PANT LEGS ARE ROLLED UP AND THEY WALK IN THE WATER.)

Creating Safe and Challenging Space

JANE

What I try to do in vocational education is to create independence in people by creating a group that is supportive and safe but not too much -- creating independence is far healthier. If you create another dependency within the group, in a 12-week course, it would be very easy for people to become very comfortable in the situation, to find this as a second home. What you have to say is, "Yes this is a very safe place and you can be safe here, but you need to start to step out from here and then come back and explain and share with us, and see how it goes, not just to stay within your own cocoon."

JOANNA

So you intentionally have to make people a little bit uncomfortable.

JANE

Yes, or at least its not just a safe haven, at least it's a safe place to share but its not the only place you've got to go to, from here you step out into the big world...

JOANNA

It's a stepping-stone...

JANE

Yes, exactly - - it's a sort of - - building block.

JOANNA

You care for the learners by challenging them at the same time as providing them a supportive environment. Anya, as someone who is constantly creating spaces for artists' learning in the studio, do you have an instance where you have intentionally challenged a learner to stretch beyond his or her perceived capabilities?

ANYA

I think I force many of the students to go to particular places... intellectually, technically, creatively. I mean, to really push themselves and to try new, perhaps difficult things. At the moment there is a young woman in one of my classes who has been living on the streets for about five years and you know, you can see by her whole body language how guarded she is and how afraid she is. For many of the students, no matter what their ages their self-esteem is so low.

You get to know which students have the confidence and come from very supportive background, but you get a lot of students that don't. Like this particular one. I have been pushing her, and been at her, and she's done some amazing things with her art. She's applied to Concordia University and she's getting out of her difficult living situation and trying another city. When she first started she just could not even fathom that she could even get the slides together

for her portfolio and fill out the application. I am just facilitating it and making it easier for her. It's what I do, particularly for students like her who do not seem to have a lot of support. She's been living on the streets and feels she is one up from the dregs of society and she's got no belief that she has any ability or talent, that she could go anywhere. So today I was at her...

JOANNA

When you say "at her" what do you mean?

ANYA

Well "at her" you know, I say to her, "What do you really, really want? What's your biggest wish?" and she'd say, "I'd love to go to Montreal. I'd love to do my BFA. I'd love to do my Master's." So I say to her, "When's the deadline?" She says, "I don't know, I don't know, I don't know." I say, "Well then go over there and go over there... You have a list of things to do, now go and do all those things."

And just by helping her make the list of things that need to be done, not doing it for her, I'm just making it easier for her, you know? Because I know what it was like myself when I was younger. It's just overwhelming. You have no clue where to go and you feel you're such a failure and you don't even know how to start. Other people have the wherewithal to figure out the system. "You go here to get this, you get this to transfer," you know? It's just following instructions and having the information. "How do I transfer to another college?" "How do I go here?" "Is it realistic?" Even though she's preparing herself for the worst, "There's no way I'll get in," she says. I think she will.

JOANNA

So showing her the ropes and letting her know that you will follow up and see how she's progressing?

ANYA

That's right.

* * *

II. Breaking with Traditions

Jennifer is an artistic director, a choreographer, and a dance educator steeped in the modern dance tradition of the great contemporary dancers and choreographers Martha Graham and Merce Cunningham. This tradition runs deep within the dance world and is not easily set aside. One important element within this tradition involves artistic collaboration and unspoken assumptions about what it means to create and to communicate a vision for a particular piece of work.

Gadamer refers to traditions as prejudices or pre-understandings and suggests that it is the prejudices of an individual that "constitute the historical reality of his [sic] being (Gadamer, 1995, cited in Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, p. 277). We cannot operate in society without traditions, but more often than not traditions are played out in ways that are unquestioned and taken as natural truths rather than as socially constructed ways of understanding and acting. In a profound sense these traditions have us, before we have them (Caputo, 2000). But what happens when these beliefs and assumptions no longer capture the complexity of the situations we face?

Jennifer's story about collaboration in dance raises interesting questions about how unchallenged traditions within contemporary dance have limited her desire to be more decisive, more verbally articulate. She says, "I have just realized recently that I have a passive approach, and now I need to become more of a leader...to get the results I want." This meta-statement, a reflection on a reflection, suggests that she is making an

important shift in her understanding, recognizing, as she speaks, deeply held assumptions about what it means to lead within a collaborative process of creating a dance. Through her example of a respected teacher/choreographer Merce Cunningham Jennifer articulates a complex and paradoxical understanding of leadership. There is a tension between the traditional command and control approach with heavy negative overtones and the collaborative model of artists who work on parallel tracks and don't interfere with the other's vision even when working side by side on the same project. With this either/or mindscape it is no wonder that she has resisted trying something new. As she says, "There is a huge reluctance in myself to being a leader." Perhaps she is speaking of her reluctance to be a traditional leader and all that it signifies to her. Yet, of late, she increasingly wants to be more intentional in her leadership process.

One reading of this story is that Jennifer's conception of leadership is based on a traditional notion of control and this definition sits uncomfortably with her own approach to artistic direction. Her words imply a willingness to risk these prejudices and to change her mind about what she considers good leadership. This struggle to understand what makes a good leader within the context of Jennifer's practice is a familiar one, one she shares openly and honestly. Yet when Jennifer talks about good leadership, I wonder if she refers to being effective or being moral. Perhaps both? Imbedded within this story of creating a dance collaboratively is, it seems to me, the progression of Jennifer's changing beliefs about what it means to lead. "I am more like a tour guide, not knowing more than anyone else" is perhaps too humble a starting point for someone who has spent years studying and practicing her art. To me this statement reflects a value of democracy and egalitarianism fitting more with Plato's notion of leaders as "weavers" (Temes, 1996), as

persons not so much different from those who are following, more in tune with a facilitative approach to teaching than a didactic one. The role of the leader as weaver is to weave together all kinds of people and their particular interests and talents all for the purpose of creating a fine garment. This is an appealing notion, one that captures something familiar in my own leadership approach. Clearly this is a more modest notion than one that defines leaders as philosopher kings.

Between Knowing and Not Knowing

To begin, says Jennifer, is to begin with humility. "You can know specific things but you can't know everything." This story illustrates how she named her dance projects in the past and the inherent risk that naming a project can result in limiting or warping its real possibilities. In her story she articulates the dilemma of naming a project too soon and thus framing the project too narrowly and consequently producing disastrous outcomes. She gives two examples of projects – "Smashed Carapace" and "No Picnic" that resulted in unwanted outcomes. What she has learned in this process is to fix the frame of the project lightly, not to put too much importance on the title but to give the project a shape that provides structure without limiting what its final outcome will be. This story articulates in a living way the tensions and interweaving of communicative and strategic action¹⁰ involved in establishing aims for a dance project, yet carefully creating the conditions within which the dancers and other collaborators are given room to

¹⁰ Communicative and strategic action refer to ends and means, about the process and the outcomes. Traditionally vocational exploration programs for labour market transitions, computer training programs for women on welfare, skills training for multicultural workers, for example are educative spaces where the ends such as developing technical-rational skills, are predetermined (e.g., how to write a resume or develop a particular skill) as well as being locations where the means are equally important, such as fostering communicative competence (i.e., how to identify problematic ideas, beliefs and values, critically examine the basis of these assumptions, and through discussion with others, test and justify them).

contribute to the final outcome. It's a struggle between means and ends. It's a struggle educators who plan programs also face. Through concrete detail this story makes important comments about and offers insight into the dilemmas of traditional leadership models where the leader "supplies" the vision fully formed and her task is to "persuade" others to carry it out. Smircich & Morgan (1982) expand this complex notion by suggesting that:

...effective leadership depends on the extent to which the leader's definition of the situation serves as a basis for the action of others, framing the experience for others so that action can be guided by common conceptions as to what should occur. (p. 74)

This story also reveals the complexity of leadership as a meaning making process; this back and forth between the vision and the necessary action to attain the vision and the need for language and talk and listening and speaking to create the outcome desired – it's as if leadership in this instance is a conversation.

"It's a dance, it's a real dance." And in much the same way, this story seems to mean, so is educational leadership. There is no straight line, no seven steps, and no list of qualities and processes that guarantee a particular result. With regard to Jennifer as the narrator of her experience, one can view the narrative as a metaphor for a larger discussion about the distinctions between communicative and strategic action (Borland, 1991) and the risk of conceptualizing or framing the goals or "ends" of action too tightly or inaccurately. These are good lessons for educational leaders planning programs, program which focus only on outcomes and leave no room for participants to bring their own experiences to the process.

Creating Safe and Unsafe Space: Pushing Learners to Try Difficult Things

In their work on organizational leadership Kouzes and Posner (cited in Conger, 1992, p.47) point out that leaders encourage extraordinary accomplishments within groups and organizations and help them to take responsibility in their work and in their lives. The co-narrators point to the various ways they challenge the students in their programs to be responsible for themselves, to challenge themselves, in a context of respect and dignity. The paradoxical notion of creating safe and unsafe educative space is addressed directly by Jane who gives the example of the short-term vocational programs where there is so much at stake. People are under tremendous pressure to find work and to be responsible for themselves. Yet when they come into the program, they often feel discouraged and anxious. Jane is a portrait in care, yet she knows that to care means also to confront. In this sense she is more in tune with bell hooks, who uses her authority in the class room to challenge students to become critical thinkers, to speak up and to find their voices by risking themselves (hooks, 1995). Murray also notes that people entering his programs are generally "on a low ebb." Surely they need safety above all. But Jane says, "It's not just another safe haven, at least it's a safe place to share, but it's not the only place you've got to go to, from here you step out into the big world..." Anya speaks of getting "at" her students when she recognizes the untapped potential and self-limiting behaviour of talented students. She demonstrates her confidence in these students by articulating her expectations of them and challenging and guiding them. She mentions a particular student who she assisted with her application to a university program. In this conversation between student and teacher, the leadership is empowering:

I say to her, "What do you really, really want? What's your biggest wish?" and she says, "I'd love to go to Montreal. I'd love to do my BFA. I'd love

to do my Master's." So I say to her, "When's the deadline?" She says, "I don't know, I don't know, I don't know." I say, "Well then go over there and go over there...you have a list of things to do, now go and do all those things.

Murdock offers another example of the degree completion program as a space to be challenged, where students' thinking deepens. He observes "...you could see them go through real stages where they would say, "You know when I came into the program I saw everything in black and white. Now I see that it's a bit more complex than that, there are shades of grey." Individuals need safe spaces to develop their thinking, gather information, and prepare to act in public – sheltered spaces that respect and dignify their experiences; preparing them not only for work, but also support their capacity to become actors in the public sphere. As Greene (1990) notes, individuals become who they are within the fabrics of communities; so much depends on the kinds of community they inhabit, what kind of teachers they have. In the classroom or community setting, wherever the site of learning is located, there is an important connection between what is personally and socially possible. Educational leaders, regardless of setting are those who ask, what kinds of communities are being created in vocational exploration or social assistance to work programs? In classrooms? In community meetings and shopping mall training sessions? What opportunities are being lost? Educational leadership in this sense recognizes and articulates the tensions between the need for privacy, trust, respect and safety necessary to explore personal issues in a dignified manner (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule, 1986), as well as the importance of challenging students to develop the communicative competencies required for action beyond the classroom. To risk their assumptions, to redefine themselves, to begin to individually and collectively learn to participate.

In a previous study (Ashworth, 2000), exploring public and private conception of educative space, I focused on the virtues of the private classroom space. Bachelard (1958/1964), in his imaginative work *The Poetics of Space*, refers to the nest as having particular virtues. The nest is hidden and sheltered and

it is a good, warm home, it is even life giving...since it continues to shelter the bird that has come out of the egg. It also serves as a sort of downy coverlet for the baby bird until its quite naked skin grows its own down. (Bachelard, 1958/1964, p. 92)

The nest is a metaphor quite fitting a discussion about the sheltered space connecting private and public. It is also interesting to note that the nest is built with the body of the bird, who through much effort, pressing and tightening the materials, fits its body into the nest perfectly. Sheltered spaces can be located in community organizations, churches, community centers, youth clubs, aboriginal, environmental or women's groups, and offer opportunities to prepare people for action in the social and political scene. These spaces are largely private in that they are often considered safe and not open to outsiders. It is within these spaces that concepts of self-worth, identity, uncertainty and hope are more freely articulated.

All young birds are eventually pushed out of the nest, forced to test their wings only as they are falling. Educators who take their vocation seriously, as the co-narrators do, are in the business of intentionally creating educative spaces that encourage critique, reflection, questioning, "not knowing," trying on new perspectives, and thinking out loud without fear of ridicule, within an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect. But what of challenging spaces? As Jane points out, "there is no point in creating further dependencies." Anya too, sees her role as finding ways to get students "to really push themselves and to try new, perhaps difficult, things."

III. Conversations That Persuade, Connect, and Provoke Action

After Nine Months of Constant Conversations a New Program is
Born!

MURRAY

When we first set up the tourism industry program it was difficult, quite frankly, convincing the government, that is, the government employees who were doing the same job for so many years, that here was a program that was going to work. It took nine months of constant meetings and within those nine months they were all on our side. There are a few that still have blinders on...

JOANNA

So when you say government employees you're talking about people working in the ministry itself? They are not convinced that some kind of a private enterprise approach can work?

MURRAY

That's been the problem... convincing government that some private enterprise can come in and do what they did. What we did in this year provincially is provide work for 3000 people, whereas in the past they haven't had as much success. Over the period of time the program has been operating we have employed 6000 people.

JOANNA

Who was offering the training that you do before your program? Was it directly from the ministry?

MURRAY

Yes, directly from the ministry or people who worked on their own. The federal government also had some programs that directed people to customer service and so on but it wasn't really directed to the tourism and hospitality industry. It was only identified six or seven years ago

that there was going to be a shortage of good employees, or employees, period, in our industry. This is in response to a study done in 1996 that indicated the industry is going to need 16,000 cooks by the year 2000. But where were they going to come from? So the industry got together and said "OK, we've got to take the lead in this," and this is what we've done. Trying to convince the government that a program of this nature is what's needed was the toughest part of the whole thing.

It has always been the ministries and the government that dictated how it was going work, and we just went along with it, but after three years of success, we went back and said, "We're going to call the shots now." And they bought into it and the partnership has been a tremendous success, so much so that virtually every province in Canada and some states in the US are looking at the success of this program.

JOANNA

What do you think is the fundamental successful ingredient there? Is it curriculum itself?

MURRAY

No, not necessarily. I think it's the working relationship that we have developed with employers, quite frankly. And having a client base that is job ready, to some degree and having employers that are willing to take people on even if they need additional training. The industry itself, the employers themselves, have recognized what the needs are, so they take people like ourselves, who -- between ourselves in this office we probably -- have at least 20 years of experience in the industry. We know what employers need, we have all done a lot of hiring, a lot of interviewing, and we are able to go to the employers and save them time and money. Rather than them have 100 resumes across their desks, we do all the screening and send them the people we think are going to work. So the industry has

bought into it. But it was a tough one to convince the employers to trust us. It takes time for the employers to know us and to trust us.

* * *

Conversations for Understanding

JOANNA

Murdock, you mentioned earlier how conversations with university faculty were so important to helping them focus their particular expertise in a way that is going to help the kinds of learners that you are interested in providing programs for. Can you say more about this?

MURDOCK

One of the challenges in these kinds of conversations is maintaining a kind of balance between the needs and interests of the learners, their employers in many cases, and the curriculum. I very strongly resist the notion in universities that you can just develop curriculum for adults by focusing on the epistemology of the discipline and that is the way the curriculum is developed within that department. On the other hand, the idea that you can just pay attention to the learner's needs strikes me as being silly also. So it's in the spirit of balance, of putting these two things together, but there is also something that a close friend and very experienced colleague of mine taught me here at the university. You need to go into these educational opportunities with a huge sense of possibility about what you are trying to create. A sense of possibility within the program, for the individuals, and I think that's very important.

JOANNA

So often the program or the course is something that doesn't yet exist and you have to create it. It's like Jennifer walking into her studio or Murray and his

colleagues reading the report on the hospitality industry and saying, "We've got to do something." It's about seeing the possibilities and then acting on them.

MURDOCK

In this case, the issue of figuring out a curriculum - how direct one can be with educational activities - is really important. A lot of people who are not educators but who are involved in training have this notion that you have to write the specs for what you want, say, in terms of core competencies; that an individual needs to fulfill a certain role and you should be able to write the specs for that. Then the educator's job is to design a program to take people from wherever they are to meet those specs. But that's not the way it works. There's quite a bit of worth it seems to me, in working between that notion and the notion that typically guides the work in the universities which is that you don't worry about what people are going to do, you teach them the traditions and then they'll adapt themselves to what ever situation; they'll figure it out. This is too indirect, I think. There is the possibility that this approach is used as an excuse for failing to think very seriously about what it is that everybody needs out of the situation.

For people in continuing education in universities, at some point you have to learn that faculty members are experts in their fields and they are very bright - they don't get there without being very bright - and they are the authorities in the subject areas that they're in. If you're fighting against that or finding that an impediment to doing the kind of programming that you want to do then you probably shouldn't be working in the university. On the other hand, many faculty members are not really in touch with the non-traditional adult learners in universities that we have to serve. That's not a primary kind of focus of theirs and they need help in thinking that through. So that is a special role for people who are university-based

continuing educators. But if you're going to do exemplary work in this field then you have to know how to work with academics and defer to them when it comes to certain kinds of academic judgments, while steering them and still helping them see other things that they might not know anything about or they may not be used to thinking about.

JOANNA

Can you think of a particular instance?

MURDOCK

The whole issue of math is very interesting to me. People who go into these kinds of degree completion programs are going to end up needing some kind of managerial accounting and finance, for which they need a certain amount of math. A lot of people coming into these programs don't have much math, or if they do, they did it a long, long time ago. And so the challenge is working out what kind of a math course people would have to have in order to do finance. I wouldn't even understand all the math myself but I would ask questions that help me talk with the people in the math department, who without this kind of information from me, probably wouldn't know where to start.

JOANNA

So the conversation is necessary to figure out what the "need" is, what the right level should be?

MURDOCK

Right. We have a very interested math department but finding the right people who want to respond to that and then working with them, tailoring a math course until you start to get it right, is an interesting process.

JOANNA

There are these two different worlds and your task is to bring them together.

MURDOCK

Well, I think the university is, in my view, too skewed over to one side of this. When you talk about leadership one of the things that has to happen is somebody has to lead the university to see the variety of situations in which people need to learn.

JOANNA

And yet that leadership has to happen at a lot of different levels. I mean, from where you're positioned there is only so much you can do...

MURDOCK

That's true it does have to happen at quite a number of levels and some of it has to happen externally - the university gets pushed to do things.

JOANNA

The demand for some kind of a response comes from outside?

MURDOCK

Well PLA (prior learning assessment) is an example of this. PLA is just a big pain as far as most academic institutions are concerned and in fact many companies find it a pain too. They find it cumbersome and awkward and nobody really knows how to do it. But on the other hand, there has to be a way for individuals to have access to higher education so that they don't have to start back at square one. If they have learned a lot through a combination of education and work, and all our experience says that people who have been out there working for a while have learned all kinds of stuff, but it's hard to translate one-to-one what it is and what it means. The fact of the matter is that most people with a background of working as a professional for many years can walk into third and fourth year university and cope very well. They can walk into a graduate course and do perfectly well, after having a two-year undergraduate program at a technical institute, for instance.

Standing Up for Dance

JENNIFER

I'm on a committee for Safety and Health for the Performing Arts and Entertainment, set up by the Worker's Compensation Board. It has taken me two years of being on this committee to understand why so many things feel askew. There is an underlying confusion from people on the Board about why anybody would want to be doing this anyway, why would anybody want to be a dancer. "It's obviously such a risky business, and you're going to get injured, and you work so hard, and you don't make much money, so why would you do it?"

The education is continual. What we do, why we love it, and why it's important to society. Well, you might remember that it came up in the last election when the Alliance Party got the titles from the Canada Council of peoples' artwork and they put them in the paper and the titles were not like Opus 4, or Beethoven's Symphony.... They were saying to the voters "Do you want the government to use your money to fund something that's called "Sweet as a Cat's Ass" or something like that?

JOANNA

So they are mocking it?

JENNIFER

They are mocking and belittling it and there is an inherent ignorance and lack of respect for somebody in dance that is typically very North American. Because when I lived in France and you say you work in dance, they say admiringly, "You do!" Here, you climb into a taxi and you say you work in dance and they think you're a stripper. Still.

This committee work is an example of somewhere where I have to really, really fight for dance and I have had to find as many different ways as possible to explain why people do this and that they do this because they love it and because it contributes to society in important ways.

JOANNA

There seems to be this great need to articulate what your intentions are, to convince and persuade and bring others along. Working on this advisory committee has forced you, in a sense; to defend and explain the reason people dance in the first place. To justify why we need dance in society. Not just your program, but dance in general.

JENNIFER

I don't think that's unique to dance. But, as I said, the education is ceaseless with each new project. I have to convince the dancers that this dance is worth doing. I have to convince my dance company manager that this idea is worth doing. I have to talk to you about dance so that you know more about dance at the end. It feels like it never stops. And aside from all this talk you cannot assume that somebody else from the form that comes to see the work will understand what you are doing.

* * *

| | |--------------------------| | I Just Want Your Success | |--------------------------|

JOANNA

Pamela, does a situation come to mind where you had to negotiate among competing interests or to intervene in a difficult situation?

PAMELA

Probably the most common problem I encounter is in classroom dynamics where certain individuals are insensitive to their own impact on the whole classroom.

Perhaps they are dominating or argumentative with others, and my challenge is being able to intervene, quickly, before it establishes a pattern. Sometimes I don't intervene quickly enough. I wait for a while hoping that the person begins to notice. I usually work with the group in the first days of a course to create classroom agreements. Simply asking "What do you need here to make these classes work for you?" "What kind of environment helps you learn?" "What could we set up as rules or agreements that will help?" And that usually works really well to be able to refer to later. But even going through the classroom agreements or ground rules exercise isn't enough for some individuals to break out of a pattern. Most people I work with are between 30 and 60 years old, so I have people who've functioned in groups in a certain way for a long time.

JOANNA

Can you think of a particular incident?

PAMELA

Oh yeah, just last month a man in my instructional skills workshop was driving some people in the group nuts. I started getting notes and people coming up to me in class saying, "Do something about that man."

JOANNA

Why, what was he doing?

PAMELA

Well, he was speaking up more than his share, dominating the classroom with stories of his experience and examples to give, and questions to ask, and comments on other people's comments. He refused to participate in one of the activities and then was in on the debrief and had opinions about how it all worked. I tried everything. I pulled every trick I had out in terms of saying "Thank you very much, appreciate your comments, let's hear from somebody else";

to "Can you hold that thought, other people haven't had a chance." Finally I asked him to come in early so I could talk to him. I was nervous about that. I wasn't really sure what I was going to say. I even practiced a little bit with somebody I was with the night before; running through possible ways I might handle it. What I ended up saying to him was reminding him that I wanted his success and that I wondered if he knew the impact he had on people in the group. And it actually worked for a while, for the duration of our class, which was a 30-hour program (this occurred around the 20th hour). I felt that it definitely improved. I know it felt better for me because at least I had really addressed it head on. I think his behaviour did improve in the classroom; however, the people who stuck with the program said that he had kind of reverted to his old ways. I mean he's a 55-year man and it's pretty hard to change patterns overnight and he had all kinds of issues.

JOANNA

What did he say when you talked to him?

PAMELA

He started to defend himself, or give excuses, and I tried to point out that the impact of his way of being was shutting people out and that for whatever reason he was acting like that he needed to know what the outcome was. By the end of the conversation, he seemed to accept the notion and say, "Well, I'll pay more attention to that." His automatic response was to defend why he was doing that. And then later he began to think "OK" when he realized that I didn't want to attack, it was just to help. So I kept encouraging him that we just wanted to change things for his success because he was going to run into problems with this behaviour.

JOANNA

But you were nervous of this conversation?

PAMELA

Yes.

JOANNA

That reminds me of a time when I was leading a discussion at a seniors' writing class and there was one man in the group who continuously interrupted my very brief opening presentation. It really threw me off and I tried to adjust what I was saying, even though I could see that others seemed to be engaged. Sometimes it's the most vocal person who draws your attention.

PAMELA

Exactly. The squeaky wheel. When I teach I use a lot of written feedback; I request written feedback, what I call the speedy memo. "What did you find worthwhile, what's not so worthwhile, what other comments do you have?" I have found that I can't trust just reading faces. There's too much going on in people's lives and there are also the facades people wear. So I find that the written feedback gives people the opportunity to say, "Somebody is bugging me." "I'm confused." "I'm bored." "This is perfect." What ever they have to say.

JOANNA

You're not second-guessing.

PAMELA

That helps a lot. So when I get those quiet people and God knows what's going on with them, I have a better idea with them too.

JOANNA

That's right. You have been doing this for a long time.

PAMELA

I have.

JOANNA

You come with a lot of authority.

* * *

Leading Meaning Making Conversations

Creating the conditions for genuine conversation is central to educational leadership. Conversation is the place where leadership and education encounter each other most directly. As Murdock's stories reflect, conversations played a central role in establishing a new degree completion program with people in the organization who would go on to champion the program. Conversations were central to negotiating the contents of the math curriculum with willing and interested faculty, and they figure prominently in his consulting and advising management of a smelter operation on training and educational approaches for the organization.

Murray emphasized through his stories about the social assistance-hospitality industry program how necessary it was to meet time after time with the ministry and the employers to establish a firm partnership and build trust among the partners. Meetings, and the conversations that took place in them, seemed to be accorded much greater importance for the program's success than the program curriculum. Arguments for establishing and sustaining the ongoing implementation of the social assistance-hospitality industry program were developed from hospitality sector research, from documented outcomes of the initial pilot project, and the personal stories of individuals who were able to find and keep work as a result of this program. In Jennifer's story of being part of a Worker's Compensation Committee for Health and Safety in the Arts, I detect more than a little weariness when she talks about the unrelenting need for

conversations with many diverse audiences (i.e., the sponsors, patrons, educators, dancers, peers, funders, and regulators) to persuade and convince them for the sake of having them understand dance. Endless conversations, it seems to her, are needed with the administrator of her dance company, with her dancers and other creative collaborators, and with the public about the value of dance within a sceptical and cynical environment. Conceptualized as acts of leadership that frame and shape the context (Goffman, 1974) of the role of dance in society, such conversations create a point of reference for others' understanding and action. Related to this notion is Forester's (1989) observation that by understanding conversation as an approach to planning it shifts the emphasis from a search for the solution to a problem to a process of *making meaning together*. Conversation as meaning making is a frame that allows room for living with ambiguity and complexity while working through to understanding the issues and problems at hand. Understanding genuine conversation as a form of educational leadership shapes, in important ways, the mindscape of the educator. Conversations understood as meaning making as distinct from problem solving would perhaps make Jennifer's committee experience less wearing. This kind of understanding seems expressed in Murdock's example of working with the math department at the university to develop a course for professionals in a university degree completion program. His story illustrates the importance of respect for the expertise of others but also recognizes the gaps in understanding that exist and the role of the educational planner, in this instance, to bridge these worlds.

Understanding educational leadership as initiating and sustaining conversations where meaning is created about what ought to be done may be a powerful mindscape, but

it is not simple. In a one-to-one conversation, in the classroom, in a program planning meeting with colleagues, in a policymaking or program evaluation process – regardless of the setting – these dialogues require thoughtful speaking and listening among all parties. Lambert (1995) suggests that much depends on being conscious of one's language choices. Conversational moves and choices enhance a conversational leader's capacity to facilitate conversations. "Asking questions and rephrasing ideas helps others create common maps from which to act" (Lambert, 1995, p. 105).

Most meetings or encounters, in my experience in education planning, tend to be places where individuals articulate their own views but learn little from one another (Senge, 1990). Getting a group of people with diverse interests to actually inquire into the issue at hand rather than simply advocate for their own position is a key challenge of all educational leaders, no matter what the setting or situation. The goal is to find the best argument or to find the best understandings through a balance of paraphrasing, inquiring, and articulating ideas.¹¹

Framing and shaping the conversation, as Jennifer illustrates in her story, *Naming the Dance*, is action that requires more than a talent for language and an awareness of the

¹¹ What are the linguistic approaches that enable us to facilitate dialogic, inquiring, sustaining, and partnering conversations? Linguistic moves include: Questioning and paraphrasing are important tools because they establish focus (conceptualize experience) and are reciprocal. To further the meaning making process, these moves must be used with the desire to understand or deepen the conceptual field. In other words only asking questions based on your own perspective or only making comments that reflect your own opinion is advocacy. The way that leaders frame questions can limit or enhance others ability to construct meaning and act...A broad question will require participants to spend time talking. Questions that are too narrow fragment the group into positions. Failing to frame meaningful questions confuses the process. Rhetorical questions are based on a desired response. It is used when a speaker does not expect an answer nor has a predetermined answer. This includes questions with imbedded commands "don't you think we should...?" and can cause groups to adopt defensive postures. The categorical questions – is one that limits the range of responses to specific categories: 'What' – asks for a label, 'Where' asks for a place, and a 'why' asks for a justification. These questions are good for gathering specific data, clarification or to find out more about persons' knowledge. They are only a small part of the process of conversation. Cross-categorical questions search for meaning by generating new contexts or reframing the group focus. For example asking: What kind of vacations do you enjoy most (places, activities, types of travel)? Or "How did you come to that conclusion? (Data, hunches, decisions, plans)?" These kinds of questions amplify the meaning that has been created by the group. Questions that amplify feedback are essential tools for building constructivist conversations (Lambert, 1995).

fluidity of meaning. At the heart of this story is a complex understanding of the enmeshed ends and means involved in creating something new. To name the dance means to place a frame around it, to give it some structure, albeit temporarily. Such structure is needed if others are to engage with educators in planning or designing programs, for example. In this way, the intentional use of language and conceptual maps imbue an educator with power to name and construct understandings of “reality.” Regardless of setting or position educators have some power to define action. This power is used in a number of ways in these stories – in conversation with a student, a peer, or a ministry policy analyst. They all involve, in varying degrees, engaging people in making meaning about their lives and what they are doing. Pamela recalls in her encounter with the “disruptive” student that she needed time to figure out what to say and how to say it. This involved rehearsing and planning how to frame the conversation. “What I ended up saying to him was reminding him ... that I wanted his success and that I wondered if knew the impact he had on people in the group.” She posed questions for him to reflect on and to pay attention to and in so doing initiated a reflective conversation. She communicated care but also challenged him to become responsible for his actions. In this way, everyday acts of educational leadership involve creating certain genuine conversations, uncovering conflicts, and questioning assumptions. As the professor who introduced me to the notion that teaching is leading suggests, “What you pay attention to, is what others will pay attention to.” And as the eminent educational leader Maxine Greene so articulately states, the role of the educational leader is to forge common direction under conditions of diversity. These simple statements frame a complex terrain.

Sometimes the only way to learn about what to do in a given instance is through the give and take of genuine conversation. For example: You talk to me. I listen. I create a space for your story. I wonder at its meaning. I notice how you interpret it. We deliberate together. Perhaps our collective understanding is enlarged. So often, in the everyday practice of education, as some of the co-narrators' stories point to, such conversations are missing and we end up isolated and alone. In such a state it becomes difficult to learn.

Freedom and Loneliness

JOANNA

Do you remember a time when you didn't necessarily feel sure about what to do?

PAMELA

Oh yeah. My confidence in this job has increased a lot over the years from getting through all kinds of problems and situations, wrenches being thrown in, unexpected turns, just getting through it, basically, successfully. Sometimes I'll turn to people and ask them for suggestions. And you know teaching is a lonely business. I go into my classes and.... Well it's a double-edged sword. There is part of it that I love, close the door and do whatever I want, but on the other hand when I run into things I'm confused about or things don't seem to be going very well, it's hard to know who to turn to, especially when, as a contract teacher, I just go into the college, do my thing and then I'm gone.

I feel way more confident just having solved problems along the way. I trust that I can figure out anything at this point,

JOANNA

Was there anytime when you were just at a loss...?

Orchestrating Diversity

PAMELA (Laughs)

One time I remember doing one of those continuing education workshops and I did a needs assessment at the beginning. I had about 20 educators, continuing education teachers who teach everything from economics, to building maintenance, to Mandarin. It's all over the place. Some of them haven't taught a class yet; others have been at it for 25 years. So the range of experience is tremendous. I can't remember what the subject of the workshop was, but I did a quick circle response, asking them what they were after, what had brought them to this workshop. And I actually quickly wrote these responses on the board. By the time I got to the end of the group the board was covered with different ideas. I was absolutely at a loss as to where to go.

JOANNA

It was great to get their feedback, but...

PAMELA

Whoa! (Laughs)

JOANNA

But how did you respond?

PAMELA

I actually asked if anybody saw a theme or a pattern or could make sense of what was up there. And people did, and I remember we kind of pulled it off, but it took way too much time and there was too much information.

JOANNA

So you don't do that now?

PAMELA

I have learned to give some options. "Here is what we're covering, what would you like to add?" Or "What is most important to you?" To kind of focus it a bit.

JOANNA

Well, it can be tough thinking on your feet with everybody waiting and watching. You're the expert and you're to tell everybody what to do.

PAMELA

Pull it together and keep the seamless flow...

JOANNA

You don't want to look too ruffled or confused.

PAMELA

Yeah. It's really multitasking in public. Because you are, all at the same time, orchestrating some event and monitoring the response, and thinking about which path to take from here. So even though I feel confident that I can handle whatever comes up now, it's not easy. It's still not easy. I've even been thinking about going back to nursing because there is part of me that is tired of the amount of preparation and the intensity of the experience of orchestrating, that's how I think about it, orchestrating 20 bright people, bright and demanding and...

JOANNA

...creating something that wasn't there before.

PAMELA

Exactly. I am very outcome oriented and I want something good and important to come out of every class, something meaningful so that people feel they are taking a step somewhere.

JOANNA

What do people - the adult learners in your workshops - say to you about your approach to teaching and your leadership?

PAMELA

Well, they say that I know what I'm talking about and that I walk my talk. I think that has really been important to me; I strive for that. I don't mention these goals of mine, so it's a big affirmation and I appreciate it very much when people comment on that. And they do, quite a bit.

JOANNA

Walk your talk, in terms of your own teaching style reflecting what you teach them about teaching?

PAMELA

That's right. I feel like a bug under a pin up there on the lab wall. Here it is (laughing with arms wide open).

JOANNA

They're looking at everything, checking everything out about you.

PAMELA

And of course, in a teaching skills course I am trying to model activities that do everything we've said needs to be done in order to create successful, motivating, content rich programming. So I try to have a flow of activities that creates an environment that is safe and comfortable for learning and gets people in touch with what they already know about the subject matter. Then I get them to reflect on how it relates to their own life. And then I give them information and some opportunities to practice what they are learning and relate it to real problems that they are experiencing.

JOANNA

So they get a chance to actually see how it all works.

PAMELA

Definitely. That's what I mean by walking my talk. Modeling adult education. And they get a chance to see how good interactive, personally relevant education ought to feel and look.

JOANNA

Do you share the inner struggles you may have with the learners in your course? For example, the nervousness you may feel about intervening with a "difficult" student?

PAMELA

My intention in education leadership is to show integrity between what I say and what I do, and I try to do this by being real with people. Yet in an educational setting I want to be real and I also feel a responsibility to model a held together approach. So funny, I find myself thinking about how might I share the struggles I would ordinarily reserve for a dialogue circle with my peers? When I am teaching, my educational leadership is more about sharing my successes that people could model after.

It's interesting... I want to model successes and be real about who I am. Yet the courage to teach and being real is about showing the cracks.

* * *

You Can't Just Drive Away

ANYA

I recently had to "walk my talk" about really taking an interest in my students.

JOANNA

What happened?

ANYA

Basically I had been teaching one night class and George, my colleague, was teaching the other class. There are two courses happening and usually a lot of the students congregate on the rooftop on the second floor during the breaks. Many of them are from George's class and they go outside smoking cigarettes. There was this group - they were a "cool" group, I didn't know them; they were from George's class - and there was one female student that I noticed with a couple of the other students from that class.

About half way through the semester I came into work at three o'clock in the afternoon and I saw this same female student from the night group was passing me in the corridor and she had her head tilted down and away from me. So I really looked at her and then I went back and looked at her again without her seeing me and noticed that she was all black-eyed. Her face was bruised. So I went to George and I told him and he said he knew about her and he didn't know what to do. So I said, "Well, you have to go and talk to her. She might want help, you know?" "Well," he said, "I don't know how to deal with this." I said, "Take her into your office and talk to her. Deal with this; ask her if she needs help. Is she OK? Whatever is necessary."

So he did. And then he came down and got me and said, "I don't know what to do, I don't know how much to get involved." It turns out that her boyfriend had beaten her up badly. He said to me, "Will you deal with it?" and I said, "Yes."

I went up to the office and I said, "Donna, do you want to talk to me?" and she said, "Yes" and she started talking; telling me she had been raped and battered. She had been out drinking with this one group from the art class and had not returned home until the next morning and the guy was waiting for her and then a whole series of assaults

followed. This happened on the Friday and she couldn't walk for two days. It was on the Monday that I saw her. She was still all bruised from it. So we began talking and basically she was too scared to go back. She was from Ontario and didn't know where to go, so she called her friend.

Subsequently, I said I would go around with her in the car and get her stuff. I called the police and said that we wanted an escort. So we basically did that, and the police officer and myself stayed outside while she and a friend went in and cleared out her stuff.

She wasn't sure if she wanted to press charges. The policeman said to her, "Think about this. Nobody can make you and most women don't do it because they are so scared." For me, what I cared about was that she was out of that apartment. Then a week after the incident she said she was going to press charges and would I write a report and I so I did. The incident was written up as sexual assault and battery. She was actually very afraid of those words. She was afraid when she saw them written on paper. She just thought of herself as battered and didn't want to face the sexual part. When she saw that he was charged with sexual assault, it frightened her.

JOANNA

Because?

ANYA

It was seeing the words. Battered. Raped. Many women don't want to admit it.

JOANNA

Did she think he would come after her?

ANYA

She thought she deserved it. She thought she deserved it and it was hard for her to admit that she had been raped and sexually battered.

JOANNA

You weren't her instructor and the instructor that she had didn't feel that it was his role to get involved. How did you feel about getting involved in this?

ANYA

No problem at all. No problem at all. Basically if she'd told us to back off I'd have backed off. But she said, I want help, then it was no problem at all.

JOANNA

This strikes me as you really going the distance. I wonder how many instructors would.

ANYA

I don't know, to be honest. But I know that people have definitely been there for me; they have gone the distance on other occasions - during my divorce and child custody, and all of that. People go the distance.

JOANNA

So that seemed natural for you to respond?

ANYA

Oh yes, totally natural.

JOANNA

You weren't afraid?

ANYA

Well we did know that there were drugs involved. We knew there were guns involved. We knew the ex-boyfriend was from a tough area and we knew that he had come after another

student because he thought that his girlfriend had been with him - he charged at him with a gun and shots were fired.

JOANNA

What do you think other people would say about how you handled the situation?

ANYA

I honestly don't know. Her mother did come out afterwards from Ontario and thanked us. I do know that this student would probably do it again.

JOANNA

You mean go through with pressing charges?

ANYA

Yes, I mean it takes a lot of courage to charge somebody with that kind of assault and then going through with it. Knowing there are drugs. Knowing there are guns and knowing you're on your own. So basically I think she showed a lot of courage and a lot of people won't follow through with the criminal charges. So really, she gave me a lot of courage by her persisting with it herself and not backing down.

JOANNA

It wasn't a simple thing that she did.

ANYA

She had the courage in the long run. She had the courage to come to school with a black eye and for others to see this. She had the courage to say, "I'm afraid and I don't want to go back there." Whereas he'd beaten her before and she'd gone back. But she drew the line. She went to the doctor and she did the whole thing. She showed a lot of courage in reaching out for help.

JOANNA

She was lucky that you stopped that day.

ANYA

Well - - I guess... She did charge him with assault and the whole process took a year to come to trial. She was scared on a number of occasions in that year, but she kept with it. In the end, the guy settled. He pleaded guilty and got a lesser sentence and she felt very vindicated by the whole thing.

* * *

Speaking Up and Redirecting the Conversation

JOANNA

Jane, you take a very low key approach, confident, but quiet. But have there been times when you needed courage to speak up or take action?

JANE

There is this department within our organization called the Wage Subsidy Group and all our clients have to come through us before they get to Wage Subsidy Group and they take a resume with them. Well, not that long ago some of the trainers from the Wage Subsidy Program decided they wanted all incoming clients to have a skill-based resume. This is fine. So this very young trainer came in on Friday with an older, quite experienced trainer to meet with myself and three of my co-workers. Now, I have been teaching this resume writing for eons, my colleagues too, but this was an example of where somebody comes in and totally puts her agenda out, and has no regard for who she is speaking to. She came in with overheads, and gave us a basic lesson in how to do a resume!

JOANNA

To your group of very experienced vocational facilitators.

JANE

Now, I'm sure that she read my body language and I had to really work on managing myself because there was smoke coming out of my ears, it was so inappropriate! To have the discussion on what they wanted and why they wanted it was fine. But not to give us a lesson on "Here's how you write an objective." "This is what I mean by skill based resume."... "Use verbs to..."

So, that's youth and that's enthusiasm and that's also lack of sensitivity. If you translate that into how she's going to deal with clients then again - I think of how frustrated I was - and the others were frustrated too, but I was old enough and was able to diffuse this and get around it; I wasn't rude but I began to change the direction and ask questions so that finally we came off this lesson business and more into how we can work through other arrangement. I asked, "What is it you want and how do you want the process to work?" It was the process we needed to talk about, not how to write a resume. She totally misread the situation. She put her agenda on us. You just have to have sensitivity and she obviously didn't.

JOANNA

...And good judgment, being able to size up the situation and act accordingly.

JANE

And that's where getting the feedback, and listening and being open to the fact that something is not working rather than taking it as a personal affront. Rather than thinking, "Oh my goodness, so and so is a bad person." I say, "Let's just broach this from a different way." And that's what I did.

JOANNA

It seems to be a combination of experience, knowledge and sensitivity that comes with maturity, but not necessarily.

JANE

No, it doesn't necessarily come with age. I already mentioned this person that I worked with in the last place who had her own personal issues (*What Leadership is NOT*). She didn't have any boundaries and she was totally lacking in sensitivity within her group of clients. She would have an agenda and her whole curriculum set up in advance whether it fit the group or not. And it's very interesting because she would talk, but she wouldn't listen. It was frustrating to work with her because she would never listen to her clients or her coworkers. And unfortunately she is still looking for work. We were all laid off at the same time in December and she's still not employed.

* * *

Freedom and Loneliness

"Teaching is a lonely business," says Pamela. "There's part of that that I love, close the door and do whatever I want, but on the other hand..." Freedom is a double-edged sword for educators. On the edge of freedom is loneliness and isolation. Pamela raises this paradox and wonders where it is appropriate to show the cracks, questions, and confusions that we all experience when we often feel alone within our practice. She has often felt like a heretic by separating her avocational passion for dialogue and peace from her professional educational practice, yet had never spoke of this tension until she received the gift from her program director, the book, *The Courage to Teach*. A conversation about the dynamics between heresy and orthodoxy would have broken this sense of isolation, but within the context of her professional work, there was no apparent space. Jennifer speaks of the struggle to communicate her vision and to be understood by those she is leading, reflecting perhaps the most enduring challenge of artists on the edges of society. This struggle also speaks to the challenge of educators who take their

vocation seriously (Collins, 1991). Jane mentions her drive home and the need to keep some boundaries, yet in other stories she demonstrates how her love for the clients keeps her in this emotionally demanding work. Anya talks about her love for the students as a haven within the "small-mindedness" of the department where she struggles without anyone to whom she can confide her doubts and questions without appearing "unprofessional." Murdock mentions working with colleagues that he respects as being an important dimension of his work, one that he values a great deal and without which the work would be very isolating, lacking energy and enjoyment. Is it another uninterrogated myth of leadership that to lead, even within the context of an educational practice, within a classroom, means one has to be isolated and alone in one's responsibilities?

"It's lonely at the top" is a well-worn expression reflecting a traditional notion of what leaders must endure. Yet I wonder where the sanctuaries are for educators, who may often feel like lone warriors, to share with each other and to learn from their own experiences? And who is responsible for finding these spaces? Gadamer (1992) suggests that "it is everyone's task to find this free space and all human beings must learn to create with one another new solidarities" (p. 40).

A shared sense of loneliness comes from Pamela in her role as a contract adult educator, Anya, as a college art teacher, and Jane as a vocational facilitator. How does one reconcile taking actions that probe and stir up the complacent and accepted status quo, with the belief in the importance of keeping the mood of the classroom or boardroom buoyant and positive? Where do educators go when they want to experiment and play with new ideas or reexamine pre-understandings? Is this sense of isolation and

loneliness due to a tendency in those who take their educational leadership actions responsibly – such as creating meaningful educative environments – the price of leading? Is the price too high? Are the roles we create too scripted? Pamela talks about wanting each encounter with her students to be the most it can be and yet at times finds the energy required to orchestrate diverse interests and needs of such a group to be very tiring work.

Heifetz (1994), in *Leadership Without Easy Answers*, suggests that loneliness comes with the weight of responsibility. Yet isolation contributes to losing effectiveness or succumbing to overwhelming stress. The capacity to care for oneself, to manage oneself – in whatever setting or circumstance – is central. This means stepping back from the action and keeping a sense of the whole picture; distinguishing oneself from one's role, not taking the events and statements personally when they have more to do with the particular role; externalizing conflict; finding partners and supporters such as personal confidants and allies within or across organizations; listening and using oneself as data in terms of knowing oneself and one's biases.

Jane tells the story of how she handled a potentially unproductive meeting with people from another part of the HRDC bureaucracy by redirecting the focus of the conversation and reframing the problems. This story shines as a touchstone for what it means to speak up, stand up and redirect a conversation. Through this communicative process purpose is explored with others as a way to deepen understanding. This story about the young co-worker who misjudged giving Jane's experienced group a lesson on how to write a resume seemed to illustrate how very gently and respectfully, but forcefully, Jane was able to reframe the conversation without blame, so that she could talk about what was most important. That seems like the essence of educational

leadership – cutting through what’s unimportant, moving past individual egos, and getting everyone’s attention focused on what needs to be talked about.

Listening well involves living with doubt, reflecting on actions – both successes and failures – and responding intentionally rather than reactively. It helps to find a sanctuary. Gadamer refers to this as “a free space.” Arendt speaks of “islands of freedom” where one can actually hear one’s thoughts, listen to one’s own voice. This kind of space is a psychological, spiritual and physical space to hear oneself and to be oneself without the noise of others’ voices. Most important, suggests Heifetz (1994), and consistent with Collins (1991) writing about vocation, is holding a sense of purpose about one’s practice. This purpose articulates the values that make risk-taking, and dealing with conflict and difference worthwhile.

Vocation refers to a calling and entails commitment to the performance of worthwhile activities that are not merely calculated to advance personal career aspirations or fulfil minimum job expectations. It incorporates a strong ethical dimension, emphasizing an unavoidable necessity to make judgments about what should or should not be done and a readiness to take sides on significant issues. (Collins, 1991, p. 42)

An inquiry into the values that one holds and that orient us is where I began in my vocation story about learning to sew. Like a ship’s compass, a sense of purpose helps us deal with isolation, setbacks, failures and ultimately gives us the courage to “face the world as it is.”

* * *

Having a Vision and Working It

JOANNA

There are difficulties with having a vision that others have yet to see or to really understand. How do you involve people to join you, how to you invite them to add to this

vision or support you? Murdock, I am thinking about the degree completion program that you developed at the university, which was very innovative, and a departure from the policies and procedures of the university. What were some of the challenges in leading this project? Did serious differences arise about what ought to be done or how?

MURDOCK

Well that was actually after we had gotten it started. But when we were getting it started I was really pleased and surprised by the amount of support that was forth coming. But we were going to the people that we thought would be most likely to be interested in doing it. But over time there emerged a kind of vocal opposition to it.

JOANNA

Really?

MURDOCK

At the beginning doing it really well and making sure everything about the program was defensible was really important. The details - making sure that the way the money flows is well taken care of, getting that stuff right is just as important as the program itself.

JOANNA

The administrative detail?

MURDOCK

It's really important. There has to be good curriculum, there have to be good teachers, probably good teachers are more important than curriculum, you have to have all that, but that program would not have happened without people who understood how the university worked and could think about how the budget would work. There was a key person I worked with who was very familiar with the university procedures who was involved in paving the way. He had started two or three of the departments in the university and he knew a

lot about what could be sold and that experience was critical to the program's success.

JOANNA

So an understanding of how to position the program in such a way as to convince any skeptics and making sure that administratively all the "i"s are dotted and the "t" s are crossed.

MURDOCK

Yes that's right. Having the administrative details right is really important.

JOANNA

And getting the right people involved to support your vision. You mentioned earlier about creating something new and being responsive to the changing needs of adult learners and some of the difficulties inherent in that.

Defining and Responding to Complex Situations

MURDOCK

There is one thing that is plaguing me right now in my work with organizations wanting professional development and academic programs. When you look around and you see what it would take to really respond to their needs, well you'd have to have some of the things that Royal Roads does, some of the things that Open Learning Agency does, some of the things that this university does, some of the things that private providers provide, some of the things from the local college, and you need to have some way of integrating it all and that's really missing. It's hard to see how you can get the right solidity, and quality of thought, and faculty attention that the university, at its best, offers, and combine that with the flexibility and innovativeness of some of the Royal Roads programs, for instance, and the way in which Open Learning Agency organizes a great variety of

programs and different things from institutions and puts them all together to serve people's needs.

One of the results of that is that they end up getting dozens of different programs from different suppliers and they are not integrated or streamlined in any way. There are all these different pieces that may use different language to talk about the same things; you end up with a kind of a mish mash...

There doesn't seem to be any real reason why you couldn't combine that all within the organization itself or you couldn't have a strong mandate from within the organization that says, "OK, we want all of you to be our suppliers but you can only be our suppliers if you talk to each other and figure out how to make this whole system work.

That kind of stuff isn't happening right now and it's partly a tension between status and concerns for academic rigour and other kinds of post-secondary institutions and private providers that are more flexible. And everybody is carving out his or her own niche, but it's a kind of Balkanized approach even though British Columbia has probably got one of the best systems.

JOANNA

As you meet with these client organizations do you find yourself getting frustrated because the university can't provide all the solutions?

MURDOCK

It's complicated. And the frustration lies in seeing the limitations within the organization - since education is not a central focus for them - and in recognizing that we are failing to see the ways the university could do more to develop good healthy partnerships with the private sector. There are lots of ways that partnerships could be a danger to the university but I think that also there are ways that

there can be positive relationships. And for the most part people tend to divide into...

JOANNA

Either - Or...

MURDOCK

Either - Or is dangerous thinking... Weak thinking.

* * *

Reading the Flicker of Possibility

JOANNA

Murray, you mentioned earlier that your biggest challenge in starting up the tourism employment program involves ongoing conversations with the purpose of building relationships with all of your partners.

MURRAY

One of the biggest challenges lately has been convincing the ministry at the local level that our program really does work. To do this we take them our success stories. Our retention rates of our placements is 73% and that's very high, particularly when we are dealing with the clients that we are dealing with - people, in some cases, who have not been employed for years and years and years. So that's been a pretty big challenge, convincing the ministry. But now they are on side and we meet with them often. We take our team to them; they bring their team to us. They see who we are and they have begun to trust us and that is a real plus for us that they trust us. It's become a lot easier. Part of the agreement of the partnership is that they are going to provide us with 24,000 referral over a one-year period.

JOANNA

Oh really. From their files?

MURRAY

From the Income Assistance files, or from those who have just applied - - they provide us with a lot of referrals.

JOANNA

You must see people who have experienced a lot of difficulty in their lives. They must be feeling pretty low.

MURRAY

That's true. But if we see that little flicker then - - I think that one of the things about being in the industry for so long is that we can go on our first impressions and sometimes the impressions throughout the whole interview. It's not too often we make mistakes, but the odd time we get burned.

JOANNA

You get to know people very well...

MURRAY

You get to know them and so we make our judgments on that. We do take some chances when we see a flicker. There are cases where a spouse has had to be home for several years because of a sick partner or a child that needed to be looked after and by the time they get to us they are just beat up, so you've got to build the self-esteem. That's a big part of the program, to build the self-esteem of the people that do come here. Because quite frankly the people that do go on social assistance are on a pretty low ebb. So if you build that confidence up and the self-esteem...

JOANNA

You seem to take action mostly at the level of lobbying government, convincing them and demonstrating the value of your program. You also know the people going through the program, which gives you a good location from which to talk about the success stories.

MURRAY

Very much so, because we are here on a daily basis, and we deal with the ministry regularly as well. We'll take the success stories and tell them what's happened in the past four or five weeks. "Here's a person who didn't have any hope and we got them employed in three days."

JOANNA

No kidding!

MURRAY

And they say Hallelujah! Sometimes they can't believe it. So it's those success stories that convince the ministry that this program is worth supporting. There are so many. For instance, there are people who come in and it's clear that they just haven't cared for themselves. Well, if we see potential there then we'll have their teeth fixed or we'll buy them some glasses or get them a haircut or buy them clothes. When we see the potential and offer support, then suddenly they start to see what we are trying to do for them. We see their pride in themselves begin to grow. It's a real turnaround. There are many, many stories. I have a drawer full of these stories that I can't share the specific detail because they are confidential. But in every office it's the same.

JOANNA

Is there any one story that stands out for you? A specific instance?

MURRAY

That's a really good question. There was one woman in the North that I can think of, who was just down in the dumps and didn't have any hope. We saw the potential, that flicker I suppose, in her and we arranged some training at the college for her and managed to get her a placement at the front desk of a hotel. She struggled through for two to three months and all of a sudden she just clicked (snaps

fingers). Pretty soon this company sent her down to North Dakota for training to run one of their hotels in Victoria.

JOANNA

That is one good story with a happy ending.

MURRAY

She has done extremely well and now she is hiring our clients...

* * *

Transformation and Emotion

JOANNA

Your stories point out that the students or clients who bring their lives into a classroom or boardroom or community meeting space have a lot a stake. What you teach them, what they learn, and how you interact with them has a tremendous impact on how they go forward in their lives.

ANYA

As an art teacher it's hard to know at the time what kind of impact you have on the students. Sure, later on they tell you that "You made a huge difference to me" but at the time it's very hard to know. I'm sure I've had an impact. I'm sure the other instructors have had an impact.

JOANNA

From what you say about the students in your program, you seem to really care about them.

ANYA

Ooh. And that's probably the only part that I love about the work (Laughing). I detest the kind of conflict that goes around among the instructors. If I had an administrative job where I had to deal with the same people all the time... Basically, as I see it, our whole job

revolves around the students and every year they're different and it's great to see them coming in at one end and two years later what they have done. Within two short years only and you see everything opening up for them, just the whole possibility. Well that's my favorite part of the whole thing and the art shows and meeting with them afterwards to talk. And you know you're a role model and you know some of them adore you and some of them don't adore you, but that's where all the energy comes from.

* * *

A Dream Come True

PAMELA

Recently I was a participant in a workshop with Raymond Wlodkowski. His focus is cultural diversity and on creating climates where people experience intrinsic motivation, where all people have the sense of being respected and connected. He had a closing exercise and I was so incredibly moved by what we had done in his workshop in the previous two days. I was so moved by what he talked about and what he did that I was just choked at the end, I could barely speak. I was really moved because he made education so much more than just the techniques and...it was, it was like a dream come true. It really seemed to be the very highest possible thing that education can be. It's like what I said earlier about education being the path to world peace. He's working that model. Education, one person at a time, is the path to world peace. I was just so moved that he demonstrated that so well. He honoured that purpose and demonstrated that it's possible.

JOANNA

Is that his intention?

PAMELA

He doesn't quite say it like that but it is. In his book you see his endeavors to cross cultural bridges and create racial harmony. He focuses on creating positive attitudes about the setting, the instructor, and the subject matter; creating belonging and connections so people feel really safe in the environment; making the content relevant and tied to your life as much as possible, and building success, that feeling of, "Yes, I can do this." I think when you get all these things happening it increases the chances that it's going to be transformative experience. It has to do with magic and timing.

JOANNA

At the end of the workshop, it all came together.

PAMELA

Yes. It was huge.

JOANNA

Do you suspect that perhaps genuine engagement in our own teaching and learning doesn't happen enough and why that might be?

PAMELA

I've looked at the whole subject of adult education and what makes it meaningful and important to people and I still wouldn't be able to say exactly why it is that sometimes people have these life changing moments..

JOANNA

It's not only the students who experience these moments of truth. As educators we are often transformed by the confrontation with our expectations and plans.

MURDOCK

There are a few moments that stand out for me. Watching the first set of students graduate from the degree completion

program was pretty moving. The odd moment in a classroom when you get a really good discussion going. Often in team teaching - I have taught a number of times in the Master's Program in Liberal Studies and we often team teach a course - so there's a huge satisfaction from that, or I've had graduate students who have done really exciting work and reading their work or talking about it with them can be really exciting. But the part that I really live for is the planning.

I remember with a great sense of excitement and accomplishment the planning for the degree completion program, working especially with a colleague, who has turned out to be a good friend, working out the ideas, how we were going to get around the various obstacles, what the program could look like. And similarly, working with some external clients. Sticking your nose into the business of their organization, figuring out different ways of dealing with the problem and doing it with a few people. That's exciting to me. That's one of the biggest thrills.

* * *

Understanding and Courage Pt. 1

ANYA

I know I have a lot of freedom within my job. I love that freedom. Basically the administrative part of it is up to you and how much you want to take on. There are people in the department that really love the administrative side of it, who come from a more academic background and they really love that side, but I enjoy the people side of it - working with the students and I really don't feel that I have the capacity or the wherewithal for all the curriculum, and the words and the "art speak." I resist intellectualizing about art. My approach is different from many of my colleagues.

JOANNA

Working with the administrators and your colleagues seems to be the most challenging part of your practice since you don't seem to be too afraid of guys with guns or drugs.

ANYA

No. I'm not afraid of them at all. No, I'm not even really afraid of the director of my department sitting across the table; it's just the small mindedness that drives me mad. It's the administrativeness that I can't stand.

JOANNA

In this context have you ever felt that your courage was tested? Have you overcome the fear of speaking up?

ANYA

Well to be honest, I think I've always had a lot of courage, you know. I mean, my mother would say that I always had a lot of courage. So you believe that about yourself, you know?

JOANNA

Isn't courage about overcoming fear; doing something in spite of being nervous or afraid?

ANYA

Oh for sure. In my personal life I was afraid in a lot of situations for a long time and then the window opens or the door opens and something dawns on you. You see people, such as that young woman who was assaulted, I see her as a picture, as a mirror reflection of myself at a time. It was like looking at somebody who is afraid, who wants to draw attention to something and doesn't know what to do. Being afraid and then becoming more courageous. You take the courage from where you see it.

JOANNA

Where do you get the authority to act? That sense of knowing that you are doing the right thing? For example, how did you know that intervening with the student was the right thing to do?

ANYA

In this case it came from her saying it was OK for me to help her. It's just the simple thing of responding to somebody who is being battered. I mean, he could have killed her with no problem at all. Do you run and get the help or do you jump in? So courage or foolishness I don't know. You have to do something; you can't turn a blind eye. You can't just get into your car and go off.

JOANNA

And drive away?

ANYA

No, you can't. It's socially irresponsible. Now you don't have to go in there and get killed yourself, but you have to phone the police, you have to do something.

JOANNA

How do you think others would describe how you are in your teaching practice - your approach to the teaching of art?

ANYA

I think they would think that I'm definitely enthusiastic. I am passionate. I've got a big mouth and I can be very impulsive. (Laughing). Well I am! I do speak out and I'm not afraid to speak out. I hate being controlled.

JOANNA

Your own art evokes that strength. The scale and colour is bold and it's complex and challenging.

* * *

It's My Love

JOANNA

Jane, you have mentioned on more than one occasion this connection between who you are as a person and how that comes across in your 'teaching and guiding' work. If there isn't some kind of connection, then what happens? Do people get burned out or not get hired?

JANE

Or they're not effective. You do need to maintain your own health, your own personal health. For anybody dealing with the public, wherever you are, you have to maintain your physical and emotional and spiritual well being. Sometimes you really have to get hit on the head before you take care of yourself.

JOANNA

What do you do to maintain a sense of balance?

JANE

It doesn't matter what's happening I always try and find something positive in the middle of it to get people going. I always try and stay positive. Enthusiasm. And that becomes tiring, orchestrating a group of learners. It's tiring because when you think about it, you are dealing with a lot of people who are coming in and their emotional level is very low. If you start with that energy level too, we're not going to get anywhere. So you have to come in everyday on an emotional upbeat, because you're the one who sets the tone of the whole structure of your group. Here we have three weeks in this setting to set that emotional scene and get a feel for group dynamics, so it's very much awareness and sensitivity.

JOANNA

[Pause] I wonder where that comes from?

JANE

[Laughing] I'm old...

JOANNA

No, really. There must be something else going on there, where does this enthusiasm and personal authority come from? What do you think the source of it is?

JANE

It's my love. It's my love. Why would I be doing this ...at this age? No, it's my genuine love. I love to work with adults because most of the time they are there because they want to be and also because once you make a connection, then the sky is the limit - and then they soar. People going back to school or that kind of thing, they genuinely want to do it. This is the challenge for me. Asking, "What is it about this person?" "What are their talents?" "What are their skills?" "What are they hiding?" "How can they find these skills and talents for themselves?" And that's the exciting part, because they do. Well, it doesn't happen with everybody, they have to want to do that, but if they have that little wish in them, then the sky is the limit and they can go as far as they wish with that.

* * *

Understanding and Courage Pt.2

JOANNA

Murdock, you mentioned the university president's advice earlier about not shying away from conflict. That seems to me to be the hardest part, for many people who step outside their role as educator or planner or programmer. Many of us do shy away from conflict yet are compelled to intentionally take a more "leaderly" role and have to speak up because nobody else is doing so, because we see an opportunity or a problem that nobody else sees. This 'speaking up' is not always easy.

MURDOCK

Well, there are lots of things involved in speaking up and sometimes it's a matter of courage. But that, I would say, is relatively rare for educators. I mean, there's not that many situations that require courage - where the consequences for speaking are extreme.

JOANNA

Perhaps people fail to speak up because they don't want to look like a heretic or appear foolish. Perhaps their own organizational leaders do not encourage or condone what might be seen as questioning the status quo.

MURDOCK

That's more like it.

JOANNA

But isn't that a kind of courage to speak up under those conditions?

MURDOCK

Yes, that is a kind of courage but I wouldn't say that's the major impediment. I would say that the major impediment is *understanding*. It is getting close enough to understand what's going on. [Pause]. There are so many walls to keep us apart.

JOANNA

So many walls that keep us from seeing what needs to be done, that's true.

I have known you in a number of different roles over the years and have always admired you as a person that was able to see things that others couldn't or didn't see or speak about. This is not you acting because of your positional leadership; it's not a script that is assigned to you, but more a stance that you have, a predisposition to see walls.

But you don't stop there. You seem to find ways to go around them or get rid of them.

MURDOCK

A good part of it is just a range of experience I've had and also growing up in a family where I was surrounded by educational thinking. I did undergraduate work in philosophy and most of my doctoral work was in philosophy and that does push you to question assumptions and to think things out rather than accepting things that people tell you - received wisdom. The other thing was having a very different experience for 10 years running a company, working with people in the construction and manufacturing industry. So it's impossible for me to think of the university as the whole world. Because I had so much experience outside it, I think that it has made me more attuned to the fact that there are all these people out there who may not have had access to the university. They're smart. They lack certain kinds of formal education and they don't lack the ability to learn, and they don't lack native intelligence and it's too bad that the worlds are so separate.

* * *

Reading the Flicker of Possibility Pt.2

JOANNA

Creating opportunities for people from all kinds of settings to learn and change is profoundly satisfying.

MURRAY

The satisfaction doesn't leave you even though we have placed thousands of people; we placed three today. When we get a placement, I still get goose bumps. I feel so happy for those people because I know what they have been through; that their family has gone hungry; that they have really worked hard to find work for themselves. When a person who really wants work gets that job... I remember the

first few people I worked with who got placements. I'd cry when they got them. Today I'm not doing the same job, but I still get those emotions because there are so many who are getting jobs. It may not be that deep, wanting to sob kind of emotion that I experienced so often, but to do this kind of job you have to have compassion, you have to be able to understand people, because if you don't, forget it.

JOANNA

You have talked about your management role, but how does leadership fit in, educational leadership?

MURRAY

Well, I think I'm a person that stands behind my convictions. I have a talent for hiring people, particularly my own staff. This team of people is very experienced, very skilled. I have always had that ability to find and hire good people. There are 16 of us in this office. Also fairness is important. There was a card on my desk this morning here and it says, "To my favorite boss. It's a pleasure working with you." I didn't expect this, there is no reason, and it was just there this morning on my desk.

JOANNA

Everyone in your office signed this? [Reading from the card] "Thank you Murray for letting me be part of this number one team." "Your kindness and understanding are appreciated." "Thank you for being who you are and letting me be who I am, scary as that is sometimes." "It's finally your turn to get the recognition you deserve. Thank you for your understanding."

MURRAY

I think leadership is about gaining respect from people that you work with and I think I do that within the organization that I'm working, and within the tourism

industry... It feels good to have the respect of the people you work with.

JOANNA

And you have a lot of understanding for people. You seem to connect with people rather well, to read them well and connect with them.

MURRAY

(Laughing) Well, thank you. It's related to leadership, I suppose. I try to provide it and sometimes wonder... But you have to have patience and the main thing is to gain respect.

* * *

MURDOCK

Responsibility is very important.

JOANNA

As Anya says, "You can't just drive away."

MURDOCK

Universities need to recognize that they have a significant responsibility in the community. The fact that they are elitist in the sense that they support the best and the brightest shouldn't mean that they don't have responsibilities to other segments of society. And I feel quite strongly about that.

JOANNA

Is that where your passion is, your vocation?

MURDOCK

Well, I like building things (laughs).

JOANNA

Well, you were in the construction business for a long time...

MURDOCK

I like projects and I like new stuff. For me developing the degree completion program and developing a policy that made the program possible, getting the first programs going is really interesting to me, and teaching in the program when it was new, and courses had to still be invented. I think that it is at least as important to continue it on, to keep recruiting the students and building the program, and recruiting new instructors, but to me that's much less interesting and I couldn't maintain my interest to be with the program like that.

JOANNA

The ongoing management of the program does not hold your attention? Would it be accurate to say that a metaphor for your vocation is "building"?

MURDOCK

Well building is one part of it. Foucault talks a lot about transgression and I think that is actually quite important. Not on a large scale, I mean I don't think of myself as a revolutionary, and I think that most people who think of themselves as revolutionaries within institutions are kidding themselves, they are deluding themselves. It is not a place from which to launch a revolution. But it is really important that there are people who are champing at the bit.

JOANNA

Transgression, in terms of resisting...?

MURDOCK

Resisting conventionality, creating new possibilities, developing new policies that allow new things to happen, that kind of stuff is important I think.

JOANNA

Poking a stick at conventionality?

* * *

JENNIFER

The desire to educate is really about how we can express something new and to do this in a profound way. It was true for Emily Carr and the way she painted and wrote from her organs - and you can see that is why her paintings are so physical. This is why we connect to them so strongly. So directly. So intensely. If we find a way to work from inside, from our organs, we can then parallel the impact.

JOANNA

Teaching and leading from our hearts as well as our minds?

JENNIFER

And from the body itself. Artists [and educators?] are, in many ways, like doctors, like healers. It feels like we are involved in something that it is sacred. And these are valuable things to reiterate to yourself daily. And so I dance...

JOANNA

And others of us teach, paint, plan - all these things we do as educators. I have an image in my mind of you walking into your studio space in the morning and there you are and you're saying, "This is the empty space and I create from..."

JENNIFER

Nothing. There is nothing and then at the end of the day, nothing. We go to an empty space and work all day and then we leave the empty room, empty. It's amazing. And humbling. And in that way my teaching is more like being a tour guide - not knowing more than the others.

JOANNA

Yet leading others to discover some new understanding through the educational experiences you create.

JENNIFER

What we teach through dance is left in memory; it's left in the visual memory; it's left in the physical memory. As I said at the beginning of this conversation, all this preparation and attention to creating a dance [or a lesson or a program] is like the Balinese who spend hours and hours and hours of their time preparing delicate, fresh, floral decorations for the temple ceremony. They have the temple ceremony - and then the decorations are just swept away. There's no immortality.

* * *

JOANNA

The experience changes you, often in subtle, quiet or profound ways. As educators we seem to share this desire to be open to change and also to contribute to change.

PAMELA

For me this work is about creating the conditions for the gradual unfolding of the individual and with the opening of one more petal, the possibility of peace.

JANE

I know I have done my work when I see people leave my programs walking tall. Taller than when they began.

ANYA

To be an effective teacher you have to be really enthusiastic. You have to be inspiring. You have to love your subject and you have to love the students. And that's not being sentimental... If you don't have it then you're not sending anything on, nothing at all. I mean, why are you there? Why?

MURRAY

It's noticing that flicker in someone whose life has been really difficult and building on it; making this possible

through programs created with new partnerships across sectors and systems...

MURDOCK

I am interested in constructing something new -- in looking for new ways to connect what the university has to offer with communities and industry. This very often involves shaking up the conventional way of doing things.

* * *

IV Courage and Ethics in Educational Leadership

What does it mean to “face the world as it is” in the context of educational practice? Facing the challenges and dilemmas of educational practice unite the series of stories concerned with intervening with students. In Anya’s dramatic story of the student who had been battered and her supportive intervention, she acted on her deeply held belief about responding to another human being in need. At the foundation of this action and the way she intervened, *who* she was with this student communicated as much as the words she used with her. Her action embodied her ethical commitment. You can’t turn away. You must respond, her story says. Pamela’s intervention with a “disruptive” student who she met with for a “coaching conversation” demonstrated her responsiveness to the needs of the students and this one in particular. It was her sense of responsibility to that student that guided her action. Murray recognizes the flicker of possibility in clients who are on a low ebb and responds in often very basic ways – with clothing, dental care, and a haircut. There are many ways to demonstrate care and support for these clients. Murray’s belief is consistent with Jane and Pamela’s regarding the need to have and to demonstrate genuine compassion and care for the clients/learners within these programs. Paradoxically Jane suggests that remaining detached, calm and composed while being

emotionally connected is the way she is able to act with wisdom and understanding. Anya demonstrates her care in solidarity with the student who was battered. She stood by her; she saw no other way to respond in this particular instance.

Facing the world seems to involve knowing how to be and what to do in the moment. To be wise leaders, these stories seem to suggest, one must be able to justify one's actions, articulate the process involved, and the principles upon which decisions are made. This means one is accountable, deliberate and intentional. Arendt (1955) suggests that facing the world as it is, means being wide-awake ethically, as well as cognitively and emotionally. This fundamental stance is the common thread of all these stories. These stories show what good educational leadership looks like. This stance seems to involve looking beyond the action in front of you, to the context of that action.

Gardner (1987), writing on leadership development in education, speaks to the theme of ethical action in leadership. His observations connect directly to Murdock's point about transgression, resisting received wisdom, champing at the bit, being alert to possibilities. Leaders tend to look not only far out ahead, but also look out to the sides more broadly to see the context in which their system is functioning...

Those managers [educators] who have little of the leader in them are apt to take the system as it is, saying, "Here's a machine, I'll turn the crank. I'll run it the best way I can." Whereas the leader with an eye to renewal is constantly saying, "Is the system doing what it's supposed to do? How can I make it do better what it's supposed to do? Have we re-examined the goals of the system?" (Gardner, 1987, p. 4)

Educational leaders ask deeper questions of the systems and structures. The status quo is not accepted as a given. Conflict is inevitable, as the university president told Murdock. Leadership by educators may require the co-narrators to operate within the context of hierarchies and systems, yet they act with an eye open for the competing

interests of students, colleagues and other stakeholders and funding authorities. In the midst of the multiple and often conflicting interests, these situated educational leaders demonstrate a willingness to step up and push for decisions that improve, renew, and respond to the changing needs of the constituents that they serve – in community vocational programs, colleges, university credit and non-credit programs for adult learners, dance studios, the hospitality industry – setting or position are secondary to a disposition that includes asking questions, engaging in critique, and acting in accordance with new understandings about what ought to be done.

Murdock is particularly aware of this dynamic. He talks about the need to change university policy to develop a new university degree completion program for working adults. Comprehensive and integrated approaches are also needed for industry and communities to access university resources in a way that suits their needs not just conform to the present policies and regulations of the university. This involves poking a stick at institutions and not permitting them to become calcified. Murray's focus is on building trust and partnerships between very diverse private public interest. Trust is built by people knowing each other's values, being persuaded by sound research, and having a reliable and responsible track record. The work is ongoing and long term and in spite of best efforts, interests will clash, conflict is inevitable and unavoidable, not all conversations end in agreement. In the end "some [will] still have blinkers on."

Projects or programs that involve change involve significant poking and prodding of people and systems. Clearly not all the co-narrators agree on the extent to which they should become involved in the struggles of their students or their organizations. What they do share is a willingness to be accountable about their notions of what is right and

good. Murdock suggests near the end of the conversation that perhaps understanding is the biggest challenge of all, requiring, not so much courage, as the wherewithal to sort through complex problems and issues in order to figure out what ought to be done – to not accept the “world” at face value. To transgress, resist, question, speak up and take action.

A Fusion of Horizons

All co-narrators speak of their own experiences of transformation as part of their participation with the adult learners within their practices. They observed and experienced transformation in the adult learners and colleagues they engage with, and these experiences have touched them personally and professionally as well. Instances of personal transformation are often accompanied by profound emotional responses; with emotions that engage the mind, heart and spirit. Emotions such as joy, sorrow, fear, and anger indicate an engagement and commitment to their vocations. These emotions connect them to their values and to what is important, to their sense of justice and other ethical principles. Anger, fear, or sadness, often contrasted dichotomously with rational, analytical and reasoned approaches may also, in fact, “prompt us to act appropriately...and have an intrinsic and instrumental value” (Jaggar, 1989, P. 155).

All co-narrators talk about ways they have experienced strong emotions at different times in their practices. Murray speaks of how he wept the day his first client found a job, and the deep sob that wells up in him even now, years later, when he sees people find work, a sign of his genuine compassion for their struggles, perhaps too, because he recognizes the profundity of the challenges that face so many. Murdock speaks of the moments of emotional connection when a student has produced an exciting

piece of work, when the first students graduated from the new degree completion program, and when he is engaged in the flow of creating new learning opportunities for organizations outside the university. As we are addressed profoundly by our experiences, these moments connect us to the “original difficulties” of our vocation. Solidarity and compassion, love and professional boundaries, creating safe and challenging educative spaces, shaping programs that have both rigour and relevance, maintaining academic standards and building new bridges to the institutions. Personal agency and institutional structure.

Pamela’s experience during the final exercise in Wloldowski’s workshop on motivation was profound; she refers to it as “a dream come true.” Although this notion may on the surface ring like a cliché, describing her experiences as “a dream come true” communicates how the experience “struck her” and how she understood anew, in that moment, the power of education to change people profoundly, and thus to change the world. A dream come true is utterly fitting such a moment of truth. This process and curriculum, led by a respected and knowledgeable teacher-leader, evoked a strong emotion in Pamela: “I was just so choked up, I could hardly speak. It was everything that education can and should be.” What moved Pamela seems also related to her respect for the deeply ethical approach of the workshop leader, including, but not limited to, his intellectual and technical expertise that clearly contributed to creating the conditions for a transformational learning environment. It seems to me that what made this moment so powerful was that it transcended technical expertise. The powerful moment was a sense of experiencing “power within” which Tisdell (2001) distinguishes from the sense of dominance or “power over.” Power within is “the ability of individuals and groups to

have a sense of agency – the ability to act on their own and other's behalf to change the world" (p. 149-150). Activating this sense of agency is at the heart of these co-narrators' practices and central to the notion of teaching as leading.

Early in the conversation Jennifer talks about the sacred role that the arts – dance in particular—play in society. Just as medical doctors are treated with reverence in society for their specialized knowledge to heal, so are the arts healing to the human spirit. Difficult to quantify, evaluate, and measure such outcomes, the preparation for such educative and potentially transformative moments are painstaking, the results, fleeting, left in memory. In times when educational and training programs are evaluated on evidence-based outcomes alone, with the onus on educators to defend and explain the benefits to society, this notion of the sacred has particular resonance for an inquiry into educational leadership. Parker Palmer takes this up in *The Courage to Teach*:

What do I mean by the sacred? It is a paradoxical concept – as one would expect when exploring the most profound truth of all. On one hand, the word points to an ineffable immensity beyond concept and definition...on the other hand, sacred means, quite simply, "worthy of respect"...(p. 111)

A society without respect for education; a society that does not revere, respect and hold mysterious such a complex and important dimension of society is, Arendt (1955) suggests, the root of banality, and the root of evil. Failing to find respect in the other, Palmer (1998) adds, "...diminishes our ability to know, to teach, to learn; we lose our capacity for surprise" (p. 112). It is this sacred dimension of the educational experience that transcends pedagogical practices and processes. How often are we truly connected to others in the learning spaces that we participate in as teachers or learners? In my experience, such sacred moments do not happen nearly enough.

Anger and outrage too have their place in these stories—emotions often appropriate under the particular circumstances. In particular instances Anya responds to the assaulted student, Jane speaks up to the Wage Subsidy colleague, and Jennifer voices her views on the need for respect of the arts and the ongoing need for arts education. Balancing rational analytic arguments, expressed persuasively and eloquently yet full of emotion are signs of intimacy with our vocations. At the heart of the educational leadership of each of the co-narrators is a passionate commitment to the students and communities and organizations where they practice.

Love also has its place. “It’s my love,” declares Jane when I asked how she managed to stay 18 years in and out of contract work with such ongoing challenges and emotionally demanding work. “It’s my love, why else would I be doing this after all these years?” “It’s where the energy comes from,” states Anya. The psychologist Eric Fromm defines love as “the will to extend one’s self for the purpose of nurturing one’s own or another’s spiritual growth...Love is both an intention and an action” (cited in hooks, 2000, p. 4). The principles of the love ethic (hooks, 2000) include “care, respect, knowledge, integrity, and the will to cooperate” (p. 101); it also “affirms the value of truth telling” (p. 49). hooks equates love to courage, saying to love in the face of fear is courageous.

Learning: An Encounter with the Self

What have I learned from the stories of my co-narrators? It is impossible to have a tidy summing up. These stories in conversation provoke, expand, and challenge traditional and emerging mental maps of educational leadership. As I listened to the stories of my co-narrators initially and worked with them in the transcripts, selecting and

editing them, setting them side by side in conversation with each other, I have been taken with familiar elements of some stories. These stories evoked forgotten memories and opened them up to new interpretations. In conversation with these stories my attention is drawn to what was missing and unfamiliar in my own experiences. These stories have assisted me to think again about mentors, teachers, and leaders whose interest and care or neglect has been imprinted on my own educational practice. They also have me reflecting on past conversations that I had or didn't have to persuade, cajole and motivate those I worked with and for in my film and program planning practice. I have been reminded of the importance of having a vision and a plan in mind yet to begin humbly and with openness. They are reminiscent of times when I was adrift and unsure and invited others to help me work through the complexity of a situation together. Stories of loneliness reminded me of when I toughed it out as a project leader, also lonely in my self-imposed isolation and unable or unwilling to trust or confide in others because I thought it would acknowledge limitations in my own knowledge or experience rather than demonstrate an openness to learn through conversation. The stories opened up memories of some of the salient and memorable moments in practice when speaking up and shaping and framing a conversation was just what was required in the instance. Such are the possibilities of telling and listening to storied accounts of practice; possibilities that entice, inspire, and provoke further intentional reflection and learning.

In the conclusion I bring together themes and threads among the stories to draw out some implications of this research for the development of educational leadership.

CHAPTER SIX:

THREADS AND THEMES FROM THE STORIES IN CONVERSATION

What are adult educators to understand about educational leadership? In the first part of this chapter I consider the key themes and threads from the stories in conversation: Pre-understanding at risk, the language of educational leadership, and the role of narrative in understanding everyday lived experience. I include two narrative accounts from my own practice experience and conclude with an invitation to adult education colleagues to explore their own educational leadership anew. The last words, from the constructed conversation, tentatively draw the research to a close.

I. Educational Leadership Mindscapes

The intent of this research is not to establish the extent to which the phenomenon of leadership in adult educators' everyday practice is widespread, but rather, what educational leadership *is* and what it *means* as a feature of human life (Jardine, 1998). Phenomenology and the corner of this philosophical field referred to as interpretive inquiry, seeks not to *explain* why or even how we may practice leadership within our educational practices, but rather to *understand* the phenomenon and its living manifestations through the particular.

Application: Understanding as Self-Understanding

Arriving at a finite conclusion in an interpretive inquiry is difficult. At its best interpretation is open-ended and tentative. It cannot be rushed. Jardine (1998) suggests dwelling with a sense of boundlessness, holding certainty at bay on the one hand while on

the other, opening up a sense of possibility. To dwell and not to rush in with theory first (Forester, 1996) involves time, space, and patience.

At its heart, educational leadership is concerned with constructing worlds where people can come together to learn what is worthwhile. Yet there are many ways to be an educational leader, many notions of what learning is worthwhile, many educational leadership actions, and many paths to understanding this dimension of educational practice. The subject of educational leadership, encountered through the stories in conversations of educational practitioners, brings out of isolation and specificity our own pre-understandings of what it means to be an educational leader. Some of us, because of who we are – our capacities, talents, temperaments, and pre-dispositions – choose to stay in the background, and as a consequence our leadership is often unrecognized in the actions we take day to day directly with individual students. Others work in the foreground, perhaps further removed from the daily lives of students, but involved nevertheless in matters that touch these learners directly in areas such as instructor development, curriculum reform, institutional policy planning, program evaluation, and improvement of linkages between educational programs and labour markets. For those in the foreground in organizations, for example, the leadership dimension may be more developed, more apparent, and more intentional, and thus available for further growth and development.

These stories in conversation with the co-narrators created a space to explore these pre-understandings not often given the necessary time or attention in day-to-day practice. One co-narrator expressed this importance: “I was pleased to see how my own thoughts and experiences were reflected in what the theory said and what the others said.

I felt validated..." Another sent a note thanking me for "the honour of participating in this research." The conversation provoked the quiet educators among us to see this heretofore undervalued or unnoticed dimension of practice in a new way. For others it was an opportunity to appreciate the diversity and commonality among us.

Understanding the subject *anew* does not occur simply by being more informed about the subject; rather this understanding is transformative. Transformation involves a communion with the living subject in a living dialogue. It is through this living dialogue that "we do not remain what we are" (Gadamer, 1989, p. 379 cited in Jardine, 1998).

Interpretive inquiry, as it is concerned with ontological understandings, touches who we are and what we know ourselves to be. Creating texts from the interviews with each of my colleagues involved carefully sifting through the stories embedded in the transcripts. Further deciphering was carried out through sending and receiving emails and phones calls, additional face-to-face conversations over cups of tea and coffee and carrot muffins. I engaged in follow-up conversations with each co-narrator of their stories and understandings about educational leadership after their reading of the constructed conversation. I selected, edited, and constructed the conversation guided primarily by those stories that had a relationship to the subject of educational leadership, although initially the co-narrators may not have considered these leadership stories. Now, some months since the initial interviews, after the text has settled into these stories and conversations, I notice that my own reading of the text – the weaving, layering, and piecing together of these stories – continues to shift and expand my understanding of educational leadership.

Prior to this research I simply conflated the notion of leadership with 'rulership.' The study of traditional leadership, primarily concerned with political and organizational leadership, did not address me. This genre of literature appeared to me lifeless and abstract, dealing with "great men" holding positional authority. Clearly I did not belong to this category of leadership; I did not fit into this pre-given definition of an educational leader. Not a dean or director of programs, I do not administer or manage departmental budgets or define policy. I simply plan and design educative experiences for adult learners – on an individual and group level, or a provincial and national level. My own definition of who I was before this research did not include leader. Facilitator, educator, film director, yes, but I did not belong to this category called educational leader. This may be explained, in large part, by the cultural traditions in which I am embedded that have educators looking up within organizations to those people who manage and organize us, rather than those who ignite our imagination. We less frequently look to those colleagues beside us, whose practice of teaching, facilitating, guiding, researching, administering, and planning are also very much concerned with leading. We rarely speak of the moments of tension, doubt, or surefootedness embedded in the everyday that call for leadership. Less frequently still do we look to ourselves and see our own "leaderly" dimension, the moral authority present when we stand up, question, redirect, or reframe the attention of others in order to consider it anew, whether questions of pedagogy, curriculum, educative setting, or the lives of the adult learners we work with. Jane, who initially was firm in her belief that she was not an educational leader, said to me when she read a draft of the constructed conversation that: "We don't give ourselves credit for the leadership dimension of what we do. We don't take the time to reflect, we don't *have* the

time, and we have so few opportunities to think about these things.” And so those instances that have educational leadership written all over them, go unspoken, unrecognized, undecipherable – lost to examination and to our own learning.

Pre-understanding at Risk: Between the Familiar and the Strange

Educational leadership as a field of study appeared to me at first reading, fixed as I am in my own situatedness, to inadequately address the worldview among adult educators, whose enduring commitments are to self-direction, facilitation, and empowerment of others. Even among the small and eclectic group of practitioners of this study we have as many or more ways to talk about leadership and about education. We hold many assumptions about what we mean when we speak of educational leadership. The difficulty with the language of leadership is that it presupposes understandings that are not there. Clearly we enter the conversation knowing something about the subject but the question remains, when we speak of educational leaders are we speaking of weavers or philosopher kings? It is not an either/or question. Those of us in more traditional “leaderly-like” roles have much to learn from the quieter, more subtle stories of adult educators at the grass roots, who with quiet courage, resilience, persistence, and sensitivity face daily the complex worlds of their students. Those of us in the front lines of education, in classrooms, community centres, and neighbourhoods engaged in teaching and guiding would be enriched by capturing and constructing these instances of leadership, and recognizing the lessons they hold, and the possibilities of generating a greater sense of personal authority. For those of us who recognize the significance of teaching as leading, and educational leadership as leading conversations about what matters in adult education, we stand to gain a greater sense of our own possibilities.

The Language of Educational Leadership

Returning to embedded meanings: Embedded in our common usage of words like *education* and *leadership* are meanings often distorted or lost over time. Returning to previously understood meaning is an alternative to disregarding, overlooking, or eliminating from our vocabulary what may seem to be such vague, baggy, and ill fitting a term as educational leadership. Reclaiming original meanings is yet another way to come to understand it anew. As I pointed to at the beginning of this study, the root meaning for pedagogue not only refers to a teacher of children, but also comes from pedagogos, or “one who walks beside.” Beside. Not behind, not in front. Friends teaching friends, as I learned at 13 years old and relearned more than 30 years later. If we reclaim the original meaning of leader from the Latin “archien,” meaning, “to begin,” “to lead,” and/ or, “to rule.” Leadership is also rooted in the word “prattien” meaning, “to pass through,” “to achieve,” or “to finish” and “agere” which means “to set into motion” or “to lead,” and “gerere” which means, “to bear.” “Prattien” and “gerere” became the root words for action – words whose meanings are inextricably woven together with education and teaching (Arendt, 1958).

Everyday language: What is the language of leadership used in this inquiry?

The co-narrators use action words like facilitate, collaborate, take charge, set up, teach, find jobs, provide service, plan programs, design instruction, organize programs, revise policy, figure out, wrangle with meaning, give a helping hand, take risks, articulate what’s important, set the tone, not shy away from conflict in institutions, poke a stick, carefully build budgets, scramble for money, go beyond the normal teaching practice, set an example, develop something new, show commitment, care, listen, create opportunities,

make substantial differences, empower others to act, guide, motivate, be the middle person, support, make decisions, recognize the need, name the dance, convince, meet constantly, develop working relationships, steer, help others see things they may not know about, translate needs into actions, intervene, encourage, request feedback, multitask in public, speak up, express convictions, champ at the bit, express something new, create new partnerships, share successes, be real and show the cracks, take off the mask, articulate a vision, attend to administrative detail, jump in, get help, don't turn a blind eye, read the situation accurately, be an example, recognize and develop talents, orchestrate, have a feel for group dynamics, be inspired by tradition, step back, take people with me. And as our stories suggest, we take leadership action with: reluctance, humility, intuition, respect, a huge sense of possibility, imagination, judgement, authority, courage, sensitivity, enthusiasm, fairness, compassion, self-awareness, kindness, patience, resistance to conventionalities, and love.

Metaphors for education: When we speak of education, too, a multitude of images, metaphors, and evocative senses of teaching and learning come to mind. Words and phrases include: become job ready, develop skills, develop understanding, give [the students] a lift, get [the students] back on their feet, transformation, effect society in positive ways, growth and blossoming of confidence, develop lifelong learners, develop different ways of thinking, figure out what you want people to learn, pose the questions, not offer the answer, a path to world peace, create supportive and challenging space, develop self-awareness, push people to go beyond, recognize the various ways people learn, know what you're talking about, provide good information, offer an opportunity for reflection and practice.

Education involves arduous and careful preparation; it is invisible, and it is more than content. Metaphors for teaching and learning include: friends teaching friends, walking tall, a gradual unfolding, creating new partnerships, building things, seeing the flicker of possibility, creating from an empty space, a gradual unfolding, magic moments. The senses are also evoked – sadness, emptiness, sorrow, joy, and hope.

In our various educational sites who we are as adult educators concerns us a great deal too. Through our stories we seem to say that we value educational leaders who are responsive and engaged, encouraging, enthusiastic, compassionate, broad-minded, extroverted, responsible, expansive, positive, interested, and skilled craftspeople. These are people dedicated to: building self-esteem, questioning conventions, seeing potential in others, opening up horizons, going beyond technique, showing solidarity, taking care with details, and respecting diverse perspectives. Educators as leaders recognize teaching as an honour, as a way to express wonder, and to elucidate meaning. They also demonstrate the diversity of emotion and care of a teacher/leader through intimacy, vulnerability, independence, loneliness, weariness, optimism, connection, strength, and the courage to show their authentic self through their integrity, consistency in word and deed, and love. Love of subject and love of student.

As adult educators we practice in a broadly based, yet unified, field, often not even recognizing how similar are the challenges we share. Those in this study have overlapping responsibilities as contract workers, career facilitators, trainers, choreographers, artistic directors, administrators, instructors, consultants, visual artists, managers, planners, producers, and more. On the surface it seems we have little in common. When our stories remain separate and apart from the others, our concerns,

struggles and questions are ours alone. Through conversation we understand ourselves as connected to this larger realm of adult educators who are teacher/leaders trying in our own ways to create opportunities for conversation about what is happening in education -- what matters and what it means.

Constrained by tradition: What prevents us from realizing our educational leadership? Our stories illuminate what happens when we have to withhold our deepest beliefs, when we experience a disjuncture between public and private life and are left feeling like heretics. Constrained by traditions, many of us are put off formal leadership positions because they seem "too much of a scripted role." Some observe how organizational leaders appear to have to sacrifice too much, to bear too much alone. Yet even the lone teacher in the classroom experiences the weight of responsibility and desires opportunities to share these experiences with colleagues and to break from this isolation. There are also those educators or managers of educational programs who do not inspire: they try to control all areas, are not able to delegate, do not have faith in others, stretch limits and set no visible standards, tend to play it safe, are too literal, too directive, fear appearing foolish, are shy of conflict, and lack understanding.

There are so many walls keeping us apart. So many walls, these stories tell us, some due to the limitations of our mindscapes, or because our location obscures our vision, or because the complexity and ambiguity of situations are beyond our knowing. These walls prevent us from understanding what is going on, what matters, and what to do about it. Our individual stories shared and challenged in conversation with each other are an attempt at wholeness. Our stories brought together give us a picture of the whole that alone is not possible. Brought together, these stories are the basis of a critically

reflective practice (Brookfield, 1995, 2000) and help us ‘realize the contextuality of all practice and the limitations of universal templates...” (Brookfield, 2000, p. 47).

I am in no rush to reduce these stories and their meanings further to narrow categories and themes. Taking time to dwell in these particular instances and in this dwelling to teach each other and ourselves about our capacities or limitations to teach, to lead, and to act, is at the heart of interpretive work. To understand requires time to dwell with the inter-connectedness of these stories and the way they help us recognize and challenge what we know about educational leadership. The stories illuminate the parts of this whole called educational leadership. This view is supported by educational leadership research.¹²

In the space between the familiar and the strange, such differences are constitutive of understanding. Understanding influences action. And what remains, as Kant suggests, is to have the courage to act in accord with one’s understanding. Courage to face the world as it is perhaps does not have to involve risking one’s life on the battle field, but no less heroic are the situated educational leaders involved in challenging prejudices and received wisdom, taking risks with new teaching practices and program models, revamping policies and eliminating unworkable procedures, taking a genuine interest in their students’ lives, redirecting attention to what matters. Teaching and leading. Such

¹²Scott (1999) suggests that educational leadership involves a way of thinking as well as having particular knowledge and skills. According to this view educational leaders: see each situation as both a unique case and as potentially similar to previous ones; prepare for and manage change by accurately reading and matching well developed repertoire of diagnostic maps; have a flexible imagination and allow for thinking on their feet, reflect on action; have the capacity for thinking different things through, tracing out the consequences of different possibilities; get to the nub of the problems and anticipates upcoming difficulties; learn effectively from experiences; direct ongoing professional learning. Educational leaders are self-managed professional learners who: understand and can work with the dynamics of change process; know key influences which may have to be taken into account; understand the nature and process of learning program design, implementation and evaluation; understand the dynamics and tactics of workplace action research; know how to document and disseminate outcomes of each change effort; look outward to the future and inward to the present; have skills to deal with effectively involving, negotiating with and delegating to key players in the change process; use communication skills suited to formal and informal contexts; create and sustain constructive work environment; understand the process of teaching and learning; know tactics to promote effective learning; and use technology to enhance efficiency in work and professional learning.

educators are a source of illumination in “dark times” when democracy, justice, and equality are at stake.

That even in the darkest of times we have the right to expect some illumination, and that such illumination may well come less from theories and concepts than from the uncertain, flickering, and often weak light that some men and women, in their lives and their works, will kindle under almost all circumstances and shed over the time span that was given them on earth. (Arendt, 1958, p. x)

This illumination, at times humble, requires a certain amount of openness to examine critically and learn from past action in an effort to act wisely. To do good work as adult educators “we must consistently involve others – particularly learners and colleagues – as commentators on our efforts” (Brookfield, 2000, p.47). Courage in educational leadership involves being willing to risk one’s own prejudices when faced with a fuller understanding.

The Role of Narrative in Understanding Everyday Lived Experience

Enmeshed in Narrative: While interpreting the stories I moved from the particular – the co-narrators’ experiences and my own – from theory to practice, from external to internal authority; the stories breathing life into the subject of educational leadership. While constructing, reading, and re-reading the texts, dwelling with the stories, turning them over in my mind, asking friends and colleagues if they had a story about a teacher who made an imprint, or recalled a moment in teaching or learning that shone for them, or made them weep, I have become enmeshed in their complex and ambiguous meanings.

With these stories comes the possibility to know ourselves more profoundly (Arendt, 1958). As the stories play out and I follow their possible meanings, I hear the voices of the co-narrators and I try out a phrase from the constructed conversation.

“When I begin a project I begin with humility,” says Jennifer, the artistic director. And as I begin a new educational design project I say to myself, “How can I hold my own pre-understandings apart while I listen for the other’s story of what matters?” “It was a dream come true,” says Pamela about her participation in a workshop. I repeat these words to myself as I plan a program. “In what way can this program contribute to improving this world? How can I make this program a dream come true for another?” A grand statement perhaps, yet understood anew, it is reclaimed as a mantra for what education should and can be. Or as Anya says as she helps a battered and sexually assaulted student, “[That student] gave me courage...I took my courage from her.” How much courage have I gained from hearing and retelling and constructing the stories of my co-narrators? And compassion. I am moved when Murray describes his search for “a flicker of possibility” in the struggling clients he works with in the hospitality-training program and when he describes the deep sob that wells up in him when another of his clients finds a work placement. In these phrases lie powerful metaphoric images that have altered my worldview, not because of what I know, but by what I have come to understand through these living and breathing instances.

I am genuinely confronted and challenged when I replay Murdock’s words as he fields my invitation to recall a leadership moment in his teaching and planning practice. His understanding of educational leadership is not so closely tied to everyday teaching. “That’s redundant,” he said. Redundant, I wonder? Is it unnecessary, excessive, or tautological to say that teaching is leading? What can be learned from such a characterization? I struggled to provide a justification for reclaiming the everyday, embedded acts of educational leadership and to hold them up for the possibilities I see in

them. Perhaps for him the meaning of educational leadership is clearer than for most because of the position that he holds. But in the space between my horizon and his, I learn something more about educational leadership.

There is so much that is generative for further conversation, analysis, and interpretation in these stories, e.g., transparency in decision-making, metaphors for a vocation, demonstrations of courage and humility. The stories are pedagogically rich; generative of new understandings. Metaphors of opening blossoms, empty rooms awaiting the creation of a dance, a new program graduate walking tall, the wild haired and extroverted art teacher, fearlessly poking at crusty institutions. These images illustrate a shared culture of educators who see their work as contributing to change and growth of the individual through an educative experience with an awareness too, that systems and structures and traditions need changing and renewal to accommodate emerging understandings of what is needed in adult education.

I have been awakened to my own experience through narrative telling, in conversation with colleagues and the theories and perceptions of others. I have taken to heart C. Wright Mills' (1970) who urges us to use our life experience in our intellectual work to guide and test our reflection and in the process shape ourselves. I return again to this life experience to guide and test my understanding of how intentional conversations figure as a dimension of educational leadership.

From Northern Vancouver Island to Bolivia and Back:
Intentional Conversations in Educational Leadership

On the most northern end of Vancouver Island communities rely primarily on the forest, more than ever now that fishing and mining are activities of the past. Recently many jobs have been lost causing massive economic

and social problems that are immediate and severe. People are leaving the region in large numbers. Youth are having difficulty coming to terms with the change in historic ways of making a living, despairing that there's no future based in the old ways of fishing, hunting, and foraging.

"We are running out of time on the North Island. Every day businesses are closing and what we don't need is another study of the problem," the community economic development official says plainly. "Sitting in my office right now I have six boxes of reports -- too numerous to count -- documenting our economic troubles. What we need now is action."

Can university research respond to the immediate and long-term problems of communities such as these? Recently, my role at the university was to reach out and explore some ideas about how a university community research alliance could serve this socially and economically hit region. I carry out my work from a location at the borders: at the border of the university - I am on a small research contract - and at the border of the community itself. I have traveled to the region only twice this year to meet and talk with people. I am both the designer and constructor of these conversations and the messenger between these two worlds. The weariness felt among the people in the region is evident. "We are tired of being the objects of university research. If you want to be involved in the region we need to 'build a house together' and work on projects that contribute to the immediate needs of the region."

An important and hopeful message I bring back to the university is, that "Yes, the region is interested in working with the university to advance a mutually agreed upon research agenda where outcomes create an economic development capacity in the region." I am told that the expertise, knowledge, and skills of the university are needed and welcomed here, but not at any price. A fisheries specialist from the region says it best. "We recognize that basic research does benefit the community, however, we

don't just want all the funding to go to the university researchers and nothing to local people. We want to see the research building the capacity in the region."

Many of the people I meet in the town of Port McNeill have traveled all day from around the North Island region to talk. We talk about the possibilities and the concerns. They seem receptive to the emerging concept of a University/North Island "Collaborative Inquiry Field School" in which local people, teamed with university researchers have opportunities to research and develop viable operations such as shell fish production, charcoal extraction, tourism impact study, among other ideas. They say that this is a good way to build the research capacity of people in the region, to direct research toward specific interests, a good way for us to "build a house together." I keep this phrase in mind as a guiding metaphor for what I am trying to create.

The Canadian writer Matt Cohen wrote in his memoir shortly before he died that "One of the most difficult things in writing is to discover what one is taking for granted. The strange thing about blinders is that they are invisible to the wearer, until something unexpected happens" (Cohen, 2000, p. 219-220). I get blindsided when I take for granted, in this early stage of a planning project, that once an idea is presented and given a warm reception, I can get on with my 'real' work, which is to plan the program. Instead what is really needed is a huge amount of talking through with a large number of people. I get blindsided when I forget the blinkers that keep me focused on my own vision of the project and fail to consider the leadership dimension of my program planning practice. Because of my position I have access to the whole messy, big picture - the macro perspective - and yet within my role as planner, as educational designer, as conceptual thinker, my power to act is embedded in my expertise, it does not come with the position. If this project is to succeed I must come out of my own world, my own horizon, and marshal my communication skills to bring the various

interests around the virtual table to work out together what ought to be done and who will take on what piece. It's not enough to have a winning, innovative, ground breaking concept. What is required now is to communicate the possibilities, find the money to make this happen and continue to bring both university and community along together. The proposal has been sent out in the form of a letter of intent for requests for funding "Phase One." Take care, I say to myself, not to think of this undertaking solely in terms of a planning activity; don't forget that one critical element - educational leadership. Without recognizing this situated leadership role I will fail to attend to a number of other important elements. The most important of which is to continuously talk with people about what is possible - talk with university faculty, talk with people in the community who are most keenly interested in this project, talk to potential funders about what it could look like, about the possible structure and content of such an undertaking. My job is to breathe life into the project; to animate the process, give it direction but this second element involves listening very closely to the concerns, the ideas, and the offers of help, and to attend to the interests. Being intentional in my own leadership is critical.

Parker Palmer (1998) suggests that the power to reflect and to re-member our stories is concerned not just with recalling a few facts of our lives, but "putting our lives back together, recovering identity and integrity and reclaiming the wholeness of our lives" (p. 20). Re-membering is one way to attend to the blinkers. And to connect the disparate pieces of experience, of what happened and what it means.

I go back to a conversation from the fall of 1981, in the early days of my two-year stay in Bolivia just before I begin contract work for the United Nations and later other non-governmental development agencies. I'm in La Paz and while waiting for my first assignment, begin volunteering at the Institute for Child Development. The Director of the

Institute, Olivia Brown, is a Bolivian woman I have met through the UN office in La Paz. Delicate, determined, and calm, with a face of a golden brown angel, Olivia is married to an Englishman who works for the World Food Programme, one of the many UN agencies in the countries. They have four children; one is still a baby. The Institute is a grey, nondescript concrete, three-story building located on the outskirts of La Paz, on the edge of a barrio - an urban slum. The coldness of the cement walls is in stark contrast to the warmth of dense Bougainvillea vines that cling to the walls of the inner courtyard. As I report to her each day I notice her indefatigable capacity for work, her high-energy, and especially the kindness, patience, and care with which she greets and meets parents, children, and employees. She seems to be in motion all day long.

My assignment is to play with the children in the day program - sing songs, play simple clapping games, as well as set up activities that involve drawing, paper cutting and pasting. I quite quickly overcome my shyness about speaking my university-learned Spanish with these delightful children. The days I spend there are blurred together now but I remember one day, around 10 AM, when the children are having their mid morning snack and rest time. Olivia invites me to sit with her in the courtyard. She wants to talk to me about rural development because I leave soon on assignment with UNICEF to the Altiplano region of Potosi. We sit side by side, sipping our tea in silence. My attention is focused on her face. She looks tired. Dark circles brush the skin under her eyes. She speaks to me in Spanish.

"You know that the Institute attends to children whose parents work in the markets, as laborers, housekeepers, and "empleados." They are rural people; "Indigenos" recently arrived to the city to work, because their own villages cannot sustain them any longer. Here in La Paz they find work but they live in the barrios outside

of the city, urban slums without decent services - water, electricity, roads or garbage collection."

"The children seem quite happy to me," I offer, not fully making the connection between this urban Institute's work and the problems of rural poverty. On a blank sheet of paper in her notebook she begins to draw concentric circles, one inside the other, linking the outer circle to the inner circle with arrows.

"The children in our day program receive the best possible help at a time in their lives when they most need it. Breakfast and lunch, recreation, music, rest, and socialization; all of this stimulation gives these children the chance to break the cycle of poverty they are born into. A cycle that originates in the rural areas."

"I've seen many children, toddlers really, being carried on their mother's back or playing on the dusty floors of market stall," I say.

"The children who grow up in the 'barrios' go to work from an early age, as babies they are often left to play alone or attended by a young sibling for hours at a time while their mothers work. The conditions of their lives put them at risk of malnutrition, life long respiratory illnesses, and learning difficulties - many have fetal alcohol effect, a problem that is multigenerational. Our programs target these most needy children and as you see they respond very well in this environment. But the source of the problem and the real need for change is located in the rural areas. Without rural economic development the population will continue to migrate to the cities, the "barrios" will continue to overflow, and the circle of poverty will remain unbroken." As she speaks the hum of activities in the Institute fall away to a background murmur. Olivia's voice is quiet and underlined with force. Urgent. Patient. She's taking time with me. "This is important. I need to get this," I say to myself.

Now years after returning to Canada from my work in rural economic development in Bolivia and then in Colombia this conversation stays with me; not just the words that

were spoken, but also the intentional nature of the conversation. A lesson in migration, economics, and development informs my work that follows later. Olivia's quiet and energetic leadership, no less powerful for its gentle approach, is a guide and model that I take to the remotest reaches of Bolivia to work with leaders of food coops and small economic enterprises, supporting their efforts to organize, plan and implement income generating projects; to establish a rural women's leadership institute with my Bolivian counterparts, and later to manage food aid projects in Colombia. Olivia's words continue to frame my understanding of what is important and why it is necessary. And she taught me about taking the time with individuals to have intentional conversations about the purpose and meaning of our work together. Writing about this instance is to attempt to understand my tradition, in the Gadamerian sense, to reveal my blinkers in Matt Cohen's sense, and to bring this understanding to bear on present challenges.

And so back to today and the conversation about the University/North Island Collaborative Inquiry Field School. For this project to move forward, to be more than a possibility, I need to have many such talks, to think out loud with whoever may be able to lend support, to shape the concept, and then to take concerted action to find the resources to make it happen. I hold Olivia's words close as I consider that the future of North Island is our future too.

* * *

Stories of Educational Leadership – A Family Resemblance?

My dilemma now is to construct some kind of order from all these narratives, metaphors, uncertainties, and questions. In the dialectic of moving from the private to the public, the practice to the theory, the significance of the everyday situatedness becomes the context for learning.

Learning to listen: Writing and remembering the moments in practice makes it possible for new understandings to emerge through a systematic returning to experience (Griffith, 1995). Telling stories from our personal and professional lives and listening “for” stories has helped me research the living practice of leadership in my adult education practice. The stories in this study are more than simply a collection of instances of educational leadership about the impact and influence of mentors, teachers and colleagues on our own educational leadership or the challenges and tensions inherent in educational practice. “[These] striking instances make a claim on us and open up and reveal something to us about our lives together” (Jardine, 1998, p.40) and in doing so, make a claim to truth. These stories provide a way into experience – both familiar and strange – that capture the complexities and puzzles of practice and offer up meanings and possible responses. Many stories, some no more than a gesture or a metaphor, others more commentary and analysis than description and resolution, some with happy endings, others with ongoing struggles not easily resolved, all provide a way into understanding what educational leadership is and what it means. These stories of educational leadership are not intended to be “objects that are fixed, closed and definitively defined” but are generative of understanding creative, humble, and courageous educational leadership that “warrant further investigation” (Jardine, 1998).

The stories, my own and those of the co-narrators, documented and reconstructed in this study address, in their own particular ways, the central concerns of educational leadership proposed as a heuristic framework at the onset of this research: being open and responsive to change (Apps, 1994); adult education as a vocation (Collins, 1991); rethinking teaching practices and enhancing learning strategies (hooks, 1994); connecting

identity and integrity, and challenging received ideas and mentalities (Palmer, 1998); articulating ideals as the basis for an educator's moral authority (Sergiovanni, 2000); and intentionally creating "force fields" or other "spaces" where people can learn (Wheatley, 1994). The co-narrators's stories are testaments to the power of narrative reflection to bring to the surface matters that most concern, trouble, confound or delight us. Within our everyday lives as adult educators our leadership involves the discernment of the true sources of the difficulties in education – the "original difficulties" as Caputo (2000), following Gadamer, suggests. In other words, it is not that we must simply choose between two competing goods – which is the essence of a dilemma – but we struggle, at times, to know what is really going on. These stories suggest that educational leadership is to name, shape, point to, and act upon what troubles us in the lives of our students, the curriculum, evaluation methods, credentials, prior learning assessment, programs, policies, research, relationships with colleagues and the interpretation of theories.

Educational leadership: An intentional stance: The stories told by educators of their encounters with leadership have enticed and invited me to find my own stories and in so doing activate the leadership dimension of my practice that has been lying dormant. Taking a more intentional stance with my leadership actions involves expanding my understanding of what is part of a leadership repertoire to include a wide awake stance, an ethical imagination (Greene, 1995), and an eye for possibilities.

The purpose of telling stories is not just to assert a point of view, "but of being transformed into a communion in which we don't remain what we were" (Gadamer, 1989, p. 379). Writing and re-interpreting "How I Learned to Sew," "Frozen in Bogota," "Vulnerable Leadership," "A Winter in Winnipeg," "Intentional Conversations," and the

following story, "Street Phronesis: A Moment in Program Planning Leadership" combined with the stories in conversations of my co-narrators has changed who I am and the mental maps I hold. My understanding has expanded and shifted; modes that no longer fit are sloughed off. This final personal/professional narrative, "Street Phronesis," was initially inspired by Apps (1994) who says, in *Leadership for the Emerging Age*, it is important not only to reflect on what caused you the most strife, anxiety or pain, or what situation caught you off guard and compelled you to act decisively, but to also learn from writing a "personal best" story. I take Apps' point, but rather than calling this a personal best, I prefer the notion of "street phronesis" (McKenzie, 1991) because it captures the notion of practice as action in real time and takes into account not only the application of skills and knowledge, but a complex mix of presence of mind and judgment to act in a given situation. The story is a light in my memory, linking me to what is salient, important, and memorable (Baddeley, 1997) about the leadership dimension of practice.

Street Phronesis - A Moment in Program Planning Leadership

The Health Canada-Open Learning Agency project is at a standstill. A provincial advisory committee and our project design team have met several times to determine the scope of the project (the objectives were set prior to Health Canada contracting OLA). The objectives of the project are to develop a 'train the trainer' program for outreach workers who work with socio-economically high risk pregnant and post-partum, also referred to as perinatal, women.

As program designer and writer my role is to shape the program and work with Pam, a prenatal nutritionist and Diane, a perinatal nursing care instructor. Together we have many years of experience. The project manager for OLA

is Peter, a man in his early 60s. He had worked for many years as a corporate trainer. He is an organized and efficient manager and is the "point man" for negotiating the contract with Health Canada and hiring our team. He is also the only man sitting around the planning table that includes three nutritionists, an aboriginal nurse, the policy analyst from the Ministry of Health and the Health Canada program manager for maternal infant nutrition programs.

In spite of having held a consultation workshop last month with the experts in the field from around the province, and creating an extensive listing of learning objectives and priorities, there seems to be a vacuum in the project, and our small team is floundering. Peter, who I had expected to be more of the command and control leader of our project, is surprisingly acquiescent when it comes to the contents of the program. I suppose this is as it should be; he is taking care of the administrative details, and leaving the rest to the team.

There are some stirrings among the committee members and an underlying tension that I can't put my finger on. My instinct tells me that the next meeting is an opportunity to move to action and begin the design and writing process. It's time for me to take the lead in the planning process - something I am more than capable of doing, having managed and led many such projects over the years. So without promoting from Peter I begin to prepare for the meeting thoroughly, consulting the content experts and reviewing in detail the notes from our consultation meeting. There is a lot of data and even though I am not quite ready to commit to a design - I prefer to spend more time reading and reviewing the content information where I can take my inspiration - I believe that if some framework for the training is not put forward, the committee, and particularly the program director for Health Canada, will lose confidence in our team and our momentum will falter.

On the morning of the meeting the advisory group committee and our team are sitting around a large

conference board table. The lighting is harsh and bright. It's early morning, people appear tired, and nobody is saying much. We seem to be seated very far away from each other. As usual, the woman from Health Canada is blowing her nose - she seems to have a perpetual cold, one that lasts the duration of the entire six-month life of the project. Peter hasn't suggested any particular strategy for the meeting, the agenda is wide open but I have come prepared with what I see as a good preliminary plan. After opening niceties I distribute the plan and review the various components.

"Please feel free to add your comments and suggestions as I review the materials," I begin.

As I speak, I think to myself what a good first crack at a plan this really is. Plus it shows them that we have listened and understand the nuances of what outreach workers seem to want and need to know and to do. The complex content areas are organized around themed modules. Each of the modules has an organizing goal and several objectives and suggested content for each is listed. And although the design refers to the stated objectives brought by Health Canada I have added a new element - the production of complementary audio cassettes that include conversations among the perinatal women who are the clients of these outreach workers, as well as conversations among "seasoned" outreach workers themselves. These conversations will provide very concrete stories of experience with outreach services and will be organized around the themes of each module. This represents an innovation and amplification of the stated project goals. The innovation has cost implications, I mention, but the Health Canada director waves this concern away.

"Send me an estimate," she says to Peter. He looks at me and I nod in response to indicate, "Yes, I'll get that to you."

He smiles, she smiles. Happiness.

The noticeable tension present at the beginning of the meeting has lifted. I can sense it and I can see it.

People's faces are softer, lips parted, almost smiling, there is eye contact all around, and the buzz of conversation takes the chill from the room. Many of the nutritionists and nurses on the advisory committee offer ideas, suggestions, and praise. "This looks really good." "You've captured many of the issues raised at the consultation workshop." "I like the audio cassette idea."

The next three months of writing result in a solid curriculum, followed-up with a series of train the trainer sessions around the province.

* * *

"Street Phronesis" is about surefootedness in uncertain and changing circumstances, and about reading a situation, and drawing authority from personal and professional experience and expertise to take action. But, as in all such moments, there is much that happens outside the frame. In this case, carrying out detailed preparation and engaging in prior conversations and research informed my suggestion to include a new dimension to the program and to bring the voices of the 'clients' into the centre of the outreach workers' education through the audio cassettes. This new element was based on my understanding of what a 'good' educational program should include. I characterize this moment as situated educational leadership because it involved going beyond the status quo, trusting my instinct, and acting on the basis of my understanding. For many of us in adult education in the role of consultant to an educational project, our leadership lies in listening well to what is needed and wanted by diverse stakeholders, interpreting the meaning of these needs, and then as needed, shifting the focus of attention by introducing new ideas, something beyond what was originally conceptualized. In field hockey we call it "going to." This means not simply waiting for the ball to be passed, but

anticipating the pass and running into the space to receive it. This kind of active surefootedness is how I understand this story and what educational leadership can look and feel like. It is a conversation, a mental stance, and action; motivated by the desire to create an innovative educational program that will support, improve, and possibly even transform the way the learners carry out their practice of perinatal education. Like the other narratives in this research, more meaning remains to be made from this story.

Leading with an Undivided Self: It is not just the strategies and policies and programs that concern educational leaders. It is also *who* the educator is in the process. Who one is, in part, happens by bringing into alignment the public image and the personal private self. As Scott (1999) suggests, this alignment between our purpose, vision, and emotions is fundamental to leadership. In my view this holds true for situated, teacher-leader, leadership.¹³ Palmer (1998) could be speaking about the co-narrators in this study when he suggests that it is capacity for connectedness – to weave complex connections among themselves – that signals the courage to teach. To teach and to lead with an undivided self means that

...every major thread of one's life experience is honored, creating a weave of such coherence and strength that it can hold students and subject as well as self. Such a self, inwardly integrated, is able to make the outward connections on which good teaching depends. (Palmer, 1998, p. 15)

There are many examples raised by the co-narrators pointing to the significance of the undivided self, to what it means to act with integrity and authenticity: Jane's story of acting from intuition and guiding by example; Pamela's stories of her own history of

¹³ Scott (1999) adds that leaders, at their core, share the following: A secure sense of self, a strong inner core to handle day-to-day pressures and uncertainties. They are not too thinned skinned nor take things personally. They are not concerned about being popular. They have a sense of humility. They are willing to admit that weakness is also a sign of strength. They are willing to take responsibility. They avoid defensiveness and having to be right.

leadership, this awareness informing her approach to teaching adults to teach; Jennifer's struggle to become the kind of leader who communicates what she believes matters through the language of dance.

Respect. Self respect and respect for others is central to the co-narrators's sense of leadership. Justice is another thread running through, bound as it is to the notion of responsiveness and responsibility. Anya recognizes that she must continue learning herself if she is to do justice to her students and she is acutely aware of the potential for conflict between the students' interests of learning the skill and craft of painting and the instructors' interests. She pulls no punches when she states unequivocally that it is with the learners that her solidarity rests. Murdock speaks of the importance of transgression or resisting received wisdom and conventionality, to be responsive to the changing society and the changing needs of non-traditional students at the university while respecting the expertise and traditions of academics within the institution. There are many tensions or paradoxes held while acting with integrity and authenticity.

II. CONCLUSION

In times of change and the demands of everyday practice, few educators have the time or space to reflect and learn from experience, from the stories of their lives and work as adult educators. There are points of convergence worth raising up from the stories of this diverse group of co-narrators, emergent through the twists and turns, the give and take of conversation about what it means to understand educational leadership anew.

An Invitation to Understanding

This research has implication for adult educators who desire to examine, disrupt, and expand their understanding of educational leadership. These considerations for action-learning I address directly to my adult education colleagues.

Begin with lived experience of leadership: Educational leaders exist at all levels of an organization or settings. If you are an educator, there is an important leadership dimension to your work. Your capacity to lead may be lying dormant. This leadership is present in educators who take well deliberated risks, make decisions, act responsibly, and are empowered by their own authority to coach, counsel, and of course, teach without waiting for new policies or decisions from the top. Examine such actions narratively before accepting off-the-shelf definitions, theories, or templates of educational leadership or other leadership derived from traditional models. In saying this I do not mean to eschew theory. Theory has power, however, more powerful still is to work hermeneutically from the familiar to the strange and back to encounter your “leaderly” self. Writing, telling, and retelling educational leadership stories about tensions and triumphs contributes to literate, morally wide-awake educational leaders – from the novice to the advanced – at all levels. The metaphors and images of learning and teaching and leading you live by, the leaders whose imprint lives on in you, and the significant moments, are the texts of your educational leadership curriculum. Pay attention to them and create narratives out of imagination and experience. These are the stories that are already writing you. But do not become trapped in the isolated moment. Bring these stories into a community of learners, open them up for interpretation, reinterpretation, and connection to theory and the experience of others.

Design and Teach for Transformation: Educational leadership is about leading others to learning and making decisions about what counts as good and worthwhile learning. Do not accept a watered down notion of education planning and teaching as simply reproducing existing conditions or injustices. Teach for wonder. Teach for passion. Teach for setting learners alight in some way. Seek out innovations in teacher and learner-centred approaches. Ask for feedback. Accept nothing less than making learning a “dream come true.”

Seek to Lead Genuine Conversations: Challenge your skills and understanding by leading divergent, meaning making conversations. Genuine conversations about educational issues that matter open up possibilities for understanding, for a fusion of horizons. Find ways to bring diverse interests together in conversation and listen deeply for the stories each participant has to tell. Don't be pressured into a tidy summing up of solutions to difficulties that are not conducive to tidying. Find ways to act to the best extent possible amidst the tensions.

Courage: Find the courage to confront your own conventions and those of others. One way to develop the strength to put forward your ideas and vision for critique is simply to do so. Be prepared to defend, explain, or expand on these ideas. Be open to critique, but accept nothing at face value. Being open does not mean having no convictions of your own, it simply means you are willing to welcome and fully consider the other. Courage is both a stance and action. To develop courage, you must step out of zones of comfort, take risks, and act courageously. Courage is also cultivated within a community of educators willing to risk themselves for their convictions. Take courage from those whose actions you respect.

Show Who You Are: As an educator you teach with your intellect, curiosity, imagination, creativity, emotion. Whenever possible show who you are. Use language that connects. Take off the professional mask. Take risks with your performance and your expression. Challenge yourself. As an educational leader you are asking others to look at what you are showing them – not so that people will like you, or because you want attention, but so they will see something anew. Embody what you believe and value. Walk your talk.

Seek Balance in Body, Mind, and Spirit: It is no surprise that all the co-narrators in this study take an active interest in their physical well being and seek ways to find balance in their professional and personal lives. You cannot inspire others, if your own soul is weary. Find ways to renew and rebalance regularly.

Final Reflections: On Becoming Literate and Reading the Texts of our Educational Leadership Experience

Stories from educational practice have the potential to stretch and expand the emerging frameworks for thinking about educational leadership. Greene (1990) suggests that becoming literate is to transcend the given and enter a field of possibilities. This begins when you are awakened to the rifts and gaps within what you think of as reality. Being articulate enough and able enough to exert yourself to name what you see around you involves the courage and skill to use language, and to name these absences and silences. This does not, as we have heard in these stories, always involve great heroism or self-sacrifice, however it does mean, “seeing clearly with our own eyes and speaking clearly in our own voices” (Greene, 1995, p. 111). As we become literate about the

meaning of our experiences we may become empowered to “face the world as it is” (Arendt, 1958).

The stories we tell draw attention to the tensions, the ambiguities, and the possibilities of practice, e.g., the authentic self in practice, dealing with conflict, demonstrating respect and care, setting standards and clear expectations, demonstrating transparency and accountability, being willing to collaborate and listen, creating safe and challenging space, naming and framing “reality” through conversation, showing emotion and courage. These are not problems to be solved as much as tensions to be lived with as best as possible (Jardine, 1997). These stories offer evidence of the fecundity of the individual case and of the importance of bringing experience to language – engaging with it – to encounter the self, and to be open to the other. In creating text from our experience with the local and particular I am reminded of Umberto Eco’s notion of the “open text” where the reader of a story brings his or her defined culture, “sets of tastes, personal inclinations, and prejudices” (cited in Greene, 1995, p. 116). This openness is central to hermeneutic understanding. In this way, the reader’s own perspective effects and modifies comprehension of the work. As I share my stories with colleagues, advisors and friends, they add their reading to the mix and through this conversation the interpretation of the story; its soul or meaning, shifts and changes and grows. Freire speaks about this as, “rewriting the texts that we read in the texts of our lives...and rewriting our lives in the light of those texts” (cited in Greene, 1995, p. 116).

Much of my biographical experience involving leadership moments is intersubjective and messy, yet generative of learning. For example, “Frozen in Bogotá” reconstructs an instance when I am unable to act due to my own pre-judgments of what

was expected and required in the moment. "Vulnerable Leadership" explores the presence of caring and emotion as a signal of intimacy with our work and our world. "Learning to Sew" is a vocational metaphor for the link between "educators of adults" and the "friendship of mutual concern, of care and respect for the others' practice of citizenship...their real possibilities" (Forester, 1996, p. 201). The story within a story explores what it means to "risk" one's prejudices through a dialogue about a seemingly simple story. Through writing and reading each of these stories, I become more literate about the meaning of my own experience not only in dialogue with myself but in dialogue with others, and with theory. To make my own perspectives available to others and theirs to mine, we become capable of seeing, in this case, lived experiences of educational leadership, from many vantage points, many horizons.

MacIntyre (1984) suggests that it is the stock of stories that we are a part of that creates a sense of what matters and what actions should be taken. Ultimately, the stories we tell are all about values, about what matters to the narrator, and what matters to the story listeners. It is the hope of phenomenology and hermeneutics that we can "get back to life as it is actually lived" (Jardine, 1998, p.12) and look for not only the meaning of each but for relationships between the stories. The stories belong together. Although they are not identical, they are about what matters to these educators of adult learners: justice, equality, responsibility, and care. It is clear from the stories here that the co-narrators take their vocations as educators very seriously, and within this role recognize what it means to be good educational leaders. The stories, like the "data"¹⁴ they are created from, offer gifts from which even the smallest of gestures or the sewing of simple shift dresses

¹⁴ "Data" comes from the Latin word meaning "that which is given."

become generative of new understandings. And it is in telling the stories of our lives dialogically that we begin to learn a new language and understand anew. The most powerful lessons in educational leadership are found within the small beats of quotidian experience, in the taken for granted, the partially understood, and the largely unspoken moments. In these details, so easily forgotten, lie our humanity, our leadership, and our vocation as educators.

Bringing the Threads of the Conversation Together

Shaking up, transgressing, and speaking up in everyday interactions are reoccurring themes no matter where our educational practices are situated - in the community, the university, the dance studio, the college, the classroom or the boardroom. These stories and dilemmas draw attention to the difficulties and the possibilities.

This conversation began with examples of the various ways teachers or mentors have led us to understand our own leadership capacities - those who inspired and encouraged us and those who did not. Specific moments of teaching and planning educational programs included interactions with individual learners, actions taken to develop new programs in response to change, responses to conflict, and the importance of integrity and congruence between one's beliefs and values and educational approach.

Concerning the notion of courage in educational leadership, is it, as Murdock suggests, a lack of understanding that prevents educators from acting or taking deliberate leadership? Struggling to understand seems to involve some level of courage. Although it may be that we are not all in a position to understand the complexities faced by students or audiences - not all of us are policy makers or have positional power - but in one way or another, the stories bring to life a wide-awakeness and a willingness to respond on the basis of our understanding. Much of this courage is expressed in actions of initiating

and sustaining conversations to convince, persuade, inform, challenge, resist, and transform individuals and organizations. Perhaps facing the world as it is means beginning with an open stance and courage to risk one's own pre-understanding, risk-taking that comes about in genuine conversation with others.

Bennis (1989) suggests that expressiveness is a fundamental leadership dimension and the stories illustrate, too, the various ways to express, in words and deeds, our moral ideals. Being expressive may begin in the community and family one grows up in, or when other teacher/leaders leave their imprint by expressing their own values and beliefs openly. Expressiveness can also be developed through focused and intentional reflecting and speaking about experience.

With language we have some power to shape action. With language we may invite others into a genuine conversation about the things that concern, puzzle, or outrage. Not to say, "look at me," but to point to what others should pay attention. And there are so many areas of adult education that require attention: Directing the attention of government and the tourism industry to the need for innovative models for training and job placement; directing the university's attention to the particular needs of working adult students who want to complete their university degrees; directing the attention through dance to a spiritual dimension; and directing the attention of art students, trainers, and unemployed adults to see, and express, and develop their capabilities through educative encounters. These acts of educational leadership go beyond the routine and repetition and reproduction of our lives. Acts of educational leadership involve making meaning through genuine conversations, orchestrating conflicting expectations and what good education means. Through talk and silence, and in the surefootedness of real time is our everyday educational leadership.

Creating and telling and retelling these stories invites possibilities for playing with their

interpretation, dwelling in the meanings, learning from them, and generating new, more inclusive, understandings of educational leadership. As a participant co-narrator of this conversation about educational leadership - a kind of multi-threaded and textured tapestry - my understanding is challenged, shifted, expanded, and enriched. These stories will, I believe, encourage and inspire others, to "face the world as it is."

For all of this I do thank you very much.

* * *

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