

EDUCATING THE YOUNG

A CURRICULUM OF CARING IN AN UNCERTAIN WORLD

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OVERVIEW

The purpose of this session is to fully consider the heart of the child in a reconceived curriculum. We imagine a heartfelt pedagogy of care for the young and to seek ways of creating spaces whereby all children and youth are valued, included, and heard (Kentel et al., 2011). We further attempt to tackle complex pedagogical concerns as a means to care for and honour children and to tell them the truth even when the truth is difficult.

WHAT IS THE RESEARCH ABOUT?

Drawing on the care ethics of Noddings (1984 ff.) as a pediment for reform we envision a living curriculum (Aoki 1993; Kentel & Karrow 2009) that places the needs of children and youth at the fore of pedagogy. Ethical principles have little purpose if they do not encompass meaningful existence and compassion for humanity. In the educational community being human means we recognize ourselves as persons first, that is, secondary to ourselves as educators. We live complex and storied lives as children, siblings, partners, friends, parents, grandparents, and teachers; lives that are at times contradictory. We may be drawn or dragged into a pedagogy that inadvertently gives scant attention to the young (Sanford & Hopper, 2011). This is the innermost difficulty of care ethics. We sway from caring to not caring because at times the latter is presumed a matter of our personal survival. And what of self-care? Is self-care a precursor to caring for others? Does self-care have a presence in the curriculum we put into practice.



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Educating the young: The ethics of care:

<http://www.peterlang.com/index.cfm?event=cmp.ccc.seitenstruktur.detailseiten&seitentyp=podukt&pk=52884&cid=5&concordeid=11984>

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MAY 27, 2012 (CANADIAN SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF EDUCATION)

*Our hearts are never more than
A heart beat from breaking,
So how, how are we going
To care for our vulnerable
hearts?*

(Leggo, 2011)

IMPORTANCE

Care ethics in educating the young will continue to evolve and embrace new ideas. There is no single response that can fully educate, honour, and reveal truth to the young. We can only consider these ideas whilst looking to ways to act. We are indeed aware that thoughts, ideas, words must be acted upon. Without action ideas are void. So as we look to new ways of educating, honouring, and truth telling we remind ourselves why we are here – children matter – the young matter. A living curriculum of caring calls on us to awaken ourselves to the concerns of the very heart of the child while caring for our own vulnerable hearts.

As educators in an uncertain world perhaps the only certitude we can offer the young is that they do matter and are cared for.

FINDINGS

If education is self-education (Gadamer, 2001), so too, care is self-care. Care of self may indeed be the most fundamental care to be learned (Noddings, 2003). Is self-care a virtue? If self-care is a virtue, 'Can virtue be taught?' (Plato). Or perhaps more significantly, 'Can virtue be learned?' Is the task of teaching simply to let learn? Much of our teaching may indeed be about getting out of the way of education. Perhaps too often we, who call ourselves educators, get in the way of education. That is, by employing a conformist pedagogy we thwart the intellectual capacities of others. An alternative way of portraying education is in its active form. If we look upon education as *educating*, always moving, evolving, acting, transforming we might open ourselves to the presence of a living curriculum. In accordance with this line of argumentation, an ethics of care is about *caring*. Caring is not something we have done, or are about to do. Caring is what we *are* doing, in the moment; the moving and living moment. Caring transforms with the carer and the cared for.