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Continued

The examination commission ratifies this judgement and determines whether there is sufficient evidence that the national examination requirements are met.

*One's own career is central*

FC-XL assumes that students determine their own career. The coach guides the student in forming a coherent learning experience. The educational programme is concluded with a recognized diploma. The programme begins with an interview, in order to determine which competencies students have already acquired and what their future vocational ambitions are. The coach and the student then go to work, determining the steps needed to be taken in order to achieve those ambitions. These ambitions constantly guide the selection of practical and theoretical learning activities. FC-XL assumes that working and learning in the real world stimulates students' intrinsic motivation, whereby they can steer their own learning process, under supervision. Students also receive support in order to develop their own personal qualities.

Coaches play an important role. A coach supervises and supports the students' learning process from beginning to end. In this manner, they are able to build up a relationship with students, which enables the coach to reflect upon the learning career of each student, as well as to encourage students to reflect upon themselves. Each coach counsels about 15-20 students. An important difference with other programmes in the Friesland College is that, in the XL programme, the roles of the coach and the teacher (who is a content specialist) are separated. As it turns out, few teachers are able to fulfil both roles. A good content specialist is not necessarily a good coach. In addition, when a teacher attempts to fulfil both roles, the danger exists that the coaching role may be underemphasized, when more attention is needed for the content. In the XL programme, the content specialist assists by the development of occupation-specific expertise, while the coach assists the career development of the student within the vocational context. The coach gives no instruction for the development of occupation-specific expertise, but does help to organize this process, to formulate learning goals and to reflect upon real-world experiences.

Extensive evaluations - conducted by the Friesland College itself - demonstrate time and again that FC-XL students are better motivated and learn better than the average Friesland College student. A national survey of the development of career competencies also showed that the XL offered the most powerful career learning environment of all schools studied. In 2006 XL won the National Innovation Prize for Vocational Education, an award established by the Dutch National Department of Education.

# 7 Embedding the ethic of care in school policies and practices

Kumari Beck and Wanda Cassidy

This chapter posits that schools based on the ethic of care offer a radically fresh approach to engaging youth in learning and in the school experience. The chapter:

- provides a brief introduction to the ethic of care, showing how care focuses on relationships, empathy, other-directedness, dialogue and respectful solutions;
- provides some examples of how educators have enacted care in their schools; and
- argues for a pedagogy of care, which will build an inclusive environment where all students can succeed and grow.



Opinions on schooling and teaching proliferate, with ideological divides on how schools should be run 'differently' from the way they operate. Changes proposed range from bringing back the 'small school', to arts-based or other specialization schools, schools that provide learner-centred environments, to schools that stress examinations and traditional forms of instruction. Common among these opinions is the assertion that schools are 'getting it wrong'. While we agree that school does not work for a variety of students, we believe that 'doing school differently' must be based on the needs of students and serving those needs relationally. Many students appear to be alienated from learning, from one another and from the adults they are supposed to be learning from. Too many students feel unwelcome and unwanted at school, and find that they are not receiving the help they need to succeed and thrive educationally and socially (Cassidy and Bates, 2005). School seems irrelevant and disconnected from students' lives, resulting in many students dropping out or being 'pushed out' (Fine, 1991; Wotherspoon and Schissel, 2001). There is some recognition of the problems but in general 'solutions' are sought through pre-packaged

programmes, applied as add-on strategies in ad hoc fashion, but rarely are the roots of the issues addressed.

There is wide agreement that schools and communities should be caring places, and caring, we contend, should provide the basis for teaching practice. We have selected the ethic of care as the framework or foundation for developing pedagogy, because of its suitability to our overall vision of building a community-based learning environment that serves all learners. 'The current structures of schooling work against care, and at the same time, the need for care may be greater than ever' (Noddings, 1992: 20). Schools that align with ethic-of-care approaches look at creating the right culture, or the right soil, so that students may thrive, rather than looking to behaviouristic models or rules and consequent approaches for managing the school and containing student behaviour. Teachers and school administrators are encouraged to model and practise those values and behaviours that they wish to see emulated in students. Thus, ethic-of-care approaches aim to be holistic and pervasive, becoming embedded in all school policies and practices.

No one, least of all in the teaching profession, would say they are uncaring, and everyone would likely say they care about their students and that they want them to be successful. This popular notion of care lulls us into a complacency that having *intent* to care will make schools into caring places. Furthermore, care is often perceived simply as 'being nice'. Ethical caring in all its complexity is still not widely understood by teachers and administrators and, therefore, is not widely practised in school settings. To understand caring as pedagogy, one must have a sound understanding of the principles of ethical caring.

In this chapter, we first introduce, briefly, some of the basic theory on the ethic of care as conceptualized by Nel Noddings (1984, 1992, 2002). These elements of care will be illustrated through examples from teachers and administrators who are integrating the ethic of care into their practice, developing a pedagogy of care. These examples are part of a research study Enacting the Ethic of Care, undertaken in Western Canada. Much has been theorized about the ethic of care, but little research has been done on its enactment in teaching/learning environments. In our study, 14 teachers and administrators from a variety of educational settings (elementary, secondary, alternate, post-secondary; inner-city, suburban, rural; multicultural; diverse socio-economic levels) participated in a community of inquiry, over four years, that sought both to understand and explore the practices and conditions that would support them in initiating and sustaining the ethic of care in their day-to-day school lives. The main findings of this study relate to how teachers and school administrators perceive and cultivate caring within themselves, with colleagues and among students, and how policy and practice have been influenced. While it is not possible within the constraints of this chapter to

write extensively about the findings themselves, nor the wide-ranging implications for practice and the theory, we do offer a few examples of how these educators practised an ethic of care. We conclude by discussing the implications of this approach on developing a pedagogy based on the ethic of care.

## What is ethical caring?

Caring for others is a natural impulse in humans. Natural caring is directly observable and experienced in the family, between mother and baby, and parents (and extended family) caring for their young. The motivation to care, according to Noddings, 'arises on its own' (1995: 187), and thus natural caring is accessible to all. The question that scholars such as Noddings address is how this natural caring can be extended to become ethical caring (1984) so that care is not limited to private life, but can be widely practised in public life (2002). As Noddings argues:

The custom since Plato, has been to describe an ideal or best state and then to discuss the role of homes and families as supporters of the state. What might we learn if, instead, we start with a description of best homes and then move outward to the larger society? (2002: 1)

Indeed, the question that relates to educators is how can we understand what it means to bring ethical caring into the classroom as a fundamental aspect of schooling?

Care is a relational ethic, with an emphasis on 'living together, on creating, maintaining positive relations' (Noddings, 1992: 21). Acknowledging the work of Gilligan (1982), Noddings articulates care as a 'needs and response-based ethic' (1992: 21) which involves an encounter or connection between the one caring, or carer, and the cared-for, or receiver of care. The carer perceives that there is need for care and is moved to respond with a caring act. This impulse to care becomes ethical caring in the relationship between the one who gives, and the one who receives care. The cared-for participates by 'receiving' the act of care through response, or reciprocity. Ethical caring in these terms offers opportunities for people to connect with one another 'in relationships characterized by mutuality' (Noddings, 1992: 18).

Caring, then, is 'not a specific set of behaviours' (Noddings, 1992: 18) or attributes, although there may be virtues that support care. It is constituted in the *relationship* between the carer and the cared-for, and this participation of both carer and cared-for in the act of caring marks ethical caring as an ethic of relationship and mutuality. The inclusion and active participation of the cared-for also ensures that caring cannot be codified, nor can the carer refer to a set of 'rules' or a template, as each act of caring demands a unique response generated from the specific needs of the cared-for. Thus, the ethic of care calls for *seeing* ethical possibilities in everyday

experiences; caring results from our sense of connection with each other, that is, of community. From the position of being cared-for, at one time, and from practising care as a carer, it is possible to develop this capacity. It is a memory of being cared for, or caring, or an ideal of ourselves as carers that enables the carer to act.

As moral education, Noddings (1984, 1992) articulates ethical caring in terms of four elements: modelling, dialogue, practice and confirmation. Modelling and practice are both concerned with 'growing' the capacities to care, and highlight the importance of providing caring opportunities so that carers and cared-for alike can develop their capacities to care. The labels of carer and cared-for are not fixed identities, which allow the cared-for to become habituated to care first through experience and then through subsequent practice. Thus, the modelling of care has the effect of letting students know they matter and giving them an experience of what it means to matter, and provides the cared-for with good memories and experiences of caring encounters. It also has the effect of spreading 'good practice' outside the classroom by habituating the cared-for to engage in ethical caring themselves. Practice and modelling promote and nurture the enactment of care and they cannot occur without dialogue.

Noddings (1984) uses the Freirian concept of dialogue as a vital aspect of a caring practice. Dialogue, as Freire (2000) articulates, reduces the power imbalances and 'contradictions' inherent in the teacher-student relationship. Open-ended dialogue where the intention is to 'receive' the other, and 'attend' to the other through empathic listening, enables both sides to move to new co-understandings that have the potential to break through the most intractable of positions and situations. Dialogue may also involve the unspoken word: touch, smiles, affectionate sound, silence or glances, 'a feeling with, and attending to' (Greene, 1991: 544). Dialogue from a caring perspective is never coercive, and always invitational, 'a common search for understanding, empathy or appreciation' (Noddings, 1992: 23).

The fourth element, confirmation, is not separate, and often arises from dialogue and is conceptualized by Noddings, in Buber's terms, as 'the act of affirming and encouraging the best in others' (Noddings, 1992: 24). Confirmation requires 'seeing and receiving the other'; for example, the teacher clearly sees what the student did, receives the feelings with which it was done and chooses the best to attribute to that student, while at the same time nurturing the student towards the ethical ideal (Noddings, 1984: 196).

## Enacting care: rewards and challenges

In our research on the ethic of care, we sought to understand how the theory on the ethic of care, described briefly above, was perceived by educators and enacted

in classrooms and schools, and if we could identify elements of a pedagogy based on the ethic of care. Developing relationships with students, and finding the time to build community in their classrooms were top priorities among the teachers and administrators who were invited to participate in our study. Care, for these educators was primarily about 'getting to know each [student] as much as possible' as expressed by Kaylin. 'It means being genuinely interested in their lives,' emphasized Denise, a vice principal in the same school. As she continued, 'Care cannot just be words; it must be followed by tangible action'. The 'action' she spoke of is the response that follows from perceiving the needs of each student, and in her experience, the more one knows students, the better the ability to perceive and respond actively to needs.

As Noddings describes, there is 'no recipe' for caring, and '[c]aring teachers [need to] listen and respond differentially to their students (1992: 19). While this is one of the most important features of an ethically caring approach, it also leads to one of the most significant challenges to maintaining care in a classroom with large numbers of learners of diverse backgrounds, with curricular and other demands, and the unique needs of the students themselves.

Relationship and community building were addressed at a number of levels and with a variety of strategies among our participants. Problems relating to exclusion and marginalization begin from very early ages, as observed by our educators, resulting in divisions and attitudes being more firmly established by the time students enter high school, vocational and alternative school, and post-secondary institutions. In their view, the absence of a caring approach in early education contributed enormously to problematic learning and social situations in later teenage years. Having a broad representation of educators in our study provided the bigger picture of how care contributed to the well-being of students, or the lack of care to problems related to marginalization and exclusion. The elementary teachers illustrated how those problems could be addressed early in the educational life of students, while the educators from alternate schools provided lessons to be learned from successful approaches in their environments.

Ken, a school counsellor and teacher in an alternative school programme, expressed it well:

If care was a more central characteristic of the school, perhaps some of the social issues that affect at-risk students could be addressed more effectively. If educators really care about at-risk students dropping out of school then more flexibility in scheduling and perhaps less instructional classes and more self-paced ones could help individual students living in less fortunate personal and social situations.

Ken suggested that care should become more 'mainstream' in all schools, rather

than an alternative practice in an alternative setting alone. Identifying belonging and recognition as primary needs among all students, and in particular among marginalized and 'at-risk' youth, he continued, 'If more at-risk students could feel a sense of belonging and recognition within the school community this would hopefully in turn encourage them to participate more fully within it'. Enacting care within a classroom and school, in Ken's experience, meant creating opportunities and strategies to foster that sense of belonging, and to recognize all students in the classroom. These in turn connect back to the notion of knowing, respecting and valuing the student, leading to a mutual relationship between educator and student, discussed earlier.

Some of the more moving descriptions of the transformative effect of care were from educators who worked in alternate settings, serving students who were marginalized in multiple ways. Helen (teacher) and Peter (principal) in a school for at-risk youth related how the youth they served were able to learn only because of the efforts made to first establish trust and connection. In their experience, the ethic of care offered hope to these students in difficult situations. 'Often, this is the only thing they have to hold on to – that someone cares for them and what happens to them' (Peter).

Ken offered hope to his students by confirming them through unconditional positive regard (a concept based on Carl Rogers). Ken saw the presenting behaviour of these youth as a result of a lack of care in their lives, and unmet needs. One of the ways in which he met that challenge was to introduce a pet-care programme in which the youth took responsibility in caring for a pet, thus gaining experience of physically caring for another being. The work of restoring healthy relationships in their lives is an enormous task, but one that must be addressed. 'It's modelling ... you are modelling how people can interact with one another [in a healthy way]. It's not like forcing your agenda, you are just "being"' (Ken). Helen also reinforced the 'being with' students as an essential element of a pedagogy of care:

[M]ostly it is just about being with them. And that's such a vague term, but be with them, be interested in their lives and I do that every day ... play cards with them, take time just to hang out with them ... tell them a little about my life ... that's how I develop a relationship with them. (Helen).

This 'honouring them through treating them well' (Helen) often resulted in a dramatic shift in how the students themselves responded to the programme, and to school. With these successes however, our participants recognized the enormous effort, energy and time that were required for a pedagogy of care, and they returned often to the topic of self-care and sustaining practices of care.

The monthly meetings in our research group served as a venue in which the

participants talked through these and other dilemmas that presented themselves in the practice of care. Denise and Kaylin convened a teachers' dialogue group in their school to examine what practices and conditions supported teachers to sustain dialogue that centred on care and inclusion. They studied and discussed the work of Nel Noddings and then worked through their own challenges to care. An important outcome of this initiative was the realization that care of the self through dialogue and support generated from the group was critical in sustaining practices of care. Also, care of others entailed the knowing of self, increased awareness of self and others, and the ability to increase the capacity to perceive and understand the needs of others.

Care, as these teachers discovered, is complex, and requires support, time, and a holistic and integrated approach in its enactment. Among the teachers in our study (including ourselves), we discovered that dialogue deepens understanding of ethical caring, and deepens practice as dilemmas and problem situations are discussed and worked through, and the learnings incorporated into everyday classroom teaching. It was evident that the capacity to care is connected to reflexivity. In other words, attending to the other, is to see one's own role in the caring relationship. Here we particularly refer to the power relations embedded in the teacher–student relationship, and how one's power influenced and affected the mutuality of the relationship. As Peter explained:

You let *them* define the relationship ... I don't have a relationship model that I'm going to have with all the kids coming in, and what I have is 'This is who I am, how do you want us to be together' ... and I try to be approachable so that any [student] feels like they can approach me on whatever level, and some kids, you know, it's a very minimal relationship, and that's all they want, that's all they need. But ... they know that I'm there, and they can come to me and that may be all that they want.

Perception or 'seeing' is another critical aspect of ethical care. Teachers must be skilled in perceiving needs rather than, for example, projecting their own ideas of student needs. And so, care relations are grounded in being able to see ourselves, as well as developing capacities to see inwardly and outwardly. Other-orientation requires a high degree of self-reflexivity and self-knowledge, and these are key qualities in the development of a pedagogy grounded in care.

Administrative support and leadership in setting a tone and approaches aligned to an ethic of care were key factors in furthering a pedagogy of care school-wide. For three administrators Janice, Sarah and Elaine, this meant balancing and constantly navigating among the needs of students, parents, teachers and other support persons, while keeping clear the objective of supporting students to be successful in school. Learning in the classroom, according to Sarah, is not an isolated cognitive activity. It is dependent on everything else that is going on in that

student's life. A pedagogy of care for all the principals meant leaving their doors open at all times so that students could wander in whenever they wanted to ask questions, share something exciting or simply check in if they felt moved to. 'The kids come to you with their problems and they'll talk to you, and you can go into a classroom and the kids will quiet down, and they'll follow your direction – because you have that connection' (Janice).

Sarah and Elaine worked in schools with high immigrant populations, and both commented extensively on the correlation between students who are successful learners and a caring environment with strong relationships at all levels of the school. As Elaine comments:

You can have the most wonderful curriculum, the most wonderful methodologies in the world, and if a [student] doesn't like his teacher or doesn't feel safe with his teacher he's not going to learn to the best of his ability. So kids have to know that people in the school care about them. And care enough about them to see beyond just what they present, you know. To know enough that a raised eyebrow, or something like that might signal 'I'm feeling anxious' or 'I'm stressed. I'm needing some attention'.

All the administrators in our study emphasized this role of creating connection with the students in their school. For Elaine, 'Care means considering all the angles, and sometimes bending the rules a bit. You know, looking after people rather than looking after policy sometimes'.

An ethic of care can be enacted in a variety of ways – an orientation to ordering school, designing the curriculum around a model of care, caring for ideas, care as critical learner engagement and caring for the world around us. We have not addressed here issues regarding caring and the curriculum, but wish to point out that there is much for exploration. In fact, it offers a clear alternative to what we consider an undue emphasis among teachers and student-teachers (in particular) on lesson plans and methodologies.

How do we move the system to recognize that teaching and school is more than reading and writing? ... And get teachers to move away from the curriculum? ... Educators are a product of the culture of conformity and obedience ... of math tests and homework. This is not school, and this is not learning. (Denise)

And for at-risk youth, Ken articulated clearly how an ethic of care could bring about change and school success: 'If an ethic of care were more central to the education curriculum, at-risk students could be able to learn things that they actually care about. Being allowed to study things that interest them would likely make

## Conclusion: towards a pedagogy of care

The data emerging from our study strongly confirmed the value and benefits of establishing a community that provides its participants with ample opportunities, resources and support to examine, reflect on and transform their practice towards a caring orientation. We found that the enactment of care leads to capacity-building of educators' ability to sustain practices of care and that we may actually learn, despite the challenges to our narrow boundaries of self, to perceive and emotionally respond from the place of deep ethical caring for the other, and in particular the significantly different other. Care theory focuses attention on the concept of self as a relational one and the ethic of care enables us to combine the cultivation of ethical self with practices that are congruent with important goals of education, in the development of 'good' human beings. As one of the participants summarized, 'caring practices are about the well-being of others' (Wendy) and the research meetings led to a strengthening of our capacity to both understand and navigate through the messy world of practice, 'the courage to walk a different road' (Wendy).

Our participants found the journey towards enacting the ethic of care into their schools and classrooms immensely rich and fulfilling, a journey worth continuing. Each talked about their own lives being enriched and deepened, about a strengthening resolve to seeing ethically caring possibilities in their interactions with students and in the decisions they made each day about what to teach, how to teach and how to foster interpersonal relationships among students and colleagues. Several talked about feeling empowered in their classrooms and about being excited to see their day unfold. They were able to see their role in the school with greater acuity.

Rawls (1971), in his book *A Theory of Justice*, claims that education must be judged against the standard of how well each 'educated' person has improved the situation of those who have lost out. Greene (1991) argues that an education based on caring brings with it a vision of healing and an unleashing of people's ethical power to act for the betterment of all. As discussed by our research participants, this path is not easy, but it is too important to ignore' (Kaylin). What we have seen in our study is that enacting the ethic of care in schools not only makes school a better place for students and teachers in the 'now', but has the potential to impact the wider community as students and teachers engage with more distant others in ethically caring ways.

### Discussion questions

1. Using examples from your own schooling and teaching, describe what constitutes ethical caring.
2. How do modelling, practice, dialogue and confirmation facilitate an ethic of care?
3. What are some of the challenges faced by teachers in practising a pedagogy of care, and how do these limit the enactment of care?
4. In what ways does this chapter encourage you to think more deeply about enacting the ethic of care into your school or educational institution?

### Further reading

- Noddings, N. (1992) *The Challenge to Care in Schools: An Alternative Approach to Education*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Palmer, P. (1998) *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.


### Recommended viewing

- 'Dare to Care: Transforming schools through the ethics of care' (2009), DVD directed by M. Hawley and D. Van Poelgeest and available through the National Film Board of Canada ([www.nfb.ca](http://www.nfb.ca)).

# 8 Pedagogy of hope

Kitty te Riele

This chapter proposes an innovative pedagogy, based on philosophy of hope. The chapter:

- explains the concept of hope, and argues that hope should be complex, attainable and sound;
- sets out the pedagogy of hope, based on four resources: a positive culture of learning, focusing on possibility, establishing a community of hope, and critical reflection; and
- provides practical examples drawn from research. 

In Greek mythology, the idea of hope goes back to the story of Pandora, who was given a jar by the Olympian gods. The jar was full of evils which were released into the world when she opened it. Pandora quickly shut the jar and only one thing remained inside – hope. Does this mean hope is imprisoned? Or is the jar keeping hope safe, preserving it as an antidote to evils?

Teachers can recognize both possibilities. Faced with a lack of resources, 'troublesome' students and/or increasing workloads it can seem that there is no hope – it is locked away. On the other hand, faced with such difficulties, teachers can equally feel grateful that hope exists – a positive resource to help them. Goleman (1998) agrees with the second interpretation when he argues that in stressful jobs hope is a crucial asset. This chapter focuses on pedagogy of hope in relation to teachers, but the suggestions can also form a generative source of action for others working with young people.

## The idea of hope

Interest in using the idea of hope in education ranges from 'hope theory' in psychology (Snyder, 2002) via pragmatist (Shade, 2006) and critical (Rieker, 2006).