Pedagogical love in the transactional curriculum

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The original meaning of pedagogy is grounded in the relational and intentional responsibility of adult to child. The vulnerability of the child calls forth a loving attitude from the adult, as pedagogue, that is directed toward the physical security and the social, emotional, and educational well-being of the child as student. The lived experiences of five teachers and their students presented in this paper demonstrate that pedagogical love as a favourable influence, or auspice of heart in teaching, is a mediating influence within the transactional curriculum. In the learning process, human beings, whether child or adult, develop an understanding of themselves and Other and in the process share a common heart. Pedagogical love cannot be perceived, nor received, in a curriculum environment in which feeling for the Other is absent or marginalized. Pedagogical love invites teachers and their students to actively participate in the understandings and knowledge that co-emerge in the transactional curriculum.

Keywords: pedagogical love; transactional curriculum.

‘You know, Dana, I still love you!’

Dana, a girl in my classroom, has a strong attachment to me. She has to have her daily hugs. She sits by me when she works, she can’t stand the other teacher. If he walks by her she puts her hand down. If I walk by she puts her hand up again. If he says, ‘Dana, I can help you’, she replies, ‘No, I don’t want your help. Go away, go away!’ If he sits beside her to help, she folds her arms defiantly and says: ‘I don’t want you here, go away!’

Dana has an obvious affection for me, but when things go wrong for her, they go horribly wrong. She bites—hard enough that she leaves a big bruise on my arm, she scratches me and she sometimes draws blood. She does all this mean stuff to me and after she does it, she gets physically ill.

Later, after she has bitten me, scratched me, spat at me and everything else, I take her out of the school for a car ride and a talk. At first she cries, angry, defiant tears and she tells me how mean I am to her and how much she hates me. Then she just stops talking. She is slumped down in the seat, limp, like one of my daughter’s rag dolls. She doesn’t seem to have any strength at all and she is very, very quiet. I look over at her and say the only thing that comes to me: ‘You know, Dana, I still love you!’ She looks up at me and there is just the slightest hint of acknowledgement in her eyes (Helen, personal communication, 28 June 2002).
In a focus-group inquiry designed to discover how teachers experience the metaphorical heart in teaching, I collected episodic narratives\(^2\) that strongly evidence the favourable influences, or auspices, of heart that teachers appreciate, admire, and sometimes criticize in themselves and in their colleagues. Helen’s narrative regarding her experience with Dana foregrounds pedagogical love as an auspice of heart in teaching and underscores the sensitive or pathic principles of custodial, parental, and educational relationality that are requisite for pedagogical love to exist between the teacher as adult, and the student as child.

Helen is finely attuned to the pathic dimensions of everyday life with Dana and no less so than on this particular occasion. Her knowledge of Dana, as Other, has been tried and proven through physical and emotional adversity. Dana is not an easy child to love; her behaviour is not easily managed. She is not an easy child to discipline for she evidences little or no self-discipline. How is it then, that Helen, as pedagogue, can express unconditional love for Dana? Is her avowal of love not more surprising given the manner in which Dana has abused her? What is it in her relationality with Dana that causes her to invite Dana into being with her?

Helen demonstrates that pedagogical love is attendant to pathic knowledge. Pathic, like empathy and sympathy, etymologically finds its base in the Greek pathy or pathia meaning affection, passion, or feeling for disease and suffering and is closely associated with pathos, another word stemming from the same root, and meaning the ‘quality which arouses pity or sorrow’ (Klein 1967: 1139). In the larger context of lived experience, pathic (van Manen 1999) refers to the felt emotion, the receptivity of mood, and the shared sensibility of being in the world as One and as Other. To understand more fully the pathic it is necessary to examine how it presents itself in life by those who live it. Pathic understanding is ‘not primarily gnostic, cognitive, intellectual, technical—but rather ... is ... relational, situational, corporeal, temporal, actional’ (van Manen and Li 2002: 219). Helen is attuned to the pathic in herself, as One, and to the pathic in Dana, as Other, and as such instinctively embodies pedagogical love in her relationality with Dana.

*In loco parentis* is not mere philosophy or strategy for Helen. It is a connective experience, a way of being with Dana that is at once intuitive and authentic. I understand this approach to teaching, to being with and for the child in one’s practice; in essence, being a pedagogue. When I first began my career in education, I remember vividly the instruction I received on the topic, *in loco parentis*. One of my classmates was heard to ask: ‘Do we have to be a parent to every child?’ The answer that was given was a simple: ‘In as much as you are humanly capable’. While our professor went on to explain that there are no absolutes in teaching, especially when dealing with the various personalities and contingencies associated with a classroom of young children, he did not back away from the requirement placed on each of us to stand in the place of the parent in our relationship and dealings with each child.

Some, perhaps sceptical of the notion that a teacher can fulfil the demands of parenthood within the pedagogical relationship, might ask: Is it possible for a teacher to be a parent to all the children? From my own experience, the answer to this question is not a straight yes or no, but is conditional. From
a philosophical and pedagogical point of view, it is essential that a teacher be personally and professionally pre-disposed to loving children in their present circumstance and to loving the potential of becoming that resides within each of them. This is the essence of pedagogical love. From a practical point of view, not all students need or require the teacher to be parent; many are quite happy to have the teacher be tutor, guide, facilitator, or cheer-leader when needed. Other students need the teacher only part-time or occasionally, especially in times of encouragement, happiness, want, or sorrow. Finally, a handful of students in every class really need a surrogate parent, and the teacher is often the only one capable or responsible enough to fill the role.

Such children sometimes need to be genuinely loved by the teacher in spite of what the child may think of himself or herself or what others may say about them. The litmus test of in loco parentis is our relationality, as pedagogues, in the lives of those children with the greatest need, and often with the least means or skill to accept or appreciate the pedagogical love that will be proffered them. Rejection, sometimes repeated, and delayed gratification are almost always accepted conditions of pedagogical love. Nevertheless, pedagogical love is a natural way with children; it is not based on sentimentality but on mutual respect. It is a love that embraces all children (Korczak, in Lifton 1997).

Just as not all children within a family require the same parenting at the same time, so, too, children in a classroom do not require the same attention or affection at the same time. It is essential that the teacher gauge the needs of each child. To accomplish this task the teacher must have a relational knowledge of the child, a familiarity with the child’s home environment and an understanding of the importance of an inclusive school environment. When taken together, this information can assist the teacher to responsibly ensure the welfare of each child, and can provide the teacher with ample direction concerning the timing and appropriateness of teacher-initiated affection or action toward a child.

In her teaching, Helen is personally present to Dana. She is perceptive of the relationality that exists between her, as pedagogue, and Dana, as her student. She does not read Dana’s actions as grounds for repulsion or rejection. Instead, she recognizes that out of her vulnerability, Dana calls upon her, as pedagogue and as adult, for help, for guidance, and for assistance, much as an unruly child, in the throes of a temper tantrum, might call upon a parent. Helen responds appropriately, both in her action and in her inaction; she viscerally experiences Dana’s pain and is sensitive to the vulnerability evidenced in Dana’s actions.

Her intentionality is ethical; she acts out of a deep sense of moral rightness for Dana and for the relationality that they share. Any fear or horror of rejection that Dana might feel is counterbalanced by Helen’s pedagogical love. Helen’s reflective action allows her to envision possibility, and to have faith in and for Dana where others might only see hopelessness and despair. Helen accepts Dana as a person and refuses to agree that she is bad. Her openness, even in the face of closure and rejection, her approachability, and her genuine inclusion and accommodation of Other validate Dana. Her pedagogical love for Dana is pre-conditioned by the pathic qualities of her personal and professional character. She is able to draw upon the pathic in
her character and in an act of unconditional love offer Dana an opportunity to grow in self-confidence and self-acceptance.

Narratives, such as the preceding, orient educators to the pathic dimensions of teaching that characterize pedagogical love as a favourable influence, or auspice of heart. If educators are to deepen their understanding of the essence of pedagogical love in the development of non-cognitive learning within the transactional curriculum of the classroom, they need to examine additional accounts of the pathic by those teachers who live it. The lived narratives of the ‘now’, of the present moments in teaching, provide opportunities for educators to experience, to know, and to examine the pathic dimension in the relationality of teachers and their students. Teachers who are influenced by the pathic in their lives demonstrate pedagogical love for their students in their daily, minute-by-minute, practice in the transactional curriculum of the classroom.

Integrating a multiplicity of betweens

The making of a common world of education is attained within the transactional curriculum, or the curriculum of lived experience in the classroom. Aoki (1993: 261) contends that there are two curricula at work in the classroom: the curriculum-as-plan and the lived curricula of each individual student. He sees the two curricula as at once ‘different in kind’ and ‘resist[ing] integration’. Students’ lives are often ruled by strong emotions and feelings that are often demonstrated in very positive or very negative attitudes towards home, siblings, parents, friends, and towards school, classmates, teachers, and homework. Who among us as parents or experienced teachers has not heard: ‘Why do I/we have to do that?’, ‘This is stupid!’, ‘When am I ever going to use that?’, or ‘This sucks!’?

It is important that teachers do not dwell in the cognitive curriculum-as-plan where student academic achievement is perceived as the single most important reason for schooling. Educators who dismiss or take only passing note of the lived curricula of their students do a great disservice to their students and their pathic or non-cognitive learning. Aoki positions the teacher in the curriculum landscape of the classroom as mediator between the language of curriculum-as-plan and the language of the lived curricula. In this curriculum mismatch, students and teachers often fail to find a middle ground and miss each other relationally, and thereby cognitively, in the classroom. They are physically in the same classroom, but their needs are so different, so at variance, that real communication often fails to occur, especially if the learning is focused only on mastery of content.

It has been my experience that many students perceive the mastery of subject content or academic achievement as a survival of the fittest. The intense competition that often surrounds academic success has a negative impact on many of them, some of whom are at-risk, and contributes, in part, to low levels of motivation and achievement. Such students fall victim to a system and approach to teaching that fails to recognize, let alone challenge, their capacity for non-cognitive or pathic learning. Under such circumstances, learning loses its intrinsic value because there is no perceived
connection between the material to be mastered or achieved and the lived experiences of the students. Learning becomes meaningless, and being in school too often becomes pointless or only marginally important.

Glasser (Gough 1987: 657) warned that when the affective [pathic] within an individual loses importance, student behaviour becomes destructive of the self, and destructive of the needs of love, power, freedom, and fun that the self seeks to fulfil:

All our lives, we search for ways to satisfy our needs for love, belonging, caring, sharing, and co-operation. If a student feels no sense of belonging in school, no sense of being involved in caring and concern, that child will pay little attention to academic subjects.

More often than not attitude dictates or determines a student’s aptitude toward learning, and if he or she does not perceive his or her presence as meaningful in content-based learning classes, learning for him or her is then not contextualized, and as a consequence is diminished. Where a perceptual mismatch occurs, students and teacher neither meet intellectually nor connect pathically in the classroom. The cognitive and non-cognitive variance is so acute that real communication does not occur. In this sense the teacher’s curriculum-as-plan and the students’ lived curricula are at ‘once different in kind’ and ‘resist[ing] integration’.

Kieren (2000) posits an alternative notion to the in-between tension that exists in Aoki’s perception of classroom curricula. He maintains: ‘if we examine the curriculum as it occurs … it is neither narrowly convergent to a few goals, nor divergent to individual coherent activities. The idea that comes out of an enactivist view is a co-emergent curriculum’. Kieren, in his enactivist view, positions the teacher in the middle of a curriculum that is neither convergent nor divergent but co-emerges ‘with the communities in which it exists and is lived’.

In addition to the convergent curriculum-as-plan and the divergent curricula of students’ lived curriculum, there are other curricula at work that influence and co-determine knowledge in the interaction of the classroom. Antithetical to the curriculum-as-plan is the curriculum-not-as-plan, the null curriculum, or that which has deliberately been excluded from the official curriculum, whether mandated by departments of education or implemented by classroom teachers in daily pedagogical practice.

There is the hidden curriculum of routines, rules, policies, and procedures that scaffold classroom inter- and intra-relationships that are often more overt, and speak louder than might naturally be expected. The Canadian poet, Pratt (1958: 77–78) portrays in Silences that, given the right environment, ‘drama is silent’ and that ‘the inhabitants … are … silently slain’. In classrooms that rigidly enforce regulation like that depicted in Chamoiseau’s (1997) School Days, the hidden curriculum is overtly didactic and oppressive and student desire for learning is not only smothered, but in too many cases it is stifled:

Time for recess …

Some dummy had the misfortune to pop up right out of his seat. The Teacher pounced on him like a red wasp: Who told you to rise? Are you in charge here?
Sit, scoundrel, good-for-nothing, budding wrretch, diminutive scalawag of a rapscallion! They were stunned to learn that, captain of his ship by divine right, the Teacher ran absolutely everything. He and he alone gave permission to stand up. To sit down. To open one’s mouth. When he spoke, all eyes and ears were to be trained on him. Pay attention, look alive, and sit up straight. The Teacher was to be spared any bunny-mumblings, any bovine, sun-drowsy yawns, any stupid-ass-molasses-lapping grins, any barnyard cackles from beneath the desks. All bladders—and the neighbouring tubes—were to be emptied before entering this sanctuary, thus obviating the need to ask anything that did not pertain to pure knowledge. A raised finger was to be the outward and visible sign of a flash of intelligence rather than the always irritating announcement of a scatological emergency. Not even a fly should buzz without permission. After class had begun, no one should have anything more to say—not to himself, not to the devil or the Goodlord, and absolutely not to his neighbour.

‘A classroom is not a bedlam, gentlemen! Order! Discipline! Respect! Now the first row will rise and file out silently, in an orderly and disciplined fashion. Good. Now the second row …’. (p. 41; emphasis in original)

Biological structuring, personal histories, and the context of community in the classroom are the constituent elements of the lived curricula of students and the lived curriculum of the teacher. These curricula may appear to be exclusive of each other and to resist integration; however, there exists a curriculum that subsumes all of them and may be referred to as the transactional curriculum or the enacted curriculum of lived experience. The transactional curriculum is distinguished in its composition by its ability to include and integrate all curricula in the classroom.

I use transactional in a context that is adapted from Rosenblatt’s (1985) distinction in her reader-response theory. She used ‘transactional’ to differentiate her theory from others that had arisen during the New Criticism of the 1970s and 1980s, and to emphasize the reciprocal importance of both reader and text. Rosenblatt emphasized the reciprocal relationship of reader and text because of its ‘pedagogical implications’ (Karolides 1999: 164). I agree with Rosenblatt in her insistence that ‘transactional’ connotes important pedagogical implications, especially in the notion that meaning in literature does not reside in the text nor in the reader but between the evocation and response during their engagement (Rosenblatt 1985: 44).

However, the term ‘transactional’ has come to connote different things for different people. I do not use the term to designate one of the English language arts curricula for senior high school as in the Province of Manitoba (McCrae 1999: s. 1–16). I do not use it to indicate a language that has evolved from the expressive language of being and becoming into a pragmatic language of getting things done. Nor do I use it to denote transactional leadership as a mode of administrative theory. Rather, I de-emphasize Rosenblatt’s notion of reciprocity in order to emphasize more strongly the oscillations between tension and harmony that exist between and among the various curricula that consolidate in the transactional curriculum. Specifically, I am referring to the give and take, the to and fro, the ebb and flow of relationality that takes place between and among the various curricula that exist in any moment in the classroom and are mediated by the teacher through the auspices of heart in teaching. I speak of the
curricula described above: the curriculum-as-plan, the lived curricula of individual students, the null curriculum, the hidden curriculum, and the lived curriculum of the teacher—all are constituent of the transactional curriculum in the classroom.

Imagine a symmetric Venn diagram composed of five congruent ellipses. As the curves of each ellipsis cross and re-cross they create 25 intersections. By far the largest section is at the epicentre or nexus of the Venn. It is a pentagon bounded on each side by the interior curve of each congruent ellipsis. Despite the fact that the epicentre derives its shape and being from the multiple intersections of the five congruent ellipses, it is devoid of any internal intersection. Like the eye of the hurricane it is a calm and clear territory. It is a confluent area in the midst of multiple divisions as the ellipses intersect and re-intersect each other. To get to the heart of the Venn, one must mediate the buffeting of tensions that comprise the conflict zone that surrounds the heart. Wholeness or completeness is attained in the heart of the Venn through the interior connection of the five ellipses as they flow into or accommodate one another.

The nexus is the actuated reality of the transactional curriculum, or what Freire (1997) refers to as the ‘gnoseologic’ nature of education. Education is said to be gnoseologic when it ‘engages subjects (educators and learners), mediated by a cognizable object, or the content to be taught by the educator-subject and learned by the learner-subject’ (pp. 106–107). The characteristics of gnoseologia are natural curiosity and unrest for knowledge, understanding, or meaning; mutual respect, maturity of thought, and behaviour between dialoguing subjects; a spirit of adventure or risk-taking; confidence in investigating and questioning; seriousness in providing answers; and a genuine surrender on the part of educator and learner to the critical quest (p. 99). Within education as a gnoseologic process, the learner is challenged to develop a critical or cognitive stance that is preoccupied with the raison d’être of the phenomenon of inquiry that mediates the dialogue of learning and is fundamental for developing epistemological curiosity. However, gnoseologia does not refuse consideration of the non-cognitive or pathic; it requires ‘respect for the freedom of others’ and it requires an ethical perspective conditioned by ‘humility, coherence, and tolerance’ (p. 105). It also requires as actuated reality the accommodation of Other as self made possible through pedagogical love.

A professional and personal obligation

It’s my first day teaching grade 9. I want so much to make a connection with each student as they come into the classroom; I believe first impressions are lasting. But, when Derek walks into my life, a grubby, skinny, filthy kid, I think mangy, mangy, mangy!

He comes to school every day hungry. His Dad gives him $2 every morning to buy food at school because there is no food at home. When he gets to school, he goes to the vending machine, promptly buys two chocolate bars, walks into the classroom and gives them away piece by piece until there’s nothing left. Nothing for him, and then he just says: ‘Oh … yeah, I guess there’s no more’.
He gives all his food away and never thinks about how hungry he is; that’s just the way he is.

He walks about 35 or 40 minutes to school every day. He doesn’t have money for the bus but he’s always there on time. He never misses a day, whether he’s sick or not. His spirit is just amazing; he’s going to be the first one in his family to graduate high school.

I buy him a toothbrush and toothpaste because his teeth are never clean. I ask him, ‘Why not?’ ‘There’s no toothbrush to brush my teeth with in my house’. ‘Do you ever eat?’ ‘Not much. … You know, sometimes Dad gets Kentucky Fried Chicken, sometimes there are beans in the cupboard, that kind of thing, sometimes’. My relationship with Derek is one of the most meaningful connections in my life, I want it to continue; but it’s sometimes hard on the heart with Derek.

His home life is appalling; his father is incredibly neglectful. His head is either shaved or it’s a rat’s nest … a greasy rat’s nest. His sister abuses him regularly—physically and sexually. He has a shunt in his head which drains fluid from a brain injury he’s had since he was a kid and she sometimes hits him on the side of the head with a frying pan and his Dad doesn’t do anything to stop it. She could kill him. His whole life is an awful situation, but I love the kid and I stay in touch.

It is the summer after grade 9; I am getting married; I invite Derek to my wedding. It’s a huge thing for him … huge. He hasn’t ever been to anything like this and he’s very excited. He gets a suit, a tie, a shirt … he really gets dressed up. He gets a social worker to drive him over to the church where he meets my bride for the second time. This meeting is special for Derek. He tells me, ‘I feel close to her now too, because I’ve been to her wedding’.

I stay in touch with Derek because it makes me feel like I’m doing something that matters. Honestly, I love Derek. He’s just the sweetest kid in the world and I give him something in his life other than periodic contact with a crappy father and an abusive sister. We stay in touch; it’s hard sometimes, though, hard on the heart. (Ezra, personal communication, 28 June 2002)

As Ezra evidences in his experiences with Derek, the gnoseologic nature of education is enactive in the transactional curriculum. The curriculum-as-plan, the lived curricula of students, the null curriculum, the hidden curriculum, and the lived curriculum of the teacher unite and flow into each other. The confluence of curricula is made possible by the pedagogical love that Ezra has for Derek. It is a relational love that affirms and reaffirms the possible in learning, knowing, being, and becoming for both as subjects—Derek as student and Ezra as teacher. The verbal and non-verbal communication that exists between Ezra and Derek as interlocutors actuates the personal growth that is inherent in the gnoseologic environment of the transactional curriculum. Both are experientially in search of meaning.

Ezra realizes in his relationship with Derek that the educator is incomplete without the learner, the learner incomplete without the educator, and both are incomplete without the other components in the pedagogical relationality of the transactional curriculum. The gnoseologic value of the transactional curriculum consists in the completion of individual components; the gnostic and the pathic fuse as cognitive, non-cognitive, and experiential faculties investigate learning, knowing, being, and becoming. When Ezra
and Derek experience the mediating influence of pedagogical love in the transactional curriculum, they are simultaneously engaged in authentic educational practice, both attain completeness and are balanced. Both are actuated; each edifies the other. The gnostic is not privileged in the gnoseologic education process that exists between them but is determinantly balanced with the pathic in authentic pedagogical practice. The nexus of the transactional curriculum is the actuated reality of pedagogical love that exists between them as teacher and student and as adult and child. The gnoseologic conditions of their relationship are bounded by the interior of each curriculum and as such constitute the heart in teaching; and the heart in teaching is the heart of teaching.

‘How did you ever think of that?’

One of the ways that the pathic manifests its importance in the pedagogical love of the transactional curriculum is through dialogue. The dialogic relationship between and among teacher and students is an interaction of communication and intercommunication that is indispensable to the co-emergence of knowledge. Dialogue is an essential function of human beings in their quest for knowledge, and it is elemental in the social nature of children and their teachers, as learners, in the transactional classroom:

Ms S. goes to the chalkboard and writes $1/6 + 3/12 + 2/24$ and then asks, ‘What’s that?’ As the students begin to ponder the question, Patrick, who is always eager to display his knowledge but has a reputation of being somewhat smart-alecky with some of his answers, blurts out ‘$4/8$’. With a surprised look on her face, Ms S. immediately turns toward Patrick and inquisitively asks ‘How did you ever think of that?’

Patrick, from off the top of his head, begins an elaborate and somewhat convoluted explanation of his thinking. The response on the part of Patrick’s teacher and his classmates is a questioning, ‘Huh?’ Not wishing to be embarrassed or have his answer mistaken for misbehaviour, Patrick runs to the board and with chalk in hand, diagrams how $4/8$ can be an acceptable answer to the question. (Ms. S., personal communication, 9 October 2000)

The significance of this exchange between teacher and student resides in the pedagogical love that appropriately characterizes Ms S. in her attitude, action, and questioning of Patrick. In certain social contexts, including classrooms, ‘smart-alecky’ can mean obnoxiously self-assertive and arrogant. This attitude, if it exists in Patrick, may partially explain his behaviour as he blurts out ‘$4/8$’; but if it does, Ms S. conveys through the tonal qualities of her voice that she chooses to ignore it, and with genuine curiosity and a hint of amazement she inquires of Patrick ‘How did you ever think of that?’

Instead of sounding sceptical or dismissive, Ms S.’s question is invitational, and receives not just Patrick’s response but Patrick as well. What he says by way of explanation matters, whether it is right or wrong, and Ms S., as teacher, probes for clarification, interpretation, and contribution. She is not seeking the answer as much as she is seeking the involvement of Patrick
as her student. She enters a ‘caring relationship’ as the ‘one-caring’ for her student, Patrick, the ‘one cared-for’ (Noddings 1984).

Her question, in the true sense of the Latin definition of *educere*, draws out the Otherness in Patrick; she calls forth that which is within him, as Ezra does with Derek. In the ‘context-dependent know-how’ (Varela *et al.* 1991: 148) of her classroom, Ms S. identifies those intelligences that Patrick has and seeks to provide Patrick with an opportunity to explain both himself and his reasoning. He responds to her invitation, and verbally and graphically explains his thinking process. The teacher recognizes that knower and the known, in this case Patrick and his response, co-emerge through ‘mutual specification’ (p. 150). One cannot and does not exist without the other.

The evocative nature of the teacher’s query to Patrick reveals that she is aware that ‘[r]esponse is not mere reaction … [it] involves [an] awareness of [self] as a centre of force capable of action’ (Johnson 1987: 15). In this classroom, Ms S. sufficiently expands the centre of her personal force or power to call forth an appropriate action of knowledge from Patrick. By and through her questioning voice, she demonstrates ‘that the exercise of power itself creates and causes to emerge new objects of knowledge and accumulates new bodies of information’ (Foucault 1980: 51).

**Power in the evocative call to Other**

Foucault (1980) posits that power and knowledge are not only reciprocal but each is the articulation of the other, and that ‘[m]odern humanism is … mistaken in drawing [a] line between [them]’ (p. 52). Power comes into being within the context of the relationality in the transactional curriculum. Relationality in the classroom cannot be diminutive, it cannot be rule-governed, nor autocratically controlled to the extent that conditions constrain students from making choices that will allow them to pursue their shared vision of learning in the transactional curriculum. If relationality were constrained in the classroom, it would negate the gnoseologic nature of education. Pedagogical love directs that it is no longer acceptable for an individual student to remain self-contained and self-constrained to the extent that personal conformity to externally-defined rules is guaranteed. ‘The individual is an effect of power’, Foucault (1980: 98) states, ‘and at the same time, or precisely to the extent to which it is that effect, it is the element of its articulation’.

Articulation in the classroom, for each participant, is not separate from relationality with Others, some of whom may be very difficult. As Ezra says of his relationship with Derek, ‘[It] is one of the most meaningful connections in my life, I want it to continue; but it’s sometimes hard on the heart with Derek’. However, he realizes, as does Ms S., that it is the pedagogical responsibility of the teacher to understand the nature of the constraints that would prevent student articulation and to posit alternative, significant, and meaningful learning experiences within the transactional curriculum of the classroom. Greene (1995: 141) contends that there is an obligation on the part of those who devise curriculum ‘to make it possible for the young to perceive ranges of alternatives that are significant “possibles” for themselves’.
If such devising takes place, then the life-experiences of students become interesting and relevant because their inclusion is the result of purposeful action. In the actuated reality of the transactional curriculum, purposeful action is engendered by pedagogical love. It is action that is born out of respect, support, mutual understanding, and inclusion of Other as self, and is evidenced in the pedagogical relationship that exists between Helen and Dana, Ezra and Derek, and between Ms S. and Patrick. Purposeful action is also the recognition of individual freedom and the obligation to act ethically and in accordance with the dictates of conscience and heart.

The influence of pedagogical love in the relationality of teacher and student brings the search for love, belonging, caring, sharing, and co-operation closer to conclusion. It is the source of enlightenment in the classroom that reinforces the belief that human life is concentric. All people have at their core the unique, mysterious, yet vital organ of the heart and as Cixous and Calle-Gruber (1997: 31) observe, ‘[t]here is a common speech, there is a common discourse, there is a universe of emotion that is totally interchangeable and that goes through the organ of the heart’. It is the commonality of heart that pre-conditions enlightenment in the classroom and persuades teachers who accept pedagogical love as essential in their relationality with students to agree with Cohen (1993: 374; emphases in original) in ‘Anthem’: ‘You can add up the parts/but you won’t have the sum// Forget your perfect offering. /There is a crack in everything. /That’s how the light gets in’.

Van Manen (1991: 70) affirms that the adult can only have influence over a child or young person within a pedagogical relationship where ‘authority is based, not on power, but on love, affection, and internalized sanction on the part of the child’. Patrick is invited by the evocative nature of his teacher’s question to participate in the communicative power of all learners in the classroom. As a distinct individual, he does not exist in a space outside the communicative power that is present in the actuated reality of the classroom. To view him as marginalized or separated would invalidate the pedagogical influence that exists between him as student and Ms S. as teacher. Through her interrogative, Ms S. has addressed Patrick as Other and she and his classmates are compelled out of respect ‘to listen, without knowing why, before [they] know what it is that [they] are to listen to’ (Readings 1996: 162).

Patrick accepts the invitation to participate in the discourse of learning. He seeks to communicate verbally his meaning and when words fail to convince others of the plausibility of his reasoning, he employs diagramming to illustrate his thinking. Ms S. knows that his knowledge, that which he now seeks to communicate to the understanding of others, has had, in part, its origin in the environmental elements of the classroom, including the love and respect that presently engulf him. Knowledge ‘depends on being in a world that is inseparable from our … embodiment’ (Varela et al. 1991: 149). As pedagogue, Ms S. knows that there is more to knowledge, more to understanding, more to the application of commonsense and wisdom than merely leading Patrick as learner to the ‘threshold of [his] own mind’ (Gibran 1949: 64). Knowledge, for Patrick, is a lived experience, a coalescence of gnostic (cognitive) and pathic (non-cognitive) meaning and understanding.
Another aspect of the pedagogical relationship between Patrick and his teacher, Ms S., which is similar to that evidenced between Helen and Dana is that she acts in an ethically responsible manner towards him. She does not give into any tendency to pick up on his ‘blurting’ behaviour. Instead of conflict or confrontation, she recognizes Patrick’s creative cognition and invites him into the transactional curriculum of making mathematics by asking, ‘How did you ever think of that?’ In so doing, she affirms him as a person and keeps open the possibilities of learning. And this is what good teachers do: they ‘occasion learning’ (Kieren 2000).

Maturana and Varela (1980: xxvi) present the view that such ‘occasioning’ in relation to another is an expression of love: ‘the seeing of the other as a partner in some or all the dimensions of living’. As hooks (1999: 125) suggests, ‘think first about how you can love your students. Do this even before you think about how you’re going to teach them’. Pedagogical love is the full accommodation of Other, and the occasioning of learning through alternate ‘possibles’ is the essence of relationship in education. Arendt (1961: 196) maintains that the condition for ‘possibles’ exists in education when:

we decide whether we love our children enough not to expel them from our world and leave them to their own devices, nor to strike from their hands their chance of undertaking something new, something unforeseen for us, but to prepare them in advance for the task of renewing a common world.

Patrick’s teacher, in asking the question ‘How did you ever think of that?’, enlarges the nature of her relationship with Patrick. In so doing, she creates a ‘possible’ and makes room for full accommodation of him as a legitimate Other. The lived experiences in the transactional curriculum of Ms S.’s classroom exist for her as teacher and for each of her students. The actuated reality of the transactional curriculum is rooted in the dialogic of completion. The ebb and flow, the give and take, of discourse among the participants and the curricula constitute the communicative power of holistic learning, knowing, being, and becoming. The transactional curriculum is the mediated confluence of all curricula at work at any given moment within the classroom. It invites the development of a pedagogical relationship between teacher and student and makes possible the co-emergence of learning and knowing, being, and becoming for all participants in the classroom.

**Pedagogical love: catalyst in the transactional curriculum**

Another example of pedagogical love as the catalyst in the transactional curriculum is found in the observations of Mrs Hutniak’s teaching conducted by Simmt *et al.* (1999). Mrs Hutniak is praised by her principal as ‘the greatest math teacher’ (p. 33). Her students and their parents believe that her greatest strengths are that she loves her students and she loves mathematics. The hidden curriculum is evidenced in Mrs Hutniak’s years of experience and ‘manifested in many of the managerial and motivational strategies she use[s] in the classroom’ (p. 34). For instance, she collects all notebooks every second week—not only as an assessment strategy but as a
way of connecting with each student, establishing a one-on-one through her ‘love-notes’ written to each student ‘pointing out strengths and weaknesses, giving them advice and encouragement’ (p. 35). In respect of this transac-
tional practice, Mrs Hutniak observes that ‘I always feel that before I can teach any student that I have to have some relationship with that student. There has to be a trust between us’ (p. 35).

Van Manen (1991: 68) reinforces Mrs Hutniak’s belief in the power of trust: ‘Trust enables! Trustful hope is our experience of the child’s possibilities and development’. Children who experience the enabling influence of trust through pedagogical love within the transactional curriculum are encouraged to have trust in themselves. Mrs Hutniak understands how to inculcate trust in her classroom. In addition to her ‘love-notes’, she uses a number of other techniques to reinforce her trust and respect for her students. Simmt et al. (1999: 38) notes that:

In a single class most students were called on by name and in a most respectful tone. Mrs Hutniak responded to many of their questions with an endearment. She took 20 seconds here and 30 seconds elsewhere to quietly interact with a student, often about mathematics but sometimes about ... the health of a friend or parent, an upcoming community event, or simply about how the child feels that day.

Through these brief but personal interactions, Mrs Hutniak illustrates that the instructional process ‘is constantly conditioned by personal, relational, intentional, and contingent factors that make teaching possible in the first place’ (van Manen and Li 2002: 217). She establishes an inclusive environ-
ment within her classroom that highlights the relationship that exists between her and her students. In her classroom, love is the condition of pedagogy and the pre-condition for the pedagogical relationship. Such a relationship, in her view, is absolutely essential to the growth of her students as mature, responsible individuals.

It is refreshing to witness pedagogical love at work within the transac-
tional curriculum in Mrs Hutniak’s classroom. As an experienced teacher of more than 30 years, she speaks of her students in language characteristic of her caring, compassion, and genuine love. She does not measure her success as a teacher with how well her students perform on an achievement test; rather, her measure of success is embodied:

‘When they start here’, holding up one hand, ‘and end up here’, holding up the other hand, ‘[t]hen I have been successful. And you’ve got to be able to do that without hurting this’, she said as she put her hand to her chest. ... ‘If I didn’t love kids, I couldn’t be a teacher—and it’s got to be unconditional love’.

(Simmt et al. 1999: 38, 42)

Operative principles within the transactional curriculum

In order for a child to maximize understanding and knowledge within the gnoseologic nature of education, there must be a balance between educating the cognitive, the gnostic, or the mind and educating the non-cognitive, the pathic, or the heart. If we, as educators, are truly committed to educating the whole child then we must recognize that neither the head nor the heart is
dominant in the body. Both are essential in balancing the dimensions of bodily living and bodily knowing. Without carefully attending the pathic we cannot fully attend the heart in teaching.

One of the greatest and most effective methods of teaching is by example or model. Teachers like Helen, Ezra, Ms S., and Mrs Hutniak model their dual focus on the cognitive and the non-cognitive in the pedagogical relationships in their classrooms. They engage their students in highly interactive and enabling lessons, they teach them to take note of the salient points in each lesson, they teach them to reflect on their learning and inspire further learning, they spend time developing and maintaining an authentic personal relationship with each of their students, and they look for occasions to extend learning opportunities in pathic one-to-one interactions.

Increasingly, teachers are required to evaluate their teaching in technical or corporate terms of outcomes, efficacy, and accountability. There is little or no time allocated to teachers to respond, reflect, or reconstruct their thinking on the meaning, purpose, and significance of pedagogical relationship. In the midst of educational restriction, the challenge for most teachers is to remember poignantly their pedagogical orientation to each child. Love, hope, and responsibility from the adult to the child are the conditions of pedagogical orientation (van Manen 1991: 123). Ideally, the school and the official curriculum should serve the unique needs of each and every child; but my experience would suggest that, in reality, teachers and officials from departments of education sometimes forget that the school exists for children, and it is for their benefit that the curriculum exists and should have been designed. Children should not be viewed as existing to serve either the school or the official, mandated curriculum.

Greene (1995: 142, 144) contends that the point of curriculum-making is to ‘order experiences in such a fashion as to move diverse persons to mindfulness and to care … [and to make] connection between diversely lived experiences and an increasingly meaningful world’. The enactive presence of pedagogical love within the transactional curriculum encourages students to make meaning rather than to find meaning beyond themselves, as in an externally prescribed curriculum-as-plan.

Certain principles operate within the transactional curriculum. Mrs Hutniak identified respect, trust, and unconditional love as essential principles. Ellsworth (1997: 46) contends that a ‘student’s relationship to curriculum’ is often ‘a messy and unpredictable event that constantly … and inevitably passes through the uncontrollable stuff of desire, fear, horror, pleasure, power, anxiety, fantasy, and the unthinkable’. Oscillation between understanding and misunderstanding occurs in student learning and knowing and is often a result of the flux of emotions, attention, and interest within an individual student, or within students collectively. Every student, as child, is unique and exhibits ‘inclinations, sensitivities, modalities of being which soon express themselves in certain choices, interests, and desires’ (van Manen 1991: 19). Aoki (1993: 258) contends that these qualities constitute the students’ lived curricula and, rather than being viewed as extraordinary or unusual, must be viewed as common within young people, especially at the middle school level. Acceptance of the Other in each student is paramount
in the development of pedagogical love between teacher and student at every level of instruction.

‘She doesn’t push me away’

Mrs D.-H., an experienced high school vocational and resource and methods teacher, shares the following experience that highlights the need for respect, trust, and love in the pedagogical relationship between teacher and student, especially when it involves a student like Amy, who ‘creates an atmosphere that poisons the class’.

Amy sits stoic for a few minutes, and I am totally unprepared for what is to come. Suddenly she throws her head down on her arms and begins to sob uncontrollably. Great sobs as if her heart were breaking. Now what do I do? Then I remember the only thing I really know about her: her mother died a few, short years ago. I get up and go over to her and cradle her head in my arms and soothe her. She doesn’t push me away. I remain there a few minutes and then return to my seat beside her. Her sobs gradually lessen to small shudders. Nothing is said for a while. (Mrs D.-H., personal communication, 28 June 2000)

Mrs D.-H.’s actions in this specific, teaching moment demonstrate that a teacher has a pedagogical calling that must, of necessity, respond to the vulnerability and needs of a student. In Aristotelian terms, Mrs D.-H. acts with ‘virtue’ in assisting her student. She has chosen to do ‘good’, to do that which is right for the student in the moment. To do so she responds pedagogically to the unvoiced call of Amy’s need to be loved unconditionally, to be comforted in her vulnerability. Mrs D.-H. responds with appropriate intention conditioned by tenderness, compassion, and an outpouring of genuine love for her student not unlike Ezra’s accommodation of Derek, Mrs Hutniak’s ‘love notes’, Ms S.’s evocative acceptance of Patrick, or Helen’s avowal to Dana: ‘I still love you!’

Gertrude Buck, an advocate of the progressive education movement at the turn of the 20th century believed, as did John Dewey, that pedagogy was founded upon the ‘democratic ideals of co-operation, freedom of thought, and equality’ (Bordelon 1998: 238). The respect and equality of personhood that Mrs D.-H. accords Amy in this personal, yet private interaction reinforces the social imperative for human-centred ethics spoken of by Maturana and Varela (1992: 246, 248; emphasis in original): ‘as human beings we have only the world which we create with others—whether we like them or not … and only love helps us bring it forth’. Pedagogical love, as demonstrated by Mrs D.-H. toward Amy, breaks the fourth wall, to steal a theatrical term, in which the spectator and protagonist co-determine the meaning of the life-play they are involved in and, of necessity, are required to work out.

Buck contended that in a classroom organized on the democratic principles of co-operation, freedom of inquiry, and equality that ‘what benefits the individual also benefits society and vice versa’ (Bordelon 1998: 257). The transactional curriculum arises out of the interaction of divergent curricula made convergent through the pathic principles of caring, compassion, and concern for each child and the democratic principles of co-operation, freedom
of thought, and equality. All of these elements conjoin in the transactional curriculum through pedagogical love.

Pedagogical love is based on a foundational attitude of intention, appropriateness, and responsibility, as reflected in custodial, parental, and educational relationships with children. The pedagogical responsibility of the teacher, as professional educator, is to act appropriately and intentionally in the place of the parent (‘in loco parentis’) in respecting children in their present circumstance and in their potential of becoming. Pedagogical love is evidenced in concrete real-life situations that represent the give and take, back and forth, ebb and flow of the transactional curriculum within the classroom. Adult actions and interactions toward children must, of necessity, be intentional, appropriate, and directed toward the positive being and becoming of each child. Pedagogical love gives teachers the patience, tolerance, belief, and trust to help children achieve their present and future potential. It also makes it clear that if they do not genuinely love, teachers cannot care for children on a daily, moment-to-moment basis. Love as the condition of pedagogy and the pre-condition for the pedagogical relationship between the adult and the child in the transactional curriculum is absolutely essential to the child’s growth as a mature, responsible individual (van Manen 1991).

Maurer and Davidson (1999) call for teachers not to ignore the affective or pathetic domain in what they call the ‘power of the heart’. The power of the heart resides in the pedagogical love between Helen and Dana, Ezra and Derek, Ms S. and Patrick, Mrs Hutniak and her students, and Mrs D.-H. and Amy. As teachers, they evidence in their relationality with children an encultured agreement with Cixous and Calle-Gruber’s (1997: 31) assertion that: ‘what the sexes have in common is the heart. … [It’s] [a]s if the heart were the sex common to the two sexes. The human sex’. As teachers, they also demonstrate that, through pedagogical love, each child, as a unique human being, can be enlarged and enlivened in the inclusive, enactive environment of the transactional curriculum.

In the gnoseologic relationality of their classrooms, the lived experience of students and teacher co-exist, learning and knowledge co-emerge, the multiplicity of curricula converge, nature and nurture co-originate as product and process; and the gnostic and pathic learning of Other are brought forth into a new world of knowledge, acceptance, and understanding. Teachers who genuinely practice pedagogical love in the transactional curriculum of their classrooms share a common heart; that’s ‘how the light gets in’.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1. All names of students and teachers are pseudonyms.
2. I conducted a series of individual interviews and focus-group inquiries in Edmonton, Alberta, between the fall of 2000 and the summer of 2002 to discover how they personally experience the metaphorical heart in teaching. The teacher anecdotes contained in this paper are taken primarily from the episodic narratives collected during a focus group inquiry of 28 June 2002, and are the lived experiences that motivate my inquiry into pedagogical love in the transactional curriculum.
3. Janusz Korczak was the pseudonym of Henryk Goldszmit, a Polish-Jewish children's writer and educator. His pedagogical love for children became legendary. He viewed children as the salvation of the world and dedicated his life to creating a better world through the education of children. He set up orphanages for them, lived among them, worked with them, accompanied them on their last walk through the ghetto streets of Warsaw in 1942, and ultimately died with them in the death camp, Treblinka.

References


