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REFLECTIVE TEACHING BUILDS LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Matthias Meiers

> …the familiar carries an air of harmlessness and ease which causes us to pass lightly over what really deserves to be questioned (Heidegger, 1968, p. 154).

To me, reflective teaching means intentionally asking questions about the discursive space or the classroom culture the students and I inhabit together. Discursive space, as I understand it, comprises the patterns of human interaction and speech that are the fabric of teaching and learning. Reflective teaching is not done to students. Rather, it directly engages them as participants and co-authors of a shared project – the educational, social, and moral life of their classroom. Reflective teaching is not a project aimed at manipulating or controlling students more efficiently to suit the purposes of adults. Rather, it recognizes school children as human agents already acting within a discursive space that belongs to all the members of the class and that can be transformed to accord better with a clear moral vision of being and learning together at school. No one single-handedly delivers this moral vision to the children. We articulate it together in speech and action.

Reflective teaching constructs opportunities for teaching and learning "within the lived experience of highly problematic organizational and political conditions" (Winter, 1997). These conditions are often the familiar patterns of speech, action, and institutional organization which we all too readily accept and accommodate. Questioning estranges us from the familiar as our moral imagination envisions alternatives to it.

I address the children in my classroom as human beings and not as objects to be manipulated. Addressing school children as human beings and as partners in learning distinguishes teaching from training and represents a complex endeavor in need of educational dialogue and strategic reflection that asks questions of the kind:

- How will I enact the curriculum with my students?
- How will I come to understand the students' engagement with my teaching?
- How will I construct educational responses to the evolving classroom situation?

The strategic dimension of reflective teaching conceptualizes and maps out intentional teaching acts which directly address the children in a given classroom, which support their learning, and which are in accord with a clear moral vision of education in school.

A day of teaching at school means a series of purposeful interactions with other human beings. It means responding to them (as individuals and groups) and always thinking

ahead to the next meeting. I suspect one of the keys to thinking reflectively about teaching practice is the juxtaposition of anticipation and surprise. Invariably, what stands out in my mind and what gives me pause for thought are the moments when children surprise me and act in ways I had not expected.

Consider the following document. I found it in my action research records. Jane, a grade seven student, had been disruptive in class. I gave her a worksheet with four sentence starters. Jane's text appears here in Italics.

Date: *November 26, 1996*
ASSIGNMENT: Reflecting on a Behaviour

1. This is what happened: *Mr. Meiers was talking to the class and I asked John if he saw any spelling mistakes in my story.*
2. My teacher does not want to accept this behaviour because *he is very strict. And he wants quiet while he is talking.*
3. This behaviour does not help me and other kids function well in school because *Mr. Meiers didn't get to finish and he was interrupted.*
4. This is how I will improve my behaviour: *I will listen more and not talk while Mr. Meiers is talking. And I will respect him more!*
   Sincerely,
   Jane

Jane's response to the worksheet I had designed invited me to think more clearly about its intentions and its usefulness. I also asked myself what intentions and purposes did Jane see expressed in this exercise. Her responses highlight the fundamental contradiction between what the worksheet claims to ask for and what it actually demands. The assignment is to reflect or think about a behaviour. Yet the sentence starters already describe the behaviour as unacceptable, disruptive and in need of improvement. Instead of thinking about the purposes of an action, the student is asked to make a choice: either accept or reject an already given point of view. Acceptance means confessing to wrongdoing and providing a response that merely conforms to the rhetorical trajectory of the sentence starters. The student will then write down what the teacher wants to hear: *I interrupted the teacher; I kept the teacher from teaching and students from learning; I will be more compliant.* The other route is to write against the grain of the worksheet and to describe the behaviour as unproblematic or, perhaps, even supportive of the educational enterprise. Jane has it both ways. In her response, she brings this contradiction to the fore. I will paraphrase her words to make my meaning clear:

1. Mr. Meiers was speaking to the class and was unavailable to help me. Therefore, I asked John for help with my writing project.
2. Mr. Meiers wants quiet while he is talking. His words do not invite discussion. He wants his to be the only voice in an otherwise silent space.
3. We can only learn, when Mr. Meiers is allowed to finish his monologues. Then, we can return to our projects and start helping each other.

4. Silent listening to Mr. Meiers is a sign of respect and good behaviour – but it doesn't serve any other purposes.

Jane essentially apologizes for engaging in an educational conversation with a classmate while I was (merely) talking or, perhaps, even babbling. She attributes no educational purpose to my speech and still promises to submit passively to my monologues because this is a demand of her schoolteacher. Jane helped me recognize a disciplinary measure that tried to pass itself off as an invitation to reflect. In this sense, the assignment was an exercise in confused educational strategy.

At the time I decided to retire this worksheet (and others like it) and to create explicit opportunities for talking and writing about learning. Over the years, I have learned that incidental conversations with students offer possibilities for mutual understanding. Dialogue allows teachers and students to form and act upon intentions that complement each other. I believe that I, as a teacher, am required to help develop the moral dimension of this classroom conversation.

Last week on Friday, James and Marion, two Senior One immersion students in my Français class, asked me not to continue having students act out or read the short stories they had written in the course of our novel study. Marion insisted, "I just want to hand in my written work. The oral presentations yesterday were awful. The kids make me nervous because they talk when I am trying to speak." James added, "Face it Mr. Meiers, right now we're not ready for oral presentations. I think we really need more help with grammar. Just look at all the errors you circled in my story." I asked, "What if we present our stories, learn grammar and listen to each other at the same time?" "I'd like to see you try," answered Marion. The students knew how to listen to each other but this week they simply had not done it very well. On Thursday, a third of the class had quietly conversed on and off during these presentations. I understood Marion's sense of frustration. The students speaking to the class needed an attentive audience. The audience needed to have a more clearly defined role during the presentations. After my conversation with James and Marion, I started to outline a framework for the morning's presentations. I decided to give the following directions in the classroom:

1. Instead of reading or acting out the entire story, quickly summarize the plot of your story.
2. Read or act out one of the highlights of the story.
3. Write one sentence that you are having (grammatical) trouble with on the whiteboard.
4. We (this includes your teacher) will copy the sentence and edit it with partners.
5. We will help you edit or correct your sentence.
6. I will, by special request, offer mini-grammar lessons which explain any corrections or editorial changes.

This lesson plan worked out remarkably well. There were no distracting private conversations. The students clearly were engaged. The talk shifted to helping presenters edit difficult sentences and to working with grammatical concepts. I believe

what made the difference was not the structure of the lesson itself but the manner in which the activity was situated in the classroom conversation and the manner in which it responded to the students' purposes. Marion wanted me to structure the presentations in a way that minimized disruptive talk. James and several of his friends had already asked me for help with grammar during the week.

The moral dimension of our discursive space calls on us to listen to each other and to give meaning to our activity. At first, I thought that the students would enjoy hearing each other's stories and act like a community of authors sharing and exchanging story ideas. However, I had already read their drafts and circled grammatical errors. These circles had probably shifted their attention away from plot development to grammar. I believe the enjoyment of story and plot is at the heart of writing narrative. I also believe that our French Immersion classroom is not an insular speech community free to develop its own linguistic conventions – which might be meaningless or jarring to other speakers. An important part of teaching "grammar" means helping students recognize the contradictions between the idiosyncratic language use that might be functional in our classroom and the conventions of speech and writing accepted in the world outside.

I wish to emphasize that reflective teaching essentially privileges thinking about the discursive space of the classroom in ways that understand teaching as a moral and strategic conversation with a group of real-life human beings. The pedagogical strategies employed by the reflective teacher help school children explore and describe:

1. the manner in which they relate to each other as human beings and help each other learn;
2. the ways they create, maintain, and develop an educational discourse community that welcomes all the students;
3. the connections they make between the classroom curriculum and the world.

The teacher, of course, has a pivotal and ongoing role to play in helping to set the stage for the children's thoughtful engagement with their individual and collective experiences at school. However, there are no recipes for reflective teaching and learning. There are no black-line masters and no simple scripts which might guide us in our efforts to be more thoughtful and more effective in helping children live experiences of *learning in community*. The answer lies largely in our ability as teachers to engage thoughtfully with the school children in our care and with each other as colleagues who can bring a diversity of experiences to bear on our teaching projects. The answer also lies in our willingness to question and transform familiar notions and habitual practices which really deserve to be questioned. The following example may help make my meaning clear.

Last year when I read Shakespeare's *Henry V* with a group of Senior One students for the first time, I treated the text as a self-contained object. I told them, "We are going to study this play. I know for some of you the language might get in the way but I will help you get through it." I handed out copies of the textbook, organized the students into groups of three, and asked them to read the first Act together. While they were reading I moved through the classroom handing out photocopies of four key passages that I

wanted them to re-read, discuss and translate into Modern English. The students immediately focussed on the excerpts, situated them in Act One, and worked out translations referring to the explanatory footnotes provided by the editors. This non-linear way of reading did not worry me because I saw this way of reading the play as a mere precursor to watching Kenneth Branagh's filmed production of the play. We moved through the entire play at breakneck speed, discussed and compared our translations with each other and then watched the film. The students learned how to negotiate Shakespeare's sixteenth century English with greater confidence and succeeded in understanding the plot. However, I saw little enthusiasm for the play and they were grateful that I moved through it quickly. I began to suspect that my decision to present *Henry V* merely as a text for study foreclosed reading the play as a history.

Iser (1978) in his book *The Act of Reading* describes how the reader moves or journeys through a text without ever being able to view it in its totality. The text "can only be imagined by way of different consecutive phases of reading" (p. 109). Furthermore, different readers will always encounter different ambiguities, blanks, or gaps in the text. In response to these gaps, readers draw on their present understanding of the text to project tentative interpretations or guesses onto it (p. 167). Reading, Iser suggests, is a conversation with the printed text. What we bring to this conversation is, therefore, always a matter of consequence.

This year I decided to have the students read *Henry V* as a history. I asked myself: what do they need to bring to their conversation with Shakespeare's text? I also asked myself: is it really necessary to translate and interpret the text itself extensively, if the students already bring knowledge and understanding to their reading. Keeping these two questions in mind, I decided to work against my conception of a Shakespeare play as a self-contained unit of study. I decided to read *Henry V* as a political play and to situate it, at least initially, in an exploration of American foreign policy towards Iraq. We began with these themes:

1. A razor-thin majority in the Electoral College sends Bush to the White House even though his opponent has won the majority of the popular vote. Some political observers forecast a weak, ineffectual presidency. However, in response to the events of September 11, 2001, he defines himself as a decisive leader and acts to remove the Taliban rulers of Afghanistan.

2. Henry V inherits an unstable regime (and many political enemies) from his father, Henry IV, who has unlawfully imprisoned and murdered Richard II. Henry IV lying on his deathbed suggests that a successful military invasion of France would allow his son to assert his royal authority.

3. In public discourse, Blair and Bush state the necessity of military action to disarm Saddam and liberate the people of Iraq. They argue this war is morally necessary.

4. Using a veiled threat (the possible expropriation of church property in England), Henry V convinces the Archbishop of Canterbury to support the English claim to the

> French crown. Canterbury provides financial support and moral sanction for an invasion of France. In public discourse, Henry presents himself as a Christian king patiently asserting a rightful claim.

I believe that situating *Henry V* in the present and in the domain of international diplomacy also invited the students to relate personally to the experiences of the characters in Shakespeare's text and in Kenneth Branagh's film. Personal readings and perspectives emerged in classroom discussions and essays. The students clearly had a conversation with the play as they read the printed script and the visual text of Kenneth Branagh's film.

David wrote,

> I don't really think it was right for Henry to attack France for the crown but he did have some reasons. He tried to bargain peacefully, but failed. The Dauphin insulted and provoked him (not a good reason) and being King of France would improve England and his popularity. There are few morally acceptable reasons to conquer a nation. The only one I can think of is if the country is a terrible threat to others.
> I think, if I required the crown, I would have tried peacefully again for it, and, failing that, I would have prepared greatly before attacking.

Meghan wrote,

> The women of medieval times had little rights or no rights. They had really little to no say in what happened to them. You could see with Princess Catherine when she sees her father, the King of France, her smile fades, her father almost scares her, one wrong step and she would be in a lot of trouble at court.

These responses suggest how reflective teaching invites personal and collective engagement with the curriculum. The students offered a wide range of responses even though most admired King Henry for his courage in the face of danger. These students politely disagreed with my view of Henry as a reckless leader who put the lives of thousands of people on the line for the sake of his personal ambitions. That was a good sign. A plurality of perspectives emerges in a discursive space where the participants value thinking and learning. We were engaged in a dialogue "each one speaking out of a distinct perspective and yet open to those around" (Greene, 1995, p. 156).

The reflective stance may also give rise to acts of educational leadership in the professional conversation. In essence, educational leadership means setting the stage for critical inquiry and reflection among teachers. This conversation does not take familiar patterns of interaction and being together at school for granted. Rather, this conversation is a thoughtful questioning of these patterns and an imaginative search for other possibilities that express the moral purposes of our coming together at school. Educational leadership means not only valuing and caring about children's classroom and school experiences but also viewing colleagues as learning and developing human beings.

Participants in this dialogue ask questions of the kind:

- How do we overcome institutional constraints that isolate teachers?
- What opportunities for professional learning do we create for each other?
- What are the children learning? What are we learning about teaching in the classroom?
- How are we treating each other as human beings and educators?
- How do we receive and respond to other professional perspectives?
- How do we help each other draw on the professional conversation that is occurring outside our school?

The conversations that arise around such questions are essential to the creation, maintenance, and development of educational discourse communities in our profession. What really matters is that people are given the opportunity to think about their experiences and imaginatively work out better ways of acting and speaking together. Dialogue allows us to form moral intentions and then to act responsibly in concert with other human beings.

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THE INNER WORLD OF CHILDREN AT SCHOOL

Cedric Cullingford
University of Huddersfield, England
The School of Education and Professional Development

The concept of Imagination tends to get a poor press, certainly in some developed countries where the emphasis on skills and competition is so rife. Imagination there is linked to something fey and abstract, a "soft " idea associated with the luxuries of art or the pleasures in learning exhibited in the very young. It was not always thus. In the nineteenth century, thanks to Coleridge, the idea of Imagination was at the forefront of critical thinking about the way the mind works and develops. There was no suspicion that the concept would somehow undermine all the mercantile enterprise of the time. Today we seem to be suffering from an overdose of utilitarianism, with some powerful myths about rational and pragmatic humankind.

This is a pity. It is also mistaken. There is nothing so powerful and central as the concept of Imagination. It is not something extra but the basis of the way in which intelligence works.

The young child comes into the world fully charged with reason, and with the need to find explanations. The curiosity that is shown is intense and is concentrated on analysing the circumstances and the people that is before the puzzled gaze. Of all the many examples of the intelligence of young children nothing could be more revealing than their social learning. They are aware of the emotional state of other people; they are even aware of the power of the point of view, and have early command of that most sophisticated of social practices, being able to detect truth from falsehood.

This type of intelligence is dependent on being able to see beyond oneself, to be able to enter into the minds of others and to realise the complexity of vision which is quite a different matter from the egotistical or self-centred point of view. This is real imagination.

If intelligence is so conspicuous in young children, so is their need for relationships. In all the research on the development of character (e.g. The Causes of Exclusion) it is clear that the need for a close relationship with an adult is paramount. This relationship, however, is not a sentimental one. No amount of warmth or affection is enough in itself. The relationship needs to be based on a mutual regard of other, shared, things – whether events or things seen and discussed. It is when there is real curiosity shown and extended that young children begin to grasp the meaning of the world they are in. It is by the mutual analysis of the environment that children learn their own identity, and develop the confidence to speculate and infer. This, again, is the heart of imagination.

The mind is not an instrument waiting for action; it functions according to the information it receives. As far as young children are concerned the amount of information that is flung at them is huge. This matters because they have not learned how to discriminate between information which is important and that which is not. Most of us survive by simple ignoring the bulk of what we hear or read. We have learned to forget easily- can you recall what you heard on the news this morning? - and to filter out that part of new information which might be disturbing. Young children have no such tricks. They have a neutral stance to information and they have to give equal weight to all they imbibe. Thus they are continually thinking about how to make sense of the facts and opinions that confront them, and make sense of it all in their own idiosyncratic way.

Imagination, like this state of barbed neutrality, depends on material, and the ability to be engaged in it. It needs stuff to feed on. If this is lacking then the consequences are serious. We neglect the intellectual needs of our young at our peril. The lack of fostering of the imagination is not just an absence of knowledge but a decaying of the attitudes and learning to the point of autism. In this way imagination is not a luxury but an essential.

Young children are also very liable to trauma; things can easily go wrong. For some, the excluded ones, this is obvious, but all have experienced the kinds of hurt that linger beneath the surface, sometimes being revealed in breakdowns. The wonder is, given what human beings do to each other, that so many survive relatively emotionally intact!

There are several ways in which children are exposed to trauma. One way is the sense of humiliation, of being exposed as missing the point, or being caught out. The most trivial incident can cause anguish, from an inability to tie a shoe lace to the failure to tell the time. Those little experiences are part of a sense of not knowing what is expected. Far from seeing what the rules and common understandings imply the individual languishes in the humiliation of being in the unique position of not knowing, when every one else does. Here, again, the freedom of confidence that derives from imagination is thwarted.

One of the earliest memories, which we all share, and which we still hear talked about, is the sense of unfairness. Nothing lies more at the heart of the difficulties of school than the perception of being "picked on" or being singled out. And yet the idea of unfairness causes problems because it is so deeply rooted. That idea of neutrality mentioned earlier, that feeling of trying to make sense of the world as it presents itself in a variety of forms, from actions to the media, leads to a profound sense of inequality. Young children have a strong realisation of the world itself, in terms of individuals and nations, as unfair. This gives them both a sense of insecurity in their own positions and a basis in which to scrutinise what takes place in school.

School can be a place where all the worst fears are realised. This is what makes teachers' jobs so hard, and why it can be an heroic struggle to overcome the real difficulties that children bring with them.

What, then, can be done? The first thing is simply to understand the situation rather than deny it. The system of school can be very trying. A famous music critic once described Wagner's music thus: "Wonderful moments.... Terrible half hours." School can seem like that. Whilst there are instances of joy, deriving from a particular lesson or a particular friend, the general impression that pupils give is of unrelenting tedium and a series of chores, punctuated by complex inventions of means of escaping work. It is no wonder that when pupils are asked to define the phrase that they associate most with teachers, they say that teachers always say, "Do it again."

Schools for most pupils are an experience that at best is "alright", to which they have to submit. It is almost geared, by its system of tests, to foster difference and comparison. Some of these are public examinations but the sense of individual comparisons, of ability and popularity, are there all the time. The scope for exposing the weaknesses of pupils is endless. We have all heard of occasional teachers who seem to take a delight in humiliating the ignorance and inadequacies of individual pupils, and there are many stories of pupils being made to stand in front of the class, or stand on a chair, or forced to write on the blackboard to reveal stupidity. The wonder of it is that teachers resist the temptation to do this, given the human tendency to relish just such exposures. Other pupils enjoy this nefarious pleasure too, until it happens to them.

The problem for schools is that such painful episodes happen more often without deliberation. There is nothing intentional in the overheard remark or the inadvertent telling off or realisation that the pupils have not done what was asked. Schools are places where, given the number and circumstances of pupils, all kinds of difficult and hurtful matters can take place, despite the best endeavours of the teachers. The first task of the sensitive teacher, therefore, is to realise this.

The traumas of schooling are not, however, confined to the levels of bullying or being picked on. They are more to do with the lack of imagination in a given curriculum, with so much to be learned, with the raison d'être of learning the ability to be tested on what is recalled. The pupils profound need to have their minds extended, through the exploration of the most difficult questions, and the satisfying of curiosity, is not always satisfied.

Let us go back to the beginning, to the needs of young children to have relationships and to share in the analysis of the world they find themselves in. It is in these earliest needs that we find the ground rules to help them.

There are certain attitudes that teachers can take which will gradually and inevitably have a strong, if subtle, influence on the pupils. These can be developed despite the constraints of a given curriculum, the demands of the examination system and the sometimes brutally narrow expectations of policy makers. In fact, if these attitudes were allowed to be pervasive, the systems would have their highest expectations surpassed.

The first rule is to keep asking open questions. Most of the curriculum is experienced as a closed book. The facts are given; they are to be tested. The secret is to try to guess

what it is that the teacher wants you to say. All the intelligence of the pupil is diverted to finding the easiest means of fulfilling low expectations. Having nothing but the right or wrong answers is stifling, where "doing it again and again" is the only option. It is when there are alternative answers, and opinions, that questions become interesting, and worth answering.

To ask open questions sounds easier than it is. The pupils have been taught so long that there is only one answer that they will treat every question as if it were closed, as if the questioner had designs. "Why does he want to know?" Open questions imply knowing the curriculum well enough that alternatives are possible, and believing that asking more demanding questions will aid deeper understanding. "What if?" is a starting point that actually elicits a greater awareness of the truth.

Asking open questions liberates the pupils. It gives them a sense of their own identity and their own learning. It makes them realise that they have a voice that is listened to.

Nothing is so enabling as being personally engaged in learning. On the face of it this might sound absurd, and yet it is quite clear that even whilst ostensibly learning, pupils are disengaged.

One example of employing open questions is the use of experiments, where pupils have to speculate on their own formulae to explain phenomena. When testing the properties of different balls, of different materials, to bounce, the experiment itself, designing an instrument that is consistent and reliable, is not as interesting as the guessing beforehand of what might happen, and more to the point, why.

The second ground rule follows from the first. This is to set up a critical dialogue, to encourage the pupils to disagree and to speculate. I have seen this done in ways that have amazed me, with teachers deliberately challenging pupils in a confrontational way, so asserting their own authority that the pupils were provoked into having to question the right of the teacher to do that. This meant that the teacher was no longer in role, but someone who had to be approached with reason and logic, with confidence and a sense of not putting up with the usual patters of classroom assertions. I have also often seen the most unlikely of shy pupils blossom into vigorous defences of a point of view.

There are any number of controversial issues that are of the greatest importance. There is no subject in the curriculum that has not got a series of issues that are worthy of debate. And yet how often do we find argument? The pupils are on a daily basis, confronted by public issues on which there are many disagreements, from the waging of war to the problems with the environment. And yet how often are these subject acknowledged in school? Pupils, for the most part, talk about them to each other. They are influenced by overheard remarks. And yet these issues are rarely related to the work of school.

Arguments should be fun. They should not be confrontational; as if there were only one point of view that is correct (that is mine). Open questions mean an iterative dialogue.

One of the great aims of education should be to enable people to think for themselves. At universities, as is schools, a lot of effort is spent in getting undergraduates to realise that there is not just one whole body of knowledge, that presented by the professor, that is right. They have to learn to be skeptical, but they have also to learn to go beyond that. They have to learn that in the end one has to find one's own point of view. It was Plato who described the stages people go through towards understanding, gradually having the capacity to employ a sense of irony. The sadness is that so many people appear to be stuck in earlier stages.

There are many verbal games that can be introduced to help both the manipulation of language and the engagement of reason. Something as simple as talking on a given subject for a minute, without preparation, can reveal both the challenges and the abilities of pupils. As in all these cases, practise improves performance. It does not simply repeat it.

One more essential rule that is of great importance has already been implied. This is to relate the curriculum to the real world. This affects, for example, the way in which mathematics makes sense when it is related, say, to how many cubes can be made to fit inside a package. It also makes use of one of the gifts that are held in common amongst pupils of all kind of ability; parody. To talk about style is difficult. To be sensibly critical, and describe the flaws of a piece of work is demanding. Parody contains all the subtlety without the need for a special language. It brings out the innate imaginative ability and signifies an awareness of the actual. It also fosters a sense of awareness of the manipulation of points of view, of politics and advertisements.

Let us take just one more example of the difference between the kinds of routines that some schools have been known to rely on (in the UK at least) and what could be done. When children complain that much of what they do is routine they have in mind instructions like "Write a story" or even "Write ten stories". What is meant by this is a wholly unnatural demand to fill one side of A4 with random actions. No-one in real life, least of all Chekhov, would write a short story of 400 words. The demand is entirely an artifact of school. It is like those exercises when pupils have to answer a series of artificial questions based on a poem.

"Twas Brillig and the slithy tove..."

"What kind of tove was it?" etc. Pupils engaged in such exercises need no knowledge of what it means to be able to answer the artificial question. The writing of stories rarely relates either to the stories that the pupils themselves read or the subject matter that interests real writers.

Using the principles invoked, what can one do? One way is to take a series of picture postcards, of works of art or landscapes, without words, and ask the pupils to imagine they are an illustration in a real book. The task is to write the page opposite; imagine what might be there. In real life it might start in the middle of the sentence. It would almost certainly not be about the illustration. To write the page would mean having to

understand something about the whole book; the characters and their dialogue; and the sense of the ending. All this would be indicated, without having to write an 80,000 word novel. The short parody would be both realistic and suggestive. It would do far more for the imagination than any artificial exercise.

This is just one example of what could be done. The most important point, however, is to work out one's own strategies, using all the innate and rich imagination that teachers bring to their task. One needs the courage to realise that pursuing such a line, rather than merely delivering a set curriculum, will allow the pupils to perform better in every way.

The real message, however, goes deeper than this. The first task is to understand the experience of school from the pupil's point of view. They are vulnerable and we must do as much as possible to mitigate this. They need to have their imagination developed simply to survive. They often come to us already damaged. The job we, as teachers, are then landed with is to try to alleviate a system in which human beings attempt, so it seems, to bring out the worst in each other. It says a lot for human resilience that we still have so many good teachers.

For more information about Cedric Cullingford see:

http://www.hud.ac.uk/schools/education/research/seducic.htm

LIVING OUR EDUCATIONAL VALUES

David T. Hansen
Teachers College
Columbia University
New York, USA

I want to talk about educational values that are familiar to every serious-minded educator, but that sometimes get submerged in the rush of events and our modern-day busyness. To set the stage, I begin with a quote from the Hungarian writer, Georg Konrad, one of many Eastern Europeans who spoke out against Soviet oppression long before the fall of the Berlin wall. He, too, called our attention to values that easily get lost from view, and he employed the image of “light”:

> Whether you are free or not will always be decided in the very next minute. You could be on a street corner waiting for a bus, in your room waiting for a telephone call, in your bed waiting for a dream… Our freedom is an impatient master; it doesn’t give us much time to rest… ‘This is what I am; this is what I can do,’ we complain. You are more, you can do more,’ the master says calmly. ‘Make room for light in you, for you are the room and you are the light. When you get tired, the room grows dark’.

I believe there is a recurrent need for us who educate to keep the “light” shining upon the values built into our work.

What are these educational values? They can be expressed in many ways. They include the following:

- expanding learning possibilities and opportunities for human beings, not contracting them;
- deepening human insight, not rendering it more shallow;
- enriching human understanding, not impoverishing it;
- broadening human knowledge, not rendering it more narrow.

This familiar set of values could be called a conception of “moral education.” That is, if we reach deep into our educational hearts and souls, it seems to me that we discover it is better, or Good with a capital “G,” to expand possibilities and opportunities for students, and to deepen, broaden, and enrich their insight, knowledge, and understanding. But I prefer to think of these values as capturing a conception of education, plain and simple. I don’t think we must insist on using the qualifier “moral” since in this outlook ALL educational practice potentially shapes who and what we are becoming as people (and this includes we educators as well as our students). At this deep level of meaning, whatever differences may exist between moral and non-moral education dissolve.

To be sure, there are times when it makes sense to speak of the "moral" dimensions of education. The word can help spotlight the fact that education is more than the transmission of information and facts from supplier (we educators) to consumer (our students). After all, computers these days can often do a better job of information transmission. To speak of education as a moral endeavour reminds us that we are talking about the growth and development of whole persons, not just of disembodied minds (or disemminded bodies, for that matter). I see no reason to shy away from speaking of education as a moral as well as an academic affair, just so long as we don't thereby bracket moral learning into a Tuesday morning lesson on "courage" and presume that everything else that happens in the school and classroom has no effect whatsoever on the actual soulful constitution of the young people placed in our care.

I employ the phrase "soulful constitution" because I believe education at heart has to do with cultivating the human spirit. Education is not exclusively a matter of what philosophers call epistemology, i.e. of knowledge as cognition or as acquiring information. Information is easier to acquire (not "easy" but easier) than what is captured in terms like enriching, broadening, and deepening human insight, understanding, and perspective. Those terms point to an outlook toward life, the world, the self, that takes considerable time and a great deal of sustained nurturing to develop.

There are many philosophers and writers who have thought about education in these fundamental terms. I want to comment briefly on three of them and their most well-known books: Plato and *The Republic*, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and *Emile*, and John Dewey and *Democracy and Education*. These books are the greatest works of all time on education. They are the most thoughtful, comprehensive, critical, and universal in scope, despite some features that reflect their times and that we can happily let go today. Plato, Rousseau, and Dewey understood that education is not exclusively or even primarily a matter of knowledge as information acquisition, but is much more a matter of a quest for meaning, of appreciating the potential richness of our experience if we understand how to be alive in the present moment, and of equipping human beings with the skills and outlooks to cultivate flourishing lives. The three great books I've listed do not contain laundry lists of information that people ought to master. Rather they present profound, moving accounts of the shaping of the soul, or self, a process in which knowledge is but one element among several.

For Plato, education means shaping us into persons with harmony and rhythm between the various facets of our lives -- his vision is heavily dependent on images from music. He portrays a fusion of the intellectual, emotional, and moral dimensions of who and what we are. (Incidentally, the English title for his book *The Republic* is misleading. That title is a Latinization of the original Greek, which is better translated as "Constitution" – literally, how we are constituted as human beings.) For Rousseau, education is a matter of shaping the human soul, or self, into something whole and integrated. He was deeply troubled by the ways his contemporary society (in 1762) seemed to pull people in multiple directions at one and the same time. He was worried about how people too often become fragmented, and torn hither and yon, by contradictory societal customs and internal psychological mechanisms. Like Plato, he

generates an image of education as a process of cultivating harmony between the facets of our lives. Finally, for Dewey education means fueling our souls, or selves, to take on the disposition of wanting to learn from all that we encounter in life. “An interest in learning from all the contacts of life,” he concludes his book, “is the essential moral interest. ”In other words, education should help us learn from both the bad as well as the good – to seek to confront challenge and difficulty and learn from it, rather than to seek to learn only from what is fun and easy. Dewey believed this disposition is necessary for a genuine democracy, in which responsibilities are shared and communicated.

When I say that these famous philosophers do not privilege information acquisition in their philosophies of education, I do not mean that they are “anti-information” or “anti-knowledge.” Quite on the contrary, knowledge is a crucial element in education; but it is one element, and it is potentially useless, or even dangerous, unless wedded with an expansive outlook toward life and the human prospect. Moreover, in an era of hyper-specialization like ours, and with a relentless juggernaut of pressure to standardize educational practice (consider the mania for testing in the United States at the moment), Plato, Rousseau, and Dewey remind us of the need to keep things in perspective and in proportion, to remember to think of the children and youth we teach in the fullness and totality of their developing humanity. That outlook is simply not reducible to information acquisition or knowledge. Human beings are knowers, to be sure, but they are also players, thinkers, dreamers, makers, poets, producers, and much more. To come into these possibilities is a matter of the education of soul and spirit, of the full development of our personhood.

What conditions can most support this broad view of education? What conditions in schools and classrooms can help ensure that education for children and youth will be a matter of deepening, broadening, and enriching insight, knowledge, and understanding, rather than rendering them more shallow, narrow, or impoverished?

I will not nominate programs, structures, curricula, or organizational principles. I don’t believe we lack for those (if anything, we’re overwhelmed by the choices). I prefer to appeal to your own philosophies of education, on the principle that having a philosophy of education is perhaps the most practical thing of all for an educator – certainly, far more so than any particular grab bag of pedagogical or administrative skills or techniques. Without a philosophy of education, we have no guide, no compass, no sense of direction, and no mainspring for judgment that tells us: this is good and worth doing, that is not good and not worth doing.

So I will nominate states of mind, attitudes, orientations, points of view, which I believe can support a holistic view of education. They include:

- a habit of awareness and attentiveness;
- a habit of critical appreciation;
- a commitment to ideals;
- faith in educational things unseen.

I will ground these dispositions by talking briefly about three well-regarded teachers with whom I worked closely over a period of several years. I observed over 400 classes they and a group of other teachers taught as part of a long-term project looking at the moral life of schools and classrooms.

Ms. Smith is a social studies teacher in an independent middle school, and has been teaching for over 15 years. Mr. Peters is currently in a doctoral program, but when I worked with him he was teaching World Religions and Christian ethics in a Catholic high school for boys. Ms. Walsh is an English teacher in a public high school, and has been a teacher for over 25 years. Their urban schools and communities differ from one another is noteworthy ways. However, I want to touch on aspects of who they are as persons, aspects which cut across differences in setting and which shed light on the conditions for learning in schools and classrooms.

In the middle of one of the years that I spent observing their practice, a sixth grade student in Ms. Smith's school attempted suicide. This action threw the entire school off its stride. Many of the child's peers were deeply troubled, and some began to share their concerns directly with Ms. Smith. To help them regain their composure and confidence, Ms. Smith began to invite individual students to sit with her during her otherwise free lunch period. In a matter of days, the lunch group mushroomed to some twenty-five students. It began to take on the feel of a formal gathering. In due time, students' anxieties about their now fully recovered peer eased. However, the lunch group continued for a few days more as students took advantage of the opportunity to share other troubles and worries with Ms. Smith. These included concerns about the climate of the school and about how other adults were treating them.

Meantime, one morning in April of that same year, Mr. Peters' Catholic school (located about a mile and a half away from Ms. Smith's school) was preparing for a memorial service for a student named Robert Williams who had been shot and killed several days before in a public park. During the home room period just before the service, in one of Mr. Peters' colleague's classes, the teacher quietly asked her students if they wanted to talk about their feelings. After a moment of silence, a boy raised his hand. "In my journal here," offered the boy, holding up his writing notebook that is a required part of Mr. Peters' religion class, "I wrote about how depressed I was to hear of Robert's being murdered. I was afraid. So I just stayed inside, I didn't want to go out, I was afraid what happened to him would happen to me. But then Mr. Peters, he said once that 'Goodness rules the world'. I asked him if he still believed that now and he says he still sees Good overall, and I feel I have to come outside, I want to see that Goodness, because there must **be** something Good if Mr. Peters sees it and believes it. "The teacher acknowledged the boy’s words in a manner that signalled her esteem for how Mr. Peters works with students. I heard other comments from students about Mr. Peters and his influence on them during my years as an observer in the school.

Finally, during fourth period one morning in March of that year, Ms. Walsh and her Public Speaking class were listening to a student give a speech up at the podium (their large public high school is about a mile away from the other two schools mentioned

previously). In his presentation, the student was recounting problems in the city's crowded prison system. The boy described how one inmate who was prematurely released promptly robbed a woman on the street, at the same time breaking her nose with a blow from a bottle. Ms. Walsh's students are neither unaware of nor always immune to the violence in the world. However, on hearing this report from their classmate, many students gasped spontaneously. Several girls turned and glanced at Ms. Walsh, who had stationed herself in a back corner of the classroom. Ms. Walsh's face registered both shock and anger in response to the incident reported by the student. The girls turned back to the front, still with disquieted faces as they shifted in their seats, a few audibly letting out a breath. They picked up the speaker's thread again. In the ensuing discussion, Ms. Walsh asked students to comment not just on the quality and structure of their peer's speech -- learning to evaluate each other's presentations is a central part of their work in the course -- but also to share any concerns it generated. Among other topics, the class discussed the issue of violence against women, children, and the poor, and what society should do about it.

As you've probably been able to surmise, these episodes attest to the kind of relationship with students that Ms. Smith, Mr. Peters, and Ms. Walsh have fashioned in their respective schools and classrooms. The moral dimensions of that relationship come to light in the students' words and actions, not to mention in the specific human issues they confront. Those dimensions speak volumes about the teachers' moral presence in their students' lives. Ms. Smith's students took up the offer to visit with her during her lunch period not because they regarded her as a trained suicide counsellor with expertise to share. Mr. Peters' student took seriously his teacher's words about goodness in the world not because he regarded Mr. Peters as an expert in theology or cosmology. And Ms. Walsh's students sought her reaction to an incident of violence against a woman in poverty not because they perceived her as a violence counsellor or spokesperson for women and the poor. What these students signalled is that they are morally receptive to Ms. Smith, Mr. Peters, and Ms. Walsh. They put faith in the teachers' judgment and example. Without hesitation, they turn to them in moments of doubt and concern (and of joy -- on many occasions I witnessed students happily describing their successes to the teachers). They want to know these teachers' views, attitudes, and outlooks. Moreover, their moral receptivity issues from more than the fact that the three are teachers per se. There are other teachers whom these same students do not approach when they are troubled, and who, to judge from their extensive informal testimony, do not embody qualities that draw students to heed them. The students' actions reveal the moral commitment that Ms. Smith, Mr. Peters, and Ms. Walsh enact in their everyday practice. Their commitment, or what we might call their sensibilities or orientations as teachers, infuse their work with an ethos of involvement to which their students respond. In the terms I've used here, they seek to broaden, deepen, and enrich their students' understanding, insight, and knowledge.

Lest the three teachers come across as paragons of virtue, and therefore as models beyond the reach of us moral mortals, let me underscore (as they often have to me) that they make plenty of mistakes, even after many years of experience. In my initial months of observing, before I understood their philosophies of education, I sometimes winced at

things they did in the classroom. Moreover, I know of other teachers who are more pedagogically proficient, more advanced in their understanding of subject matter and technology, and the like. But what these teachers have learned to develop is what we might call “moral knowledge. ” They **know** it is important to seek continually to understand their students better, and to find ways of connecting them meaningfully with subject matter and with questions about life. I am not implying there is an antithesis between competence and wisdom. Moral knowledge in teaching is ineffectual without pedagogical skill and subject matter knowledge. But the latter, as I contended before, may be damaging (even dangerous) without a moral vision informing their use.

Let me return now to the dispositions – or conditions – that I began with for supporting the holistic portrait of education I have been sketching here.

1. A habit of awareness and attentiveness

The three teachers’ influence in the incidents described here is unrehearsed and unpremeditated. In other words, the teachers do not undertake their everyday efforts in order to have students come see them during lunch, as did Ms. Smith’s students, or to mention them favorably in other contexts, as did one of Mr. Peters’ students. I make this perhaps obvious point to stress that the teachers do not treat their everyday work with youth as simply a means to an end. Ms. Smith created a classroom environment, through her day-by-day habitual attentiveness and awareness, that positioned students to discern that she was a person to trust. Mr. Peters’ student wrote about him because he had been affected by his teacher’s steady, serious-minded, attentive efforts. Ms. Walsh’s students turned to her when unnerved because she had showed them time and again, through her everyday awareness, that she believed in her obligations as a teacher. In other words, these educators “pay attention” to youth in an everyday, non-self-conscious, habitual way. That way of working becomes a condition for their students’ learning.

2. A habit of critical appreciation

Like good teachers everywhere, the three I’ve mentioned here are always seeking in students something that can be built upon or extended. They encourage and push their students. They do appreciate what students accomplish, but rather than letting students rest on their oars in a kind of placid self-esteem, they immediately look to the implications of what students have done. They look to where and how students can take their new insight or understanding and extend it, cultivate it, deepen it, enrich it. The teachers possess a more or less permanent disposition to be on the lookout for possibilities of growth in their students. That disposition merges with a habit of awareness and attentiveness to create conditions for learning.

3. A commitment to ideals

I have in mind here not “big ideals” like democracy, social justice, peace on earth, and the like, as valuable as those are. Rather, I mean educational ideals such as the fact

that teaching and learning can truly happen, that genuine teaching and learning can constitute the everyday life of the classroom and school. This achievement is an ideal because reality works against it happening. Societal pressures and constraints, conflicting objectives and agendas, the limitations of time and space, insufficient resources, and more, work against the realization of a perfect school or classroom. Nonetheless, serious-minded educators seem to hold true to the ideal that education itself is real and attainable. They act as if this ideal shines a light; it shows the path ahead that is worth taking. The three teachers I've introduced do not look at the world through a rose-colored lens. I am not sure they are particularly optimistic people at all. But they are hopeful, literally "full of hope" for the children and youth placed in their care. We might call them idealistic realists, or realistic idealists. Either term will do – but some such term is a necessary condition for meaningful teaching and learning.

4. Faith in educational things unseen

Pedagogical faith is another necessary condition for learning in schools and classrooms. This is so because educators never really know what students will do, or what they will or won't learn. We can never scientifically know for sure that the educational work we do guarantees a good result. Perhaps this fact accounts for the surprise and delight we feel when a student comes back years later and thanks us for our effort, often in ways that we can barely recognize. "I did that???" we wonder to ourselves. There is a great deal of unpredictability built into teaching and learning. Thank goodness, too, since we're trying to educate human beings rather than program robots. Education is always and at all times a journey into the unknown. It requires we educators to operate with faith that something good can happen if we persist in the everyday work of educating.

Let me conclude with another thought about faith in educational things unseen. American educators have heard lately from Washington DC that we must develop "scientific, evidence-based" classroom and school practices. I appreciate that call. For one thing, I appreciate science, in part because my spouse is a molecular biologist. For another thing, I agree that it is better to implement educational practices that are thoughtful and intelligent, rather than to do things that are thoughtless and unintelligent. Moreover, it is good to learn from experience about what is more likely to lead to learning, and what is least likely. But the irony here is that educators must always operate without clear-cut evidence, but rather with faith. As I suggested previously, we can never know in a kind of foolproof way that everything we've done has been successful and worthy, and is guaranteed to have a positive result. Consequently, while we do not want to abandon what works, and while we do want to pursue tirelessly new idea and methods of educating, I think we should not conceive this process as in some way eliminating the need for pedagogical faith and hope. It never will, so long as education remains a human rather than mechanistic undertaking.

What are the conditions for meaningful teaching and learning in our schools? They include a vision that education means enriching, not impoverishing, human understanding; it means broadening, not narrowing, knowledge; and it involves

deepening, not rendering more shallow, human insight. In the widest sense, education entails expanding rather than contracting human opportunities to grow and develop. Among the conditions for cultivating these values in schools and classrooms are a commitment to ideals even in the face of challenging difficulties, a faith in educational things unseen, and a habit of awareness, attentiveness, and critical appreciation. If we who educate hold true to these educational values and dispositions, I believe we will serve our students, our communities, and our societies well.

For more information about David Hansen see:

http://www.tc.columbia.edu/faculty/dth2006/home.htm

MORAL REFFLECTION IN TEACHING

Cathy Horbas

We can find many sources for what values and virtues we should teach our students that would enable them to become moral human beings. The values and virtues that are espoused in these books, methods and research articles are very similar. They include virtues such as honesty, kindness, empathy, conscience, self-control, respect, tolerance and fairness. We can find curriculum for building citizenship, self-discipline, integrity, perseverance and trustworthiness. We are told that the development of these characteristics in our students can lead them to develop a moral intelligence.

Teaching about morals or virtues to develop a moral intelligence and teaching as an inherently moral act are not the same. Teaching as an inherently moral act comes about when our teaching and the relationships that we build with our students and colleagues have embedded in them honesty, empathy, kindness, conscience, self-control, tolerance, integrity and perseverance. Hansen (2001) states,

> Teaching is a moral endeavour because it influences directly the quality of the present education moment. Teachers need not have an "aim," but they must have an orientation - - what might be called a vision of the moral life that guides their work in the classroom (p. 831).

Hansen further defines teaching as moral work with several categories all relating to the teacher as human being. He develops his ideas about teaching as moral activity into areas of practice, manner, style, tact, moral knowledge and judgement.

> Moral considerations permeate the practice of teaching. Teaching is morally layered work. On the surface are teachers' word and acts, many with obvious moral overtones. But underneath the behaviour reside teachers' values, beliefs, perceptions, judgement and more. Those underlying values and convictions help produce the infinite variety of moral messages teachers emit to their students, many of them unintended and unwilled and many of them beyond teacher's own awareness (p. 852).

How are we to come to understand these moral considerations that permeate our practice of teaching? How can we think about our practice, manner, style, tact, moral knowledge and judgement to enhance our lives as teachers and those of our students and colleagues with whom we interact every day?

Greene (1984) identifies five areas of developing conscience: the conscience of craft, membership, memory, sacrifice and imagination. These are the basis for describing what we do as teachers that makes our work inherently moral. I believe, his concepts speak to all who are involved in the educational enterprise.

The conscience of craft, he suggests, comprises the learned conventions and the ability to apply those conventions for self-reflection (p. 4). He further suggests that, as we learn to apply those conventions, we gain a sense of what is good and bad, or I would say, what is acceptable or unacceptable and what needs work to improve. We develop the ability to recognize and discriminate against accepted norms. We also develop the art and the skill to craft something meaningful. Greene further writes,

> If we cannot teach children that it matters whether they craft a good sentence, for example, then why should we be surprised that they do not craft a good life? Developing a conscience of craft is a major part of what we should routinely think of as moral education (p. 5).

Knowledge about the conventions of academic work, social norms of behaviour and professional practice become the construct of the conscience of craft. We base decisions about our life's work on the knowledge we gain from the study of math, music, coaching, etc. We apply those conventions in academically, socially and behaviourally acceptable ways. We learn to reflect on the application of these conventions helping us to form judgements about how to proceed in a particular situation.

We teach the conventions, teach them well and help students to understand that the quality of the work they do at school is important in shaping the quality of their life's work. It is through the attention to the craft that we learn how to decide what is good and what has value. As we teach students how to work at becoming better at what they do, who they are and how they come to think about their world, we are laying the foundations for them to become discerning adults who have a basis on which to make their life's decisions. The "conscience of craft" demonstrates the moral responsibility teachers have in helping children recognize and produce quality work.

Teachers and their students share the public space of a classroom. The relationship that develops between the constituent members of that classroom, school or community builds the foundation for that public space. The understandings that come to be in that public space require that private individuals act as members of a public. Greene would suggest this is the basis for conscience of membership. This state of conscience develops when private individuals ask, "Is this a good thing for me and if so, is it good for us?" *Us* could mean the global whole world. *Us* could also mean groups who will be affected by the decisions we make: our families, classrooms, schools, communities or cities.

Teachers who act in a moral manner think about and act upon this question every day. They ask themselves for example: If I present this lesson in this manner, how will the students respond? Will this particular student be able to understand the meaning of the activity? Will this activity enhance the quality of the student's understanding? How can I structure this activity so that all students will be able to participate? They ask themselves: Is this a good thing for me as the teacher, and if so, is it good for the individual student and for the class as a whole?

Greene suggests that we act in a moral fashion when we ponder questions of decision and choice considering all those involved. Teachers who think through curriculum and pedagogical questions considering themselves as well as all the individuals in the class are acting in a morally responsible way. We must consider the material and pedagogy in terms of the suitability for the teacher and the students in the context of the school and community. If we do not agree with the materials or the pedagogy, then we are obligated to consider alternatives and act upon those alternatives.

In developing empathy, Greene would suggest we ask ourselves whose interests am I expressing? Whose interests are not being expressed? How does my proposal balance the goods being sought?

It is not good enough just to consider the interests of others. We must also state these interests in front of others and enter into those interests as if those interests were our own. "Without that entry we do not have moral knowledge, only moral speculation." (p. 14). We must enter into the public arena of our classrooms, schools and communities with these questions of empathy in the forefront.

Coulter and Wiens (2000) talk about this consideration of other interests as "the visiting imagination." The visiting imagination requires us to enter into conversation, hear the stories, and listen to other viewpoints without passing any judgement on the content, thereby acting with empathy. As we visit other viewpoints, we provide ourselves with the understanding and respect of differences in which to consider the consequences of a later judgement. They write,

> Respecting diverse standpoints requires dialogue with other people, listening to their stories, and relating to their uniqueness without collapsing these divergent views into a generalized amalgam. A new kind of actor with the requisite communicative virtues is needed (p.18).

Communicative virtue begins with the ability to "visit" without prejudice. Visiting without prejudice allows us to develop an empathetic stance.

Greene suggests we consider the conscience of sacrifice. Sacrifice in this context allows us to think about the collective good rather than individual interests. It also means that we have a moral duty to attend to our own happiness. He points to groups such as women and minorities who often sacrifice themselves for the sake of others. Ethical behaviour is demonstrated in this way:

> The moral practises of promise keeping, truth telling, keeping contracts, preserving confidences – these are paradigm practices in which the voice of conscience as sacrifice speaks most firmly. The performance of perfectly gratuitous acts of grace and kindness among friends and fellow members offers experiences in self-indifference, which may point, in turn, to experiences of self- sacrifice (p. 19).

Greene has provided us with an ethical stance for professional and personal behaviours that encourage us to act with kindness and caring for no other reason than it is the right and good thing to do.

Greene then moves on to discuss conscience as memory. We cannot act without history to remind us of our membership in human communities. Greene suggests rootedness as a moral skill, the ability to take into consideration personal and collective historical remembrances, both lived and oral.

Conscience of the imagination is last on Greene's list. It is in the imagination that we are able to think about happenings in our world, as they might be possible. We cannot act in this state of conscience without the insight of craft knowledge, the rootedness of historical remembrances and the ability to speak and act for all the members. In other words, all the other states of conscience are present in the critical imagination (p. 25).

Egan in his book *Imagination in Teaching and Learning* defines imagination in this way:

> The capacity to think of things as possibly being so; it is an intentional act of mind; it is the source of invention, novelty and generosity; it is not implicated in all perception and in the construction of all meaning; it is not distinct from rationality but is rather a capacity that greatly enriches rational thinking. The imaginative person has this capacity in a high degree. It may not be invariably true that imagination involves our image-forming capacity, but image-forming is certainly common in uses of the imagination and may in subtle ways be inevitably involved in all forms of imagining; and image-forming commonly implicates emotions (p. 43).

Imagination allows us to draw on all that we know to look at our work as teachers as work of possibility with all the emotional implications and consequences of our communicative and judgemental actions. If we rely on our craft knowledge, consider the implications and experiences of lived memory and sacrifice, we can imagine a moral and ethical "intentional act of mind". We can begin something new. We can imagine the possibilities of acting, being and teaching that ground us in a vision of the human responsibility we have for each other in shaping our collective future. We can consider ourselves acting in a morally responsible way.

Hansen (2001) in his book *Exploring the Moral Heart of Teaching* says that if we consider our teaching with attention to craft, imagination, memory, and intention then we are acting morally sensible way.

He develops the idea of moral sensibility by first looking at who the teacher is as a person. In this analysis he describes the teacher as person who has the skilful art of classroom instruction as well as the "sense of imagination, a memory and a feeling, thinking, social human being… in which we take on language, customs, beliefs and more" (p. 22).

Hansen also develops the notion of how the person as teacher feels as a result of speech, acts and relationship and that this feeling "stretches the boundaries of pedagogical work" (p. 26).

As does Greene, Hansen speaks about the role of imagination in teacher-student relationships in the classroom and intertwines his ideas of how the teacher uses imagination with the sense of intention and memory. The person as teacher imagines

how the class will respond or how the community in the classroom will be affected by a particular strategy. The person as teacher relies on the imagination of past classes to re-imagine the experiences and discover their implications for the pedagogical intent of the present situation. Hansen writes,

> Memory figures into intentions, will, thought, feeling, and imagination. In fact, all of these aspects of the person in the role of teacher overlap and come to life together… The teacher remembers his original curricular plans when revising them. He strengthens his will by recalling how things went awry last week or by recalling how well the lesson went in the earlier part of that day. He fuels his thoughts about students with memories of what the have said and done so that he can connect with them better in the future. He recollects what he felt at the previous faculty meeting so that he can conduct himself at the forthcoming one more prudently. And he remembers his hopes for his classes when the school year began, how he imagined things would turn out, and thereby restarts himself as he enters a new semester (p. 27).

Hansen develops the idea of conduct as an integral part of moral sensibility. He writes,

> … a person becomes a teacher through embracing the responsibilities of the work and through engaging in the social world of the school and classroom. Conduct instantiates the person's intentions, will, thought, feeling and hope. Conduct is also a medium through which people influence each other and who they are becoming as persons. Moreover, persons can improve or enrich their conduct throughout a lifetime, and person can influence one another throughout their lifetime's (p. 31).

He contrasts conduct and behaviour as the difference between saying and acting.

Wonderful teachers think about teaching as conduct and behaviour. They think about the why, what, how, who, and when of every moment of a lesson. There is nothing in their teaching that does not have a purpose and everything they do is linked in a profound way to the pedagogy and planning of the long term learning for children. They think about each individual in the class and anticipate how they may react to a specific teaching strategy, classroom novel, or assignment.

Great teachers wonder out loud with the children in their classrooms and their colleagues as an integral part of their professional conduct. Their wonderment about teaching and learning is a masterful act in itself. Teachers construct their knowledge about teaching every day. It is a changing and ever expanding intellectual challenge that encompasses their professional stance.

Hansen concludes his analysis by combining the teacher as person and the notion of conduct into a concept of moral sensibility.

> A moral sensibility embodies a person's disposition toward life and the people and events he or she encounters. It describes how a person fuses humaneness and thought in the way he or she regards and treats others. A moral sensibility features a critical orientation. It is neither blind nor sentimental. It includes a reflective capacity: the ability to stand back from the scene at certain moments in order to discern the issues at stake, to appreciate differences in point of view that may be involved (p. 33.)

The idea of moral sensibility combines reason and emotion, moral and intellectual growth, trust, responsibility and obligation.

As a person in the role of teacher, I am much more comfortable with Greene's development of conscience than I am with Hansen's idea of moral sensibility. Greene's analysis helps me focus on the questions I need to consider for my own moral conduct in the classroom and on my responsibilities and obligations as a member of a greater community. His consideration of the interests of individuals and of the collective in moral questioning, his discussion of sacrifice and his emphasis on the importance of imagination to critically consider other possibilities, allows me to think about my teaching in a moral and ethical manner. This framework for moral thinking helps me define who I am as a person and how I act as a teacher.

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