THE UNCERTAIN JOURNEY: A REFLECTIVE EXPLORATION OF THE TEACHABLE MOMENT

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ABSTRACT

This reflective, experientially based study examines the "teachable moment" in the context of two learning contexts, a university tutorial classroom and a karate dojo. The data for the study is generated through in-depth reading; journal, exploratory and expositional writing; and a cyclical interaction with the texts generated during the study. As teacher, student and writer, the researcher examines her experiences in these contexts to further her development as a teacher. The boundaries of the inquiry are selected to allow enough room to explore concepts and experiences as they emerge. The researcher attempts to convey the experiential nature as well as the content of the inquiry in the thesis text. The form of the thesis and the processes used in writing it contribute substantially to the content of the document. The writing is more than the account of the research findings; rather, it is the methodological vehicle used to drive the inquiry. The text of the thesis is an attempt to creatively express the ineffable qualities of teaching. Italicized excerpts, from the researcher's own journal inserted throughout the text, are used to express reflections on the embodied experiences of these qualities of teaching and learning. Throughout the text, the language is carefully chosen and the meaning of the language considered. The researcher uses analytical and categorical language as well as experiential, personal language and attempts to include creative, artistic language to create a narrative unity which corresponds more closely to the entirety of her teaching and learning experiences. The researcher's own uncertainty and questions are the beginning place for her search for knowledge about teaching and learning in the teachable moment

and for an exploration of the nature of knowledge.

The teachable moment is an opportunity for learning and teaching. The teachable moment begins with the learner's question. The teacher, obedient to the search for knowledge and fully present to the conditions surrounding the question, trusts he or she will respond appropriately, ensuring the learning environment is supportive of inquiry. The teachable moment is a space for authentic questions and answers contributing to the development of a personal relationship between the learner and the topic and to his or her understanding of the nature of knowledge. Learning in the teachable moment is potentially transformative, creating the conditions to make a space for change in the learner's perceptions, understanding and practices. The teachable moment can be powerful for the student because it is an opportunity to integrate several levels of understanding and ways of knowing, extending beyond a rational understanding. Teaching for the teachable moment acknowledges the pace of learning varies depending upon how the student's learning is integrated into her or his understanding.

The learning and the writing in this study are cyclical in nature. Ideas or themes that emerged early in the inquiry, surface again and again during the researcher's dialogue with the texts generated from the two teaching and learning contexts each time revealing a new layer of meaning. The researcher has tried to convey this cycle of learning in the thesis text by revisiting the themes, the nature of knowledge, uncertainty, awareness or mindfulness, attentiveness, obedience and trust in each chapter. Each treatment of these themes deepens the discussion of them, following the researcher's own learning. The author of this study asks the reader to engage holistically with the text, to come along

with her on a learning journey to seek possibilities and further questions as well as answers.

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The First Step

> The minds we have used to divide and conquer creation were given to us for another purpose: to raise to awareness the communal nature of reality, to overcome separateness and alienation by a knowing that *is* loving, to reach out with intelligence to acknowledge and renew the bonds of life. The failure of modern knowledge is not primarily a failure in our ethics, in the application of what we know. Rather, it is the failure of our knowing itself to recognize and reach for its deeper source and passions, to allow love to inform the relations that our knowledge creates-with ourselves, with each other, with the whole animate and inanimate world. (Palmer, 1983, p. 8/9)

Beginnings are deceptive. Beginnings imply a tangible point out of which the story emerges and before which nothing noteworthy existed or occurred. Beginnings are a selected point, the place and time chosen to begin, out of many possible points not necessarily along a line but like the stars, a point out of such a vast number of points that it boggles the mind to contemplate which one to pick as a starting point. Selecting a beginning is difficult because picking one point to start from denies one the possible choice of other starting points. The responsibility of picking a good starting point weighs heavily on me. A journey of a thousand miles begins with one step so rather than sit on my front stoop and think about starting, I put my boot to the ground and begin. I start my journey, my uncertain journey, not knowing where it will lead, or what roads I will take to get where I'm going. The impetus to begin overcomes my fear of the unknown; staying, while secure and known, is no longer satisfying. My need to know, to explore my own questions, overcomes my own inertia. This text is the record of my journey, a recounting

of where and how I travelled. Sometimes the story is more about me than the places to which I travelled; sometimes it is more a description of the educational landscapes through which I travelled. Throughout the journey, I looked for meaning, the meaning of my experiences as a teacher and a student, the meaning of words used to talk about and create ideas in education. I left the place where what I understood about 'the way things are' or should be is unquestioned and went looking for the places of the possible, the way things could be.

The grail of my journey is an understanding of the "teachable moment." The words, teachable moment, imply a single, recognizable moment that involves a teacher and a learner and a discrete moment of understanding. Words can also be deceptive. At the beginning of my research, I conceived of the teachable moment as the moment when understanding replaces confusion in the learner's mind or what Irving Siegel calls the resolution of discrepancies between what students know with what they learn (cited in Ellsworth & Sindt, 1994, p. 43). It is the "Aha!" or "I've got it!" moment. Through my research, I have come to see this conception of the teachable moment is only one of many. The teachable moment is a teaching and learning opportunity. The teachable moment is a space for authentic questions and answers potentially contributing to the development of a personal relationship between the learner and the topic and to his or her understanding of the nature of knowledge. It is a moment when it is possible for the learner to connect several levels of understanding and ways of knowing. It is a moment of integrative learning on a continuum of learning activities and experiences. It is a moment that is potentially transformative for both the teacher and the student. It is a moment of possible

learning that can be difficult to predict or detect. While it is logical to assume that when the teacher teaches, the learner learns, the relationship between teaching and learning is not so straightforward. Learning is not confined to planned teacher-student interaction in the classroom. The teachable moment could happen in front of the teacher which is the most gratifying scenario for the teacher as it gives her or him immediate proof of the student's learning. The moment could happen in the future, even years later, because of the ground work prepared by earlier learning. The moment could happen for some students, but not for others, because of the level of their development, preparedness, motivation, attention or any number of other factors. The teacher may never be aware of the moment of learning, the "learnable moment" for the student, of the connections he or she has made through private reflection. Despite favorable conditions, the moment may pass without learning taking place. I believe the essential aspect of the teachable moment, the Aha! or the learnable moment is the meaningful connection of past knowledge to present knowledge. The nature of the learner's past knowledge, how she or he has learned it, how he or she understands it, shapes the occurrence of connections with present knowledge and the transformation of that knowledge into understanding.

The shaping of understanding is not only a rational process. Some ideas are understood first with the body, with emotions, with intuition and are named, ordered and articulated through thought and language. The act of naming, of articulating generates another level of understanding. Some ideas that have only been words become embodied, become felt. The history of the questions I have asked and how I have lived with the responses to my questions also shapes my understanding. The teachable moment is

powerful for me as a learner because it is the bringing together of different kinds of knowledge, different kinds of understanding to create new understanding that is more than the sum of its parts, an understanding that shapes future actions and future learning. It is a moment along a continuum of learning in which many ways of knowing are accessed at the moment of creating new understanding.

My inquiry into the teachable moment has led me to many questions, most of which are beyond the scope of this text. One of the simpler questions–What is knowledge?–is difficult to answer in a definitive way. The question is intriguing because our understanding of what knowledge is affects our relationship with it. The joining of knowledge with relationship transforms knowledge into a living curriculum. In this inquiry, I pursue a living relationship with my topic of inquiry which has implications for my relationship with the knowledge and understanding I come to know throughout the span of the inquiry. I will discuss the implications of a personal relationship with inquiry later in this document. In this inquiry, I am not interested in establishing a hierarchy or catalogue of kinds of knowledge. I am interested in knowledge in the context of how I interact with it when I learn, do, and create and when I can see and help others learning, doing and creating. In my own experience with learning in and out of school, the knowledge I have lived, that I have bodily experienced, is the knowledge that is the most fully integrated into myself. I understand many concepts intellectually and can usually draw accurate inferences based on newly learned information. The knowledge that stays with me, however, is created in activities in which I have to use mind and body together such as riding a motorcycle, cooking, writing, playing a musical instrument. These

activities call for an integration of body and mind, of memory, perception, judgement, wisdom, intellect, emotion. I am drawn to examine the teachable moment because I believe it is a moment when learning is integrated with experience and where the experience extends learning beyond an intellectual way of knowing.

The privilege of being a teacher is the "beingness" of teaching, having all your own learning, and your interaction with others while learning, inside of you, re-creating you each time you teach. Peter Jackson (1986) talks about teaching as one of the few professions in which a teacher can say "I am teaching" but for which it is not always clear what the result is of the teaching activity. Architects design a building. Construction workers build it. Because the outcome of teaching is less certain, some of the essence of teaching is being a teacher. As a profession it is likened to ministry, to medicine, to professions that are callings as well as ways to earn a living. The calling is not only a calling to do, it is a call to be. This journey is my response to the call in my own life to be a teacher.

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The important thing about the teachable moment for me is the dawning of understanding in that moment, how I can see in a whole new way the things I have known and the things I am learning still and how this new way of seeing changes how I am, how I act in the world. I think of the time in karate when I was having trouble doing low side kicks and I asked the teacher, "how can I do the kicks better?" He showed me the kick

several times and talked about how the beginning movements we learn in karate use the same muscles, the same motions as when we walk. Learning to punch and to kick straight ahead are easier because we already know how to move in that way. He demonstrated some more advanced movements, moving backward while punching forward or moving sideways and striking out sideways. These movements, he explained, need to be practiced more because we are not used to moving in this way. It takes more time to build strength for these movements. I understood in that moment not only what he was saying but how my thinking about how I was moving had been limited prior to that moment. He did not tell me anything I did not already know. But his explanation, at that moment, facilitated my understanding of how I was moving, while practicing karate and walking down the street. I think about movement now in a different way. So when I repeat movements I already know and learn new ones, I can see which ones flow out of movements I am accustomed to doing and which movements require more practice. I am more aware of what I am doing while I am doing it. My question, "how can I kick better?" and the teacher's response was a teachable moment that changed how I think about the way I move - a result that was far beyond my immediate desire for knowledge, for the answer. I could tell of other teachable moments, when I learned the difference between concentration and awareness, when I learned I could know something in my body before I could make sense of it in my head. The learning in these moments and following these moments is tangible; I will keep it with me beyond the original context in which I learned it. These moments do not appear from nowhere; they come out of frequent engagement with the topic, with a sincere desire to learn more, to improve, with an openness to experiences and ideas and an awareness of them that builds a personal, vital relationship between student and topic. My drive to know when I practice karate is personal. If I am going to continue to practice, I need to know more about it. My passion drives my need to learn, to be better than I was yesterday. The passion comes from my realization that karate is the response to my desire to learn more about how my mind and body are connected, to learn how to use them in different ways than I had before. So quickly my writing about the teachable moment turns toward the learning experience I have had in karate. It is a place of learning where I have experienced my most recent teachable moments and even recalling them fuels my desire to learn more. These moments changed me and continue to change me. I could not and would not forget what I have learned. It is too powerful to forget. (Personal journal entry Jul 9/98)

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The content of this introductory chapter is an answer to the question I posed myself, "What do I think the reader needs to know before reading further?" The answer to that question is what my inquiry is about, how I've gone about inquiring and why I chose to do it that way.

My inquiry is an attempt to pay attention to my lived experience of the teachable moment. The teachable moment is a phenomenon that is difficult to describe in the way I would describe my favourite chair. The moment is transitory, an internal event that may or may not have recognizable external signs. It is a moment teachers and parents recognize but can not describe. We use metaphors; "the light bulb turned on," or "the skies opened up and the sun shone down." While these metaphors convey a meaningful image, that image does not tell me what is happening during the moment. How can I, as a researcher, describe something that is ineffable? It is difficult to get inside peoples' minds to know what they are thinking. A good starting place is to get inside my own mind, to use my own experience to describe what is happening during this moment of connection.

In order to use my own experience as research data, I must consider how to prepare myself to research my topic. Max van Manen (1990) talks about the researcher's orientation to this kind of inquiry as a "carefully cultivated thoughtfulness." This thoughtful orientation makes sense for me in terms of the word, attentiveness. The word attention comes from the Latin, tendere, which means to stretch. As a researcher, I strive to be attentive to my subject of inquiry. Being attentive as a researcher means I am stretching to meet my subject, to come to know it from a position of care. My care as a researcher is

to give voice to the phenomena she studies and to be obedient to the truths that emerge out of the inquiry. "Obedience requires the discerning ear, the ear that listens for the reality of the situation, a listening that allows the hearer to respond to that reality, whatever it may be" (Palmer, 1983, p. 43). My preparatory orientation to the study of the teachable moment includes an awareness of and a striving towards this state of obedience to the lived experience.

Through my inquiry, I will attempt to articulate my own experiences with the teachable moment in two learning contexts: as a teacher and as a student. The context for my experience as a teacher comes out of my recent work as a tutor/facilitator within an introductory, liberal arts, cross-disciplinary course at The University of Lethbridge during the 1997 Fall semester. I chose this context as it seemed to be a favorable teaching context in which to facilitate the teachable moment. The course includes two lectures per week performed by a series of guest lecturers on a variety of topics that cross disciplinary boundaries. Throughout these series of lectures, broad themes are interwoven into the discipline-specific lectures so that themes such as equality, gender roles and human rights are discussed from a sociological, historical and multicultural perspective. In addition to the lectures, the students attend a tutorial once a week in which tutors try to engage the students with the material and to teach them to think critically about what they are learning.

As a tutor, I focussed much of my attention on the processes of teaching and learning through dialogue and questioning to bring the course content to the students so they could make sense of it and integrate the information into their personal knowledge

framework. Mezirow calls this knowledge construct "meaning structures."

> These structures contain our personal beliefs and values as well as norms and expectations acquired from the socio-cultural context. When life experience is congruent with the meaning structure, it is assimilated into that structure. The incongruent experience might also trigger changes in the meaning structure and/or lead to the formation of a new meaning structure. (cited in Merriam & Clark, 1993, p. 130)

The merging of life experience with classroom knowledge involves the construction and deconstruction of meaning. In this learning context, I attempted to facilitate understanding and connection between the student and the subject matter and it was this opportunity for sense-making that I believed constituted a fertile ground for the teachable moment.

The context for my experience as a student comes out of my practice of karate and my observations of the karate instructor over the last year and a half. I chose this context because I frequently experienced and observed what looked like teachable moments during karate class. As a novice teacher, I am interested in examining the karate instructor's approach to teaching karate, wanting to learn what he does to facilitate these moments of learning. He is a master of his subject matter, teaching for mastery of karate. The basic challenge of karate is self-improvement, to work each day to improve a little bit more. The practice of karate is unlike my participation in other learning contexts and is shaping my conception of what it means to learn, to live with a topic of study even as the practice is shaping my own body.

In chapters two and three, I describe the contexts of the tutorial classroom and the karate dojo focussing on what is happening there, how it happens, and, my interpretation of why it happens. Through a critical appraisal of research literature and the two learning

contexts from my own experiences, I attempt to draw out essential themes I believe are linked to the teachable moment and through writing about these themes, articulate and illuminate them. The themes that have emanated from the texts I have generated out of my inquiry are the role of uncertainty in teaching for the teachable moment, attention and mindfulness, obedience and trust. By remaining grounded in the text produced by this inquiry, a text which, hopefully, will speak to actual teaching and learning experience, the interpretive account produced by this inquiry should resonate with teachers who have also experienced the teachable moment and will reveal at least some of the moment's essential nature in a meaningful way. This account reflects my personal journey and how I have learned more about the nature of the teachable moment. Although my experience of these two learning contexts is unique, the understanding I've developed through my experiences and my interpretation of those experiences will speak to others interested in the nature of the teachable moment.

> To learn is to face transformation. To learn the truth is to enter into relationships requiring us to respond as well as initiate, to give as well as take. If we become vulnerable to the communal claims of truth, conversion would be required. Our knowledge of the atom would call us to the patient work of peacemaking, not mindless acts of war; our knowledge of human nature would call us to the difficult task of cooperation, beyond our easy instinct to compete; our knowledge of nature would call us into careful nurturing, not careless exploitation, of the earth. But we find it safer to seek facts that keep us in power rather than truths that require our own conversion. If we can keep reality "out there," we can avoid, for a while, the truth that lays the claim of community on our individual and collective lives. (Palmer, 1983, p. 40)

> We learn to do something by doing it. There is no other way. (Holt cited in Cameron, 1992, p. 162)

I chose to pursue the question, "What is the teachable moment like?," through a reflective, experiential inquiry process because this cycle of experiencing, reflecting, theorizing, acting and re-experiencing is how I learn, how I make sense of what I'm learning. Although my education as a child and even as an undergraduate student in history was not characterized by this cycle, as an adult learner I have learned that only by taking time to work through each part of the cycle can I say that I truly understand a topic of study. The kind of understanding that was typical of my earlier formal educational experiences could be called an intellectual understanding that was sometimes grounded in experience but more often was created in isolation from experience and relied heavily on the authority of my teachers, textbooks and peers. Although I was a successful student in terms of achieving high grades, I rarely thought about the content of my classes or the methods used in those classes. During my secondary and undergraduate schooling, I learned, among other things, that education was learning about things apart from myself and that establishing a personal relationship to the topic of my learning was irrelevant to the educational goals in the classroom. Formal schooling taught me to distrust my ability to learn for myself, by myself and to devalue the experiential knowledge I learned outside of school. In this inquiry, it is important to me that I ground my learning in my own

experiences. This grounding shapes my exploration of literature on teaching, my recording of my experiences as a student and a teacher and my interpretation of the text generated out of my reflections on these sources.

This text does not contain a separate review of research literature on the teachable moment. This omission is intentional. The question of authority has travelled with me throughout my inquiry. I question the validity of my own authority, of my experiences as a source of knowledge. I question the place of other authors, other authorities in my inquiry: how I can learn from them, from their tellings of knowledge without turning my inquiry into an intellectual game in which other authors' words are juggled with my own? How do I combine my voice with their voices without losing my own in the chorus? My answer to these questions is embodied understanding. After reading the words of many authors, the beginning of my own embodied understanding began when I shut the book and used those ideas to reflect on my own experience; when I started to write about the connections I had made with the authors' ideas. This process takes time and goes on even as this project comes to a close. The questions remain and as my understanding grows, changes, lives, I am more comfortable taking my place in the flow of the conversation, the discourse. I may not contribute anything significant to the answers but the understanding I create, this making of sense is mine. I am grateful to all of the people whose voices inspired me to travel further than I originally intended, pointing towards possible roads to take.

This inquiry occurs in a time and space of significant change for me. Prior to the commencement of this project, I worked for two years toward a Masters of Education

degree as a part-time student and in the month prior to my first full-time semester as a student, I resigned from my previous job of seven years to commit myself to this inquiry and to a change of career from library work to teaching. The impetus behind my inquiry is my need to develop my own relationship with learning and teaching, as a student, as a critical observer, as a writer, and as a novice teacher. This time and space is a highly uncertain one for me. My choice to pursue this kind of inquiry, to leave the security of a stable job and to embark on a new career has created an exciting, fearful and challenging arena for me to explore myself as a person as well as a teacher.

The exploration of uncertainty is a central theme of my inquiry into the teachable moment. Uncertainty has infused the content and process of my inquiry, mirroring the uncertainty I experienced in my own life while researching. Learning about uncertainty is counter to everything I have learned about the 'way things are.' Uncertainty resides in the silences, in the spaces. It is a place of tension which we rush to fill. Uncertainty is found in the asking of a question with no ready answer. Teachers can be drawn toward certainty in the classroom. The routines of learning, exercises, activities, tests, assignments are "tools for increasing certainty" that the teacher uses to reduce the ambiguity surrounding the student's knowledge (Floden & Clark, 1988, p. 516). What is the cost of certainty?

> Single-minded pursuit of certainty...can lead to a limited conception of education. A teacher in quest of certainty will be drawn toward factual content that can be taught by rote memorization and tested by requests for recall. Since the present is more certain than the future, a desire for certainty pulls toward a focus on immediate, obvious, specific difficulties, away from global, long-term plans and goals. Thus striving for certainty can lead to limiting teaching and education to those parts where certainty is easiest to obtain. (Floden & Clark, 1988, p. 513)

The pieces from which we can obtain certainty are small parts of the living, flowing world. The certainty we gain from knowing about separate, discrete pieces does not necessarily tell us about the life of the whole. In focussing our attention only on things we can know for certain, we limit how we view the world. So how could we use uncertainty as a way of learning about the world? Does the only useful knowledge about uncertainty consist of ways to minimize it, to minimize its impact?

What if when we use the word, uncertainty, we think of it as a useful way of finding out about the world. Instead of uncertainty, a word associated with negative properties, we could talk of "openness," "awareness of possibilities," and "fluidity" (Floden & Clark, 1988, p. 514). Openness, play, creativity, risk. The possible. These are elements of what learners do with the knowledge they learn, ways in which they come to own it, to understand it. This way of knowing is an artistic way of knowing the world. James McDonald writes,

> Teaching is in part an art, whose impact comes through interweaving the expected and the surprising. An artistic work of depth continues to reveal new facets each time one experiences it. Likewise a teaching lesson has depth if, while going on the whole as expected, it repeatedly provides unexpected opportunities for learning. These tempering thoughts about certainty's virtues are part of what teachers should know, so that they can strike some moderate stance, rather than rooting out uncertainty wherever they find it. Achieving a good balance is difficult. Understanding the various aspects of uncertainty should help in finding the balance, as well as in reducing uncertainty. (cited in Floden & Clark, 1988, p. 514)

The balancing of pre-determined goals and objectives with emergent teaching and learning is indeed an art form, one that can not be reduced to formulaic techniques. Teaching with uncertainty and for uncertainty is an art form, requiring an aesthetic sensibility.

An essential element of an aesthetic sensibility in teaching or in life is attentiveness or mindfulness. I see attentiveness as a strong and authentic way of living and teaching with uncertainty. Earlier in this chapter, I talked about my attempt to attend to my research inquiry, to be open to the questions and the themes that emerged. Attentiveness or mindfulness is a kind of perception of the world, a way of seeing without imposing one's own assumptions.

> A mindful approach to any activity has three characteristics: the continuous creation of new categories; openness to new information; and an implicit awareness of more than one perspective. Mindlessness, in contrast, is characterized by an entrapment in old categories; by automatic behavior that precludes attending to new signals; and by action that operates from a single perspective. (Langer, 1997, p. 4)

Living in a state of mindfulness is a transformative state of being. Living mindfully is not an extraordinary way to live but it transforms our experience of ordinary life, creating an appreciation for it. Living mindfully means we are fully present for the moment that is happening now. Sharon Salzberg (1997) talks about mindfulness as a "continual letting go" (p. 20). By letting go of distracting thoughts that take us away from the present, we can concentrate fully on the present. When faced with uncertainty, being fully present is a good way to cope with the demands of the moment.

Control of attention is the central issue of control in the classroom. Lack of control is the dangerous side of uncertainty, the reason why teachers often prefer to teach for certainty. Teachers have a hierarchy of activities they want their students to pay attention to and often have to struggle to get and keep their attention. The curriculum, learning objectives, classroom and school rules and norms, the authority of learning sources and

resources all command the teacher's attention. If, as a teacher, I am committed to achieving and upholding this long list of things to do, I am closed to anything that happens that does not appear on the list. The list of "things to do" takes on more reality than the moments that are really happening. "Sit up and pay attention! Are you listening to me? Prove to me you've been paying attention - solve this problem on the board." We hear teachers say these things and we say them ourselves. We defend the hierarchy of activities against the students for their sake.

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> *Fear of the future is a powerful force in my life. If I really lived mindfully in the present, there would be no room for worry about how to overcome dreaded future problems, real or imaginary. I learned early that planning ahead is the best and only way of controlling the future. The devastation of the unexpected is lessened by a good solid plan of action, complete with lists and details. The boy scout motto is 'be prepared' not 'be aware.' This motto means to be smart and bring a lot of stuff with you 'just in case.' It's like a heavy purse. The purse is stuffed with so many things that most people carrying them would be assured of a prize on the game show, Let's Make a Deal, because they could produce a turkey baster, a cotton swab and a map of India from their purse which they haven't cleaned out for at least a year. When I carry a big purse around with me, I have to spend time and attention just handling it, finding the few things in it I really need. The weight of it hurts my shoulder and impedes my movement. I don't carry a big purse often. (Personal essay excerpt Feb. 22, 1998)*

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Fear of uncertainty affects what we see. Rather than concentrating on one thing to

the exclusion of everything else, attentiveness allows us to focus on one thing with an awareness of the things connected to it. "The mind has already been trained: to grasp, push away, separate, collapse, to be confused, to not see options. We have been trained to be jealous, anxious, doubtful, afraid and to judge ourselves" (Salzberg, 1997, p. 76). Salzberg suggests that, in turn, we have to re-train ourselves to be open, to fully experience the world.

> It is rare for any of us to imagine that the quality of our attention might play a role in our feeling unsatisfied, but it is only when we are mindful that we find satisfaction in our lives. Mindfulness is the key to life itself. When we relate fully to our experience, we see that our perceptual world is actually teeming with extraordinary sensations. It is as though we are experiencing each thing for the very first time. (Salzberg, 1997, p. 96)

Mindfulness or attentiveness counterbalances the disturbing aspects of the experience of uncertainty.

A counterbalance to risk and fear is trust and obedience. Relationships within the classroom are based upon trust and/or the lack of it. Trust and obedience are linked because it is difficult or impossible to pursue truth, to ask questions, to risk not knowing without feeling that the space in the classroom is a safe place to pursue truth.

The trust between teacher and student is a quality in classroom interactions that is assumed to be in place. When I enter a classroom, I trust the teacher will teach me something, hopefully something valuable. The teacher trusts that I, the student, will learn something. In my own experience in university classes, I have seen students enter into a classroom without any trust in the teacher's ability to provide a valuable learning experience. These students talk of their disappointment in the course, of ways in which

they wanted the teacher to teach, of the experience being a waste of time. They explain their mismatch of expectations to their experience as a "personality conflict" or a "difference in learning types." They do not usually, however, acknowledge how their lack of openness and acceptance or how the professor's lack of responsiveness prevented them from experiencing meaningful learning.

The connection of trust to classroom interaction seems readily apparent but what do we think of when we say the word, obedience? The word obedience is based on the Latin word, audire, which means to listen.

> Learning the truth requires that we enter into personal relationship with what the words reveal. To know truth we must follow it with our lives. In this kind of education, the relationship between the teacher, the student and the subject is one of obedience...Obedience requires the discerning ear, the ear that listens for the reality of the situation, a listening that allows the hearer to respond to that reality, whatever it may be. (Palmer, 1983, p. 43)

Obedience is connected to attentiveness in the classroom. Being obedient or attentive to the topic of study and to the people with whom you are working is to be open to that thing or that person and to trust in their inherent validity. Part of trusting yourself and being obedient to whatever emerges in the classroom is honesty with yourself, being "honest in action and reflection" (Denis & Richter, 1987, p. 21).

Another aspect of trust is the trust a teacher has in his or her own teaching abilities. This trust is closely associated with time. Most learning contexts have a finite amount of time in which the teacher can teach. The amount of time in which teaching processes are allowed to occur without clear successful results is limited. Learning, however, takes time. Teachers try to create the maximum amount of learning possible in the shortest time

available. The pressure of time is real and usually beyond the teacher's control. But allowing time for learning, for teaching that does not have immediate results is a trust the teacher needs to keep for herself. Teachers need to trust the time is well spent, "...time to make mistakes, time to go off on tangents, time to let ideas bubble and stew" (Wilson, Miller & Yerkes, 1993, p. 96). Trusting yourself as a teacher when faced with uncertainty is one way to respond that does not require "heavy purse" planning. Ruth Heaton and Magdalene Lampert (1993) talk about trust as a

> willingness to go into a situation without knowing what is going to happen next, to accept that there is not one right way to do things, to rely on yourself to be able to come up with the next good action rather than looking in a guidebook or having some expert tell you what to do next. (p. 58-59)

This kind of trust is permission to be a teacher and to trust that being a teacher, you will act like one and that the action will be appropriate to the conditions of the learning context at that time.

I want to talk about an aesthetic or artistic appreciation of teaching. I mentioned this theme earlier in my discussion of uncertainty and attentiveness but I want to talk about it separately because I feel it is an important part of the orientation to teaching for the teachable moment. Creativity, openness to the possible, playfulness, seeing and appreciating the world for what it is forms part of an aesthetic perception of the world. We usually talk about artists as people who use this perception, although I believe anyone can use it to engage creatively with the world. Max van Manen (1990) speaks of inquiry as a "poeticizing activity" to use language that "authentically speaks the world rather than abstractly speaking of it" (p. 13). This is the teacher's "living challenge" to incorporate the

classroom into the world, not segregate it from the world (Ayers, 1994, p. 94). The teacher's creativity and imagination transforms the inert prepared curriculum into a living curriculum, turning the parts into a whole.

> The imagination is what enables us to connect and without connections we don't know anything. Without the imagination there is no such thing as a whole, there are only a whole bunch of disassociated parts which are completely without meaning. It's tricky because connecting goes in so many different ways at once. It goes backward to what one already knows. It reaches forward to the thing that one is learning. It comprehends intuitively the whole into which those things that one's learning fit. It stretches in all different directions at once. (Schubert & Ayers, 1992, p. 65)

The creative aspect of teaching, creating a space open and safe for learning, creating connections between topics and students, creating excitement, creating what Koerner (1992) calls the "body electric," the group experience of understanding the same thing at the same time, is the environment out of which the teachable moment will most likely occur (cited in Schubert & Ayers, 1992, p. 47). It is teaching for community, for connection, for understanding, teaching wholeness. "Life is pain, joy, beauty, ugliness, love, and when we understand it as a whole, at every level, that understanding creates its own technique. But the contrary is not true: technique can never bring about creative understanding" (Krishnamurti, 1953, p. 18). It is the qualitative difference between an accurately played piano concerto and one which is played accurately and with feeling. This is the quality of teaching that can not be replaced by a computer, a book, a module or an instruction sheet. It is a human moment.

Teaching for the teachable moment is teaching for the creation of knowledge and understanding rather than for the transmission and representation of knowledge.

Approaching knowledge as an act of appreciation and creation rather than transmission and representation is a fundamental shift in the teacher and learner's relationship to knowledge. Knowledge can not be thought of only as currency, locked in one form, available only for transfer and limited in how it may be handled to retain its value. Knowledge can also be fluid; facts become important in terms of their place within relationship, not confined on a pre-eminent pinnacle. The gap between student and knowledge closes, the relationship becomes personal and involved. If knowledge is no longer "out there," something to be conquered and claimed, the student can play a role in its creation. As the student and teacher work together to create the students' understanding of the knowledge, the student begins to possess it.

In this context, the ownership of knowledge is the ownership of the craftsperson, the artist, the musician, rather than the ownership of the shopper or the conqueror. When a student owns the knowledge she or he is learning, in this way, there is a change in the kinds of questions he or she asks. What questions the student asks matter because the asking of the question–more than finding appropriate answers–is the beginning of dialogue. Without asking, the search for knowledge, for understanding will never begin. "The deciding of the question is the way to knowledge" (Gadamer, 1975, p. 328). What questions we ask, shape how and where we look for answers. What questions we ask have been shaped by what we already know. A student who asks and pursues his or her own questions, rather than another's, is actively engaged in shaping his or her own knowledge.

> In practice we are all bewitched by words. We confuse them with the real world, and try to live in the real world as if it were the world of words. As a consequence, we are dismayed and dumbfounded when they do not fit. The more we try to live in the world of words, the more we feel isolated and alone, the more all the joy and liveliness of things is exchanged for mere certainty and security. On the other hand, the more we are forced to admit that we actually live in the real world, the more we feel ignorant, uncertain and insecure about everything. (Watts, 1951, p. 50)

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I dread writing again - the struggle with words, with purpose - the weight of time as it passes. I really don't have anything to say, anything at all. I'll weave baskets for a living or stamp small pieces of paper - anything to not face making sense of the unsaid, the unsayable, the intricate, the silence. (Personal journal excerpt Jan. 3, 1998)

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The data for this inquiry has emerged from my own writings; journals I've kept while teaching, while practicing karate, exploratory free flow writing, synthesizing essays based on other authors' work and multiple drafts of the thesis text itself. The writing has been an important part of my inquiry so the issue of how I write is almost as important as what I write. My exploration of writing has made me re-examine the possibilities of how I

can write about my topic, my life, my experiences. I have been trained to speak what Ursula Le Guin (1989) calls my "father tongue," a public dialect, used for analysis, for direction, a focus of discourse, reliant on authorities and power (p. 149). I use it almost unconsciously. It is the dialect that defines what I mean, classifies my world, with which I can explain my ideas about teaching and learning. If I want to speak with authority, I speak with my father tongue. For months, working on this project, I tried to filter my experience through this dialect, straining to fit my experience and this ineffable topic, the teachable moment, into the structure of my father tongue. My personal journal has many entries lamenting how difficult it is to find the words to say what I mean. While words are used to represent meaning, they also can be used to create meaning. I have struggled with how to represent my experiences teaching and learning, what I have read and the connections I have found between ideas. The structures of linear, analytical discourse limit what I want to say and dilute the experience I am trying to communicate. The struggle to represent my experiences has evolved into a struggle to create, to create meaning, using language as the medium.

One way I've attempted to resolve the tension from the discrepancy between inner vision and outer expression is to use alternative and artistic modes of discourse. Le Guin (1989) talks about the "mother tongue," a dialect she says is not only about communication but also about relationship, connection. She writes, "It [mother tongue] goes two ways, many ways, an exchange, a network. Its power is not in dividing but in binding, not in distancing but in uniting" (p. 149). This kind of communication allows multiple purposes, a wholeness of purpose that is more like how life is really lived. Le Guin talks about it as

"carrying a basket of bread and smelling it and eating as you go" (p. 154). To understand the teachable moment, I have to be open to the smell and the taste of the bread, to the whole experience of the seminar room, of the karate dojo in order to develop my understanding of the topic.

Another way in which I've tried to overcome the linear nature of language and text is to use a device called a "crot" which is a cumulation of bits of text rather like a textual slide show. Tom Romano (1995) states, "a series of crots is meant to create a cumulative effect, each crot in the series 'should have a certain integrity' that enables it often to stand alone, end abruptly, make a point in itself..." (p. 94). I have inserted crots throughout this text because I want to represent the many connections among ideas without implying linearity or causality. I also want to juxtapose discussions of topic and process in ways that speak more closely to how I experienced them than would a thorough, separate discussion of each. Through this structure, I am inviting the reader to participate actively in a dialogue with the text in order to create their own meaning. I have tried to ensure the clarity of this text is enhanced, not hindered, by this juxtaposition by considering the inclusion and position of each crot carefully. As Simone Weil (1973) eloquently states, "I do not know if I [will] have succeeded in making you understand these almost inexpressible things" (p. 55).

Writing this text has involved me completely, wholly. I hope readers of the text will read it with more than their minds. I invite you to come with me on this journey.

The Tutorial Classroom

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I find there is a tension in teaching - a tension in trying to make something happen, having a vision of what you want to come about and the struggle to make that something emerge. The tension is not unlike the tension I feel as a writer in trying to make my thoughts and words come together to make something more, to create something that has its own life. It is a struggle to control but it is also a struggle to create. As a relatively inexperienced teacher, I am still engaged in experimenting with the tools of my craft - my creative efforts are hampered by my own inexperience with the tools of teaching. But I have a sense inside of me what I want to create when I go into the classroom to teach, how I want to attempt to mould the students. Except, the students are not passive mounds of clay, waiting to be moulded - they are alive and active and I want them to be so. The spark of the divine comes from the connection between us. The tension comes from wondering, "what will we create today?" It is not even so much wondering if the vision will become like the one in my mind - it's wondering if the moments of learning in the classroom will happen, will become alive, if only for a moment. (Personal journal excerpt, Apr. 5/98)

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The context for my experience as a teacher comes out of my recent work as a tutor/facilitator within an introductory, cross-disciplinary course at the University of Lethbridge during the 1997 Fall semester. I chose this learning context as it seemed to be a favorable teaching context in which to teach critical thinking skills and to facilitate the teachable moment. The tutorial was also the only current teaching context in which I was involved. The course includes two lectures per week given by a series of guest lecturers on a variety of topics that cross disciplinary boundaries. In addition to the lectures and the readings assigned to them, the students attend a tutorial once a week in which tutors lead discussions about the ideas presented in the lectures. The students also attend a lab taught

by other instructors once a week to work on skills such as time management, and essay writing as well as other skills that are relevant to first year university students. Between the lecture, the tutorial and the lab, the students see three different instructors: a professor lecturer, a student tutor and an associate lab instructor.

I'd like to first examine the reasons why I believed this course was a favorable context in which to teach for the teachable moment, and then, the assumptions about the teachable moment upon which those beliefs were based. I intuitively believed there was a connection between critical thinking and the teachable moment; that the students would learn to think critically and would, therefore, re-examine their own beliefs and ideas about the world. I believed the questions in the course would lead the students to ask their own questions. The course outline states,

> Lectures in this course are directed at introducing students to a wide variety of important ideas in the humanities, the social sciences, and the fine arts, without reference to a particular academic discipline or field. As such, the course will attempt to strike a balance between providing basic knowledge and generating intellectual excitement. The goal is to encourage students to think critically, and to comprehend some of those intellectual and social influences that have had the largest impact on our world. Although no special attempt has been made to coordinate or articulate various groups of ideas, the intent is also to stimulate synthetic understanding or a sense of the relationship of seemingly disparate ideas with one another. Tutorials in this course...are intended to support the lectures and, through seminar discussions, extend student understanding of the subject at hand. (Tagg, 1997, p. 2)

This course is intended to introduce students to important ideas, ideas which have impacted our world. The course is intended to provide basic knowledge and generate intellectual excitement through a critical understanding of the world. This suggests these ideas are relevant to the students' lives, a relevance that should increase their engagement in their

learning. The first lecture and tutorial in the course focussed on critical thinking and liberal education, preparing the students for the remaining course content with discussion about how and why we think critically. At the time, I believed that a course which supports critical thinking by including discussion of it in the course content and provides for a weekly opportunity to practice it would create many opportunities for the teachable moment. The students would be exposed to many different perspectives and would be encouraged to reconsider their own views and, possibly, change them. I believed the tutorial class would give the students a chance to explore, to build on the information they received during lecture classes and from course readings, resulting in a deeper understanding of the course topics.

I also believed that the tutorials would allow the students a safe place to question what they were learning. The tutorial groups were small, only 6 to 10 people, allowing students more opportunities to speak and to hear each other. In larger lecture classes, only the most outspoken students contribute to the classroom discourse; many lecturers do not make space for student comments or questions. I saw the tutorial classes as an important time for students to develop a personal relationship with the course topics and as a time for the students to bridge the distance between themselves and the knowledge "out there." The topics of the course: gender and society, democracy, cultural notions of rights and freedoms, evolution and ethics, spirituality, aesthetics, gender and race, and architecture presented such a wide range for discussion that I felt it would not be difficult to connect the tutorial discussions to the students' personal experiences.

The assumptions I made about the teachable moment were intuitive when I began

teaching as a tutor in September, 1997. I had only begun to inquire into the teachable moment for my thesis project. Following qualitative research methodology, I wrote down my pre-suppositions about the topic. I believed that to teach for the teachable moment, I needed to be open to hearing and discussing the students' ideas even if they fell outside of the planned curriculum; that I needed to challenge what they believed they knew about the ideas; that I needed to help the students reflect on discrepancies between what they already knew and the knowledge presented and discussed in the course. I thought the students needed to be actively engaged with the course material. I thought teaching for a deeper understanding would take time, time to consider the new information and time to integrate it into a personal knowledge. The tutorial seemed to provide a space for all of these qualities or conditions that I felt were connected to the teachable moment and would be more likely to occur than in a typical lecture class format. I had high hopes and expectations for the students' learning in the course. I had hoped that they would learn something or experience something they were "going to take with them" (Koerner, 1992, p. 49). I believed I was going to help foster the intellectual excitement mentioned in the course outline. I wanted to witness a teachable moment, a moment of student learning as a direct result of my teaching so I would know for certain the students understood the ideas discussed in the tutorials. I wanted experiential evidence of the outcome of my approach to teaching in the tutorials. I wanted to be certain about my influence as a teacher on the students' learning.

My expectations of my impact as a tutor/facilitator, of the students' movement in their learning, of the relevance of the ideas in the course to the students' lives were, in

retrospect, overzealous. I had envisioned what I wanted to happen without much knowledge of the context I was entering. The mismatch of my expectations for the course with the students' expectations clashed before the end of the first month of classes. The dissonance from this clash created opportunities for me to question my ideas about teaching.

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Today was like paddling upstream with sieves for paddles. Each time I thought I had gotten to a significant point, they [the students] just ran through the openings and continued on as before. Today the question I asked was why does language matter when we talk about men and women? Their response was - it doesn't. They used the word 'mankind' to include everyone and told me there is no harm in using one word or another. I brought up the issue of titles - job titles, policeman, fireman, Mr., Miss, Mrs., Ms. and tried to make them see that language does affect how we think about things. We discussed why women who are police officers or men who are nurses might not like the gender suggestive title. These students told me they thought the feminist movement was over - its work was done and anything more was excessive. Their view seemed to be that enlightenment surrounding women in society was a naturally progressive one with conditions getting better for each generation. It was clear this question was a non-issue for these students. I feel these students are entirely comfortable in their world view. I guess their level of un-thinking about this caught me totally unprepared. I think my own immersion in language and what words mean biased my orientation to this session. One of the coordinators said it might have been a seed planting - perhaps. But I think I will be failing in my efforts as a teacher to fasten on topics in which they have no investment. Perhaps, I should always prepare a secondary tangent in case the first one is dead in the water. (Excerpt from journal entry Sept. 17/97)

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Two tutorials became teachable moments for me and shaped how I taught for the remainder of the semester. Both tutorials occurred within the first month of classes. The above journal entry excerpt I wrote following the first of these tutorials. The lecturer had presented two lectures on "Gender, Identity and Society" so in the September 17th tutorial I followed her lectures with a discussion of how language affects our thinking about gender roles in society. I started the discussion asking, "Why does language matter when we talk about men and women?" The student's position throughout the discussion was language does not matter and there is no need to talk about these things because women have gained an equal place in society. One student said, "I think the feminist movement is over because everyone knows now that when we use the word, mankind, we all know we're talking about men and women." I talked about the importance of labels: job titles, titles of address - Mr., Mrs., Miss, Ms., even cultural labels and why what people are called might matter to the people being labeled. The students talked about the naturally progressive enlightenment surrounding women in society that is improving with each generation. By the end of the tutorial, I had convinced the students only that some people, (me), felt it was an important issue. I did not convince them of the validity of my arguments except that they would respect it as my personal opinion even though one of the course readings discussed language and it's relation to gender roles in society.

My passion to explore and question ideas had hit its first roadblock when the students refused to explore this topic. I believed this kind of question, asking how what we think and say affects how we act in society, was essential to think critically about gender roles. The students rejected my question as irrelevant.

> Many of us went into teaching out of just such an urge to share things with others, but we find students turn us down or ignore us in our efforts to give gifts. Sometimes they even laugh at us for our very enthusiasm in sharing. We try to show them what we understand and love but they yawn and turn away. (Elbow, 1983, p. 330)

These students were comfortable with their world view. Any discrepancies or ambiguities they had experienced were unimportant ones that did not cause any harm. Gill Robertson (1987) suggests that

> where learning involves uncovering and discovering aspects of our unconscious, the movement from unawareness to awareness must begin with contradiction and ambiguity in the attitude of the learner. Then the learner must confront or encounter a new perspective, and be able to reframe his or her past experience, be able to resolve the ambiguity and to accept that the ways of the past are no longer appropriate... (p. 83).

The students seemed unaware of any contradiction or ambiguity in their explanation of the discussion topic. I underestimated their complacency on this subject. My challenge to their world view was not sufficient to cause the students to reconsider what they knew about gender roles and how language influences that knowledge. It appeared that they didn't know and they didn't want to know. My authority as a tutor did not motivate them to move from their already held beliefs.

> In Piaget's terms learning involves both assimilation and accommodation. Part of the job is to get the subject matter to bend and deform so that it fits inside the learner (that is, so it can fit or relate to the learner's experiences). But that's only half the job. Just as important is the necessity for the learner to bend and deform himself so that he can fit himself around the subject without doing violence to it. Good learning is not a matter of finding a happy medium where both parties are transformed as little as possible. Rather both parties must be maximally transformed - in a sense deformed. There is violence in learning. We can not learn something without eating it, yet we can not really learn it either without letting it eat us. (Elbow, 1983, p. 331)

The only violence in this tutorial came from wanting to beat my fist against my chest and pull out my hair. I could not believe what I was hearing from these students. Their knowing, matter-of-fact manner grated on me. How could they be this smug when they didn't seem to understand the issue I was raising? They seemed to lack the desire to see any further than what they believed they knew. I reacted emotionally to this session, more so than to any of the other tutorials. I was invested in the topic of this tutorial–how men and women are perceived and talked about in society–and because of my own thesis work, I was engaged in the meaning of words and how they shape our understanding. If the students could not understand the meaning of their own everyday language, how could they learn to think critically about the ideas in the course? I felt I had failed to do my job, that is, to get them to think critically about the topic. I wanted to know why. In the tutorial meeting afterward, I confessed my failure to the tutors and the course coordinators and asked for guidance. They suggested the problem lay in the students' lack of life experience and the abstract nature of the topic: language in society. Later, I thought about my own preoccupation with the meaning and use of language coming out of my thesis writing and how my immersion in the use of language had caused me to assume the students were aware of language, its meaning and usage. I was not aware of the problem during the tutorial. Instead of switching to another tactic, I persevered, increasing my frustration and probably the students' as well.

What I believe happened in this class is that I questioned the information presented in the two previous lectures to the students and they rejected my question as irrelevant. Convinced of the question's relevancy, I tried to persuade them to reconsider their own

experiences in terms of the new knowledge. The students were not prepared to question the role of language in shaping how they thought about gender roles in society and were unwilling to consider how those roles have been and are being created in society. They seemed content to say "things are the way they are" without wanting to question. I asked the students to consider reconfiguring their world view, expecting to see progress within one class. These students were in the class to accumulate information; I do not believe they considered giving up old information part of the learning process. As a tutor, I should have focused more attention on deconstructing their existing knowledge before I could challenge them to rebuild it. In retrospect, the obvious starting point for deconstruction was the student's statement that women's place in society is a naturally, evolving progression, rather than a historically, culturally specific phenomenon; for example, to look at the reasons why women started to challenge social conventions through public forms of protest in the 1960s and 1970s, what mores the sexual revolution challenged, etc.

Ellen Langer talks about the value of doubt in teaching mindfully: learning facts presented conditionally and contextually creates a mindset which is open to question and to perceive distinctions and differences.

> Most of what we learn in school, at home, from television, and from nonfiction books we may mindlessly accept because it is given to us in an unconditional form. That is, the information is presented from a single perspective as though it is true, independent of context. It just *is*. Typically, no uncertainty is conveyed. Much of what we know about the world, about other people, and about ourselves is usually processed in this same way. (Langer, 1997, p. 15)

In the tutorial, the students' seemed to possess this unconditional attitude toward knowledge. The students seem to accept their experience of family, neighborhood,

community and society as naturally occurring and, allowing for some variation, essentially the same as everyone else's experiences. However, the course topics included many ideas that were presented conditionally and contextually. Despite this, the students wanted unconditional facts, which they felt they needed in order to answer the exam and essay questions.

The tutorial following the September 17th session was my second teachable moment. The session turned out to be a deconstruction exercise, although I was not conscious of it at the time. I wanted only to prevent another tutorial like the previous one. The topic for this second tutorial included issues of democracy, freedom, equality and individualism. The students' initial reaction following the lectures was, "We've done democracy to death. We don't want to do it again. There's nothing else to say about it." I began the class asking the question, "What kinds of things stop you from fulfilling yourself as an individual?" Their response: "Nothing but yourself." I suggested that a lack of money prevented me from fulfilling all of my aspirations. This prompt restarted the discussion but I soon began to hear the same answer to my questions. The students' response to most of my questions of why people act as they do in society was because of their individual choice or preference. This time, more sensitive to the students' explanations, I stopped my planned outline of discussion questions and pursued the concept of action or inaction arising from individual choice.

Throughout the course, I was frustrated by the students' inability or unwillingness to raise their discussions above the level of personal anecdotes. The students told personal anecdotes without explaining how the story was connected to the discussion topic. In this

tutorial, I made use of the stories they told to make a connection to the idea that individual choice is shaped by society. In one example, a student stated she had chosen the religion she practiced, so it was wrong to say that society or religion influenced her personal choice. She had indicated earlier in the semester she was enrolled in an introductory religious studies course. I asked if she had known about the religions discussed in this course when she chose to join her religious community. She said no. So, I replied, she didn't really make a choice from all possible religions, but chose the one supported by her family, her community. She didn't answer. I tried to reassure her that I was not questioning her choice of religion. What I was questioning was her assertion that her choice was free from outside influence. She agreed with that, maybe only to get my attention away from her, and we moved on to another student and deconstructed how one of her stated personal preferences may have been shaped by societal forces.

The students also argued that an individual's personal choice arose from his or her psychological state. In other words, they believed that "I think as I do because I'm me." They argued that every person can freely choose to be how he or she wants to be. To counter this idea, I brought up the example of suicide. I presented suicide as a legitimate choice for a person. Suicide, in Canada, is an illegal act and is considered morally wrong in our society. Individuals attempting suicide, if caught, are restrained and held against their will in institutions. Their psychological condition is called into question by the standards set in our society. This example was intended to point out that psychological assessment can be determined by the state or by society and may contradict the individual's assessment of herself or himself. Although the students were not very willing to grant credibility to the

proposition that suicide is a legitimate choice, it did make them rethink the concept of individualism in a mass democratic society. At the end of the class, I summarized the discussion, presenting the argument that individual choice or preference is influenced by societal forces and was able to refer to each student's personal anecdote to support that argument. As I finished, they all nodded their heads and thinking about what I had said, looked away in the distance and then looked back at me. At the time, this moment of understanding felt like a small breakthrough.

This account of the September 24th tutorial may sound like I knew where we were headed and had a sense of an overall discussion plan. I did not. After the tutorial, I wrote in my journal, "At the mid-way point in the class I really felt we were spinning our wheels and that besides bonding through common stories, no real learning was taking place." In our tutor meeting afterward, I said I spent the session

> throwing out a very small life jacket to rescue an idea from the sea of anecdotes, trying to pull the students in hand-over-hand so they could connect to the larger idea. I hope the rope holds and that they don't let go because it's back-breaking work to bring them all on-board this way. (Personal journal entry Sep. 24/97)

In retrospect, I see a contradiction between my desire to have the students connect the ideas they were studying to their own experiences and my assumption that their personal anecdotes contributed little to the tutorial discussion. As I discovered through the September 24th tutorial, when I used the stories from their personal experience, they seemed to connect to the idea I wanted them to understand, that their personal preferences and choices are influenced by the society in which they live. Telling stories was the way the students were most comfortable contributing to the discussion. In their minds, their stories

were related to the discussion topics. Rather than dismissing their stories as distractions, a prelude to the real discussion, I could have used their stories as a place to generate questions, to encourage the students to reflect on their own experiences in order to make sense of them.

Much of my work with my tutorial students focused on inserting room for doubt into their world view, to talk of people who have different perspectives and experiences, who have made different decisions, and the reasons, beliefs and assumptions that have evolved into those differences. The students' explanation for difference was based on psychological factors. They displayed tolerance for differences, yet, at the same time, the students clung to opinions that they saw as universal and naturally correct.

The exercise I used at the 1 October tutorial, following the two teachable moment tutorials, was an attempt to bring doubt and dissension into the students' immediate realm of experience. Although I was only conscious of wanting to shake up the students, I was looking for a way to create tension, to create an opportunity for critical thinking by focusing on ambiguities and contradictions in the students' arguments. The tutorial was a discussion of ideas concerning whether democracy is based fundamentally on individualism or on a sense of community. At the beginning of the tutorial, I had the students commit to individualism or community as the most representative model of how our society worked. I gave the students four examples of how individual and community interests can clash and asked them to decide what they believed should happen and why. The examples included: a loud party next door, the provincial law requiring everyone wear seat belts, the statement that everyone should be allowed to attend university and whether a

homeless man who is hit by a car should be given medical care. The specific examples gave the students a grounding for their discussions. We explored how ideas such as the tyranny of the majority, good citizenship and equality in a mass democratic society would be manifested in these examples. As students talked about the examples, I connected what they were saying to the concept of democracy based on the individual or on the community and challenged them when their positions shifted. By questioning their opinions and linking those opinions to their declared position on democracy, I opened a small space for the students to become aware of possible contradictions in their own thinking.

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I'm finding the tutorials harder to prepare for - that I have to work a lot harder to prepare questions and strategies and that I'm more uncertain now than at the beginning of the semester about what use these tutorial sessions really are. I guess I felt at the beginning of the course the tutorial would be the place students would make connections between ideas but it doesn't seem to be the case - or if they do make connections, they don't transfer to the essays or the exams very well...We've covered so many things so quickly in this course - the students have had so little time to absorb this stuff...they must feel swamped and sinking fast. (Personal journal entry Nov. 19/97)

After this whole semester, I don't know if I'm any better at leading these tutorial sessions than when I started. I still get nervous when I think the topic or the angle I've chosen to start a session with may not fly. For every tutorial except today's, I've prepared two different ways of going at the topics so I can fall back on something if the first is going nowhere. It seems to me the engagement the students have with the course topics is limited because they have limited life experience and life knowledge to bring to them. The stronger students can form the arguments and make the connections and present them in a relatively convincing ways. The average students attempt to thrust ideas together in a way they hope makes sense but without a framework to hang them on. (Personal journal entry Nov 27/97)

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As a novice teacher, the tutorial experience was a valuable one for me. There were many aspects of the tutorial during the semester which defied my advanced planning. On 27 November, I wrote in my journal, "the experience has been disheartening - I do not have a sense of what the students have learned and certainly no sense of an important teachable moment." If the students in my tutorial did not have a teachable moment as I had intuitively conceived of it, I experienced a few moments which were powerful enough to change my practice. My own teachable moments came from the unforeseen, what I did not expect to happen, the events for which I did not plan. Reflecting on these moments has helped me make sense of them. At the time, I viewed what happened in the tutorials in terms of what I had planned for each session. Now, with the luxury of time for reflection, I am able to see the events from a more balanced perspective, one that appreciates the events for what they were rather than only for what they were not.

My work as a tutor became increasing more difficult toward the end of the semester. I was frustrated by the students' poor performance on the written course assignments. I was troubled by many aspects of the course's evaluation process and tried to address the problems I perceived through the tutorials. The written assessment for the course consisted of essay questions; two take-home essay questions and two exams consisting of essay-style questions. All the essay and exam questions were worded so the students would have to do more than organize factual information to answer them. The questions called for synthesis of knowledge, some reflection and an organizing structure to provide coherence for their discussion. The first test of the students' knowledge came with the first exam in mid-October. The results were not good. I wrote in my journal,

> I laughed and was horrified when I first read their essays. All of the students used some of the information from the course to support their essay argument. But their application of the information is unsteady and often bogged down by a listing of facts that do not meaningfully contribute to their argument. (Personal journal entry Oct. 16/97)

What appeared on their essay and exam papers came essentially from their lecture notes. The students had asked if they should make notes during the tutorial; I left that choice up to them saying it would be useful to jot down important points from the discussions. Most of the students did not take any notes during the discussion. I think they relied only on what they had written in their books to prepare for the exam, disregarding the course readings and the discussions in the tutorials. The students were still assuming that if they memorized facts, they could reproduce them in the exam and get a good grade. The exam and essay questions asked for more; it was the more for which the students did not know how to prepare.

Toward the end of the semester, I became more uncertain that the students were learning anything of value from the tutorials. The essay and exams results did not show much evidence that the tutorial discussions impacted the students' learning. I found that lack of evidence disturbing. Was it that the students were not learning anything in the tutorials or was it that the students were not using that knowledge to answer the essay and exam questions? I looked to the course coordinators for answers. The coordinators seemed to find the students' performance on the assignments less troubling; they said they believed this group of students were average in their abilities. They defended the evaluation format, arguing the students needed to learn to write coherently and persuasively in an essay. I was willing to follow their lead; they are both experienced teachers and surely know more about

evaluation than I do. I was comforted that each essay and exam was marked twice; once by the tutor and once by the professor. We then conferred over any discrepancies in the assigned marks. Overall, the marks were similar. Yet, I was troubled by the arbitrary, subjective feel of the evaluation process.

The students' problems in responding to the essay and exam questions came out of what I believe is a discrepancy between their understanding of information and the paradigm of knowledge upon which the course was based. Through the first month of classes, the students looked to me to provide the answer during the tutorial. They expressed frustration about what they should be getting from the tutorial discussions. During the course, I believed the students did not know how to integrate the tutorial discussions into their knowledge building within the course and that somehow this was a weakness in their abilities as students, an unpreparedness for university study. Later, I began to see how the knowledge paradigm on which the course was based contributed to their difficulties.

The discrepancy between the students' knowledge paradigm and the one used in the course emerged out of the students' use of language. Many students used language such as, "these examples prove that" or "gender roles cause ...." Their language suggests to me they were inappropriately using language to discuss the great ideas of humanity. The students talked about the relationship between ideas as causal or correlational. Their essays tried to provide an answer to the problem presented in the assignment questions. One of the first criticisms the students' made after the first essay assignment was that the question wasn't a real question. My first response to their criticism of the essay questions was to help them learn a different way to think about addressing the questions, that if I made the students

aware of other kinds of language to talk about connections between ideas in their essays they would more successfully respond.

To help the students with the process of writing, for the 5 November tutorial, I prepared a practice essay question which we answered as a group. I intended to use the session to talk about the content of the previous lectures and to talk about the process of writing for the exam and essay questions in the course. The lectures prior to this tutorial had drawn together many different ideas to support an argument explaining the emergence of serial killers in industrialized society. The question I gave them: "The serial killer is a troubling symptom of inherent problems in our individually-oriented, consumer-driven, mass democratic society in which violence, opportunity and freedom are celebrated and frustration, inequality and alienation are ignored. Discuss this statement using material from the course." After we had discussed most of the key ideas in the question; individualism, democracy, unfulfilled expectations, etc., one student asked, "what does what we are discussing have to do with answering the essay question?"

I had worked one-on-one with this student who received a lower mark on the first assignment than she was used to receiving in high school. She told me she was not strong in language arts; her strength was math. She had been taught to write essays based on a five paragraph script with an introduction to pose the question, a conclusion to answer the question and a three paragraph body to develop the answer to the question. The essay questions she was given did not lend themselves to this essay format. She did not know of another way to write an essay and found the essay questions troubling because, in her words, 'they didn't even ask a question - they just said discuss.' This student knew the

essay form she was familiar with didn't fit but she did not know of any other way to express what she wanted to say. The distinction between a causal or correlational relationship and a relationship of influences - without including proofs - was one she was not prepared to make. She was not prepared to relinquish the concept of knowledge that she had been taught. This paradigm, however, did not serve her well, as the course topics included many of the big questions of western civilization, ones which had been debated for hundreds of years and were not intended to be solved within the confines of the course.

For many of the students in my tutorial, this leap of language and thought, was one they were not prepared to make. They did not possess the skills to discuss ideas, how to link them together without creating a causal relationship or making a sweeping, summative statement about the impact of the ideas on society today. Ellen Langer (1997) makes an important point saying, "education traditionally has given students packages of information that are largely context free. Even when context is provided, the manner in which the information is presented still encourages mindless processing" (p. 70). The students were unaccustomed to thinking about the relationships between ideas. They tried to use familiar study techniques without knowing how to modify them to meet the demands of the course with limited success.

I believe the students saw themselves as capable learners. In the first tutorial, the students compared which scholarships they had received graduating from high school. They seemed to have a secure student identity; they believed they knew their own academic strengths and weaknesses. Some of the students in my tutorial were confused by the new demands they faced in university and frustrated that their successful high school learning

strategies were no longer yielding the same results, that is, high grades. Part of the purpose of this course was to introduce first year students to the skills, ideas and discourse they will need to be familiar with to be successful in university study. During the course, I was not fully appreciative of the transition these students were facing. Based on their questions during the first tutorial, I think they found the course outline confusing. We discussed the course processes at every tutorial. I believe the students expected more guidance from the instructors in the course and were not prepared to take on a higher level of responsibility for their own learning.

The students' problems with the questions in the course come from another source, more fundamental than their lack of preparedness to respond to the essay questions. The kind of questioning within this context was a specific kind of critical, rational questioning that was intended only for the course topics, those ideas put on the discussion table. The students' questions about the evaluation process, the kind of questions they were made to address, were not open for the same kind of examination. The questions asked in the essay questions were intended to make the students show they knew not only the content of the course but also how to think critically about it. The question of whether the topics were meaningful for the students was unrelated to how the students were evaluated. Although my intention in the tutorial was to enable the students to generate their own questions, to make connections between their personal knowledge and the course ideas, they knew, as I at the time did not, that those questions were not important to the evaluation process. Finding a way for the students to be open to transformation through learning, to accept responsibility for their own sense-making was counter to the purpose and understanding of

knowledge within the course, so sense-making did not happen and the students' engagement lacked the integration of knowledge that I have experienced through the practice of karate and of writing.

I felt the student's involvement, their level of engagement in the course topics was superficial, and transitory. The students did not participate in all of the course activities all of the time; they didn't read all the course materials, attend all the classes, pay attention to every lecture. The students were not engaged as fully as they could be. At the beginning of the fall semester, I viewed the course as sufficiently broad in topic and in teaching methods to engage the students. While it is true there was more space in the course than many university courses for the students to explore the ideas in the course, their exploration was bound by the limits of rational thought, their engagement was limited to an exercise in critical thinking. The students understood that their personal experiences were not an important part of their participation in the course because that knowledge was not part of the evaluation process.

In experiential learning theory, it is recognized that knowledge is "not fixed and immutable" but is "derived from and continuously modified by experience" (Kolb,1993, p. 144). Kolb proposes that we make sense of our experiences by integrating them into what we already know about the world or substituting new ideas for old ones. Citing Piaget, Kolb discusses two ways in which new ideas are learned by an individual; through integration and substitution. "Ideas that evolve through integration tend to become highly stable parts of the person's conception of the world" where ideas that are substituted for one another are more easily discarded (p. 146). The tutorial students learned by

substitution, not through integration. In their essays, the students often interchanged words and concepts that suggested they were plugging in elements into a pre-determined structure; the resulting product was often nonsensical statements and arguments. The learning that occurred in the tutorial was not likely to lead the students toward change, to alter significantly what they knew about the world or to change how they acted in it. My belief that teachable moments would occur because the students were thinking critically about the information they learned was not apparent in this context. Their personal engagement with the course topics was limited, not supported, by the focus on their capacity to discuss the topics critically and rationally. The students were not allowed time enough to move beyond an intellectual understanding of the course topics.

There is a violence associated with deconstructing student knowledge, deforming their world view, a violence that I am not entirely comfortable exercising as a teacher. I am uncertain whether I should challenge students that do not want learning to be transformative and I am uncomfortable assuming that as a teacher, I know what is best for my students. I believe learning arising from a teachable moment is closely associated with change. How forcefully will I challenge students to change? Or does my responsibility lie with creating a space comfortable enough for students to risk transformative learning?

A learning space needs to be hospitable not to make learning painless

> but to make the painful things possible, things without which no learning can occur - things like exposing ignorance, testing tentative hypotheses, challenging false or partial information and mutual criticism of thought. Each of these is essential to obedience to truth. But none of them can happen in an atmosphere where people feel threatened and judged. (Palmer, 1983, p. 74)

My responsibility to my students is to create a safe environment and to encourage them to take risks, to ask questions about their opinions, statements and beliefs and to make room for answers or even for a space without an answer. This responsibility is demanding and difficult for me and for the students. It is easier, and safer, to keep knowledge and learning apart from our personal selves, to discount our own stories about the world and to separate learning into an intellectual exercise that impacts our full selves as little as possible. The space for this safe environment requires external support and validation in order for the students to trust it as an authentic learning activity. In this context that external support and validation were not present. The students learned implicitly, if not explicitly, that their personal experiences and knowledge little value within a university classroom. Their assessment that learning is something that is done to them was in this context an accurate one.

> We cannot understand existence abstractly or theoretically. To understand life is to understand ourselves, and that is both the beginning and the end of education. (Krishnamurti, 1953, p. 14)

> Here is something central to our sense of ourselves as knowers: we are busily engaged in trying to construct a liveable world with our facts. (Palmer, 1983, p. 22)

> Education is not merely a matter of training the mind. Training makes for efficiency, but it does not bring about completeness. A mind that has merely been trained is the continuation of the past, and such a mind can never discover the new. (Krishnamurti, 1953, p. 13)

What have I learned from this educational landscape, the university tutorial class, that I can take with me, to keep with me on my journey? What souvenirs can I keep from a critical examination of this landscape? I have talked about what I learned about the students and their relationship to learning in this context. What did I learn about teaching, about myself as a teacher? This question is harder to answer as it is reveals my beliefs and assumptions about myself as a person. I have resisted answering it even as my students resisted answering some of my questions to them. I learned that even as I talked about control and uncertainty in the classroom, I still believed that somehow I could control what kind of learning would happen in my classroom, that I would see a teachable moment and know it happened because of my teaching. Somehow, I would mould my students and create my own vision of teaching and learning. My first reminder that the relationship between teaching and learning is not so simple came in the 17 September tutorial when the students resisted my first question and derailed the whole session from its planned track. What I knew intellectually, I had to discover for myself experientially.

Having a sense of community as a learner is important to me. The first time I encountered that sense of community in post-secondary schooling was in the master of education program, the feeling of belonging, of similar interests and goals. I wanted to foster this sense of community in the tutorial, to help these first year students feel less alone, less isolated. I stated earlier that I believed the students' involvement in the course was relatively superficial and transitory. The bond created in the tutorial was based upon, I believe, the shared experience of hurdles; the assignments, the stresses, the relative freedom of university life. This shared experience of first year university students was not grounded in this particular course and did not foster more than a transitory connection to it. Compared to my experience in the masters of education program or the karate dojo, there was little sense of community among the students in this course.

I, however, shared a sense of community with my colleagues, the other tutors and the coordinating professors. This sense of community came out of weekly meetings, scheduled after the tutorials, which provided all of the tutors with an opportunity to talk about the session while it was still fresh in our memories. Listening to the other tutors' experiences and how they chose to handle problems in their own classrooms was a valuable source of information for reflection on my own practice. Talking about my own experiences helped diffuse my anxieties about my own teaching, reducing my sense of isolation while in the classroom. The sense of collegiality and community I felt from these weekly meetings was a welcome addition to my teaching experience. We had read all of the course readings and attended all of the lectures. Our shared experience of the class gave me a sense of being on a teaching team, a team which supported each of our individual

teaching efforts.

I started the semester expecting the students would be enthusiastic, open to new ideas and passionate about the issues we debated, willing to question. I found the students to be conservative, careful and non-committal. My expectations had to change if I was going to build a relationship with the students. After the 17 September tutorial, I realized I was going to have to work harder to encourage them to express themselves as fully as possible, to build on the contributions they made to the discussion and to draw their attention to connections between their experiences and the discussion topics. I had to build a basic trust, to get the students to trust me and to get the students to trust themselves to question what had been previously unquestionable for them. Trust building was difficult as my time with the students was limited to one class a week. I had to find an acceptable level of tension, enough to make them uncomfortable with accepting knowledge unconditionally but not so much that they withdrew from the question.

I was not prepared for the students' unwillingness to be open to learning. One of the students told me not to ask her about what she believed about the nature of human beings, whether they were good or evil, because she didn't want to argue about it. She preferred the stability of her own beliefs over the uncertainty of questioning them. For her and perhaps the other students, questioning their beliefs was threatening. The students were not prepared to associate their learning with risk-taking. Their reticence to embrace a potentially transformative relationship with learning kept their experience of learning "out there," separate from personal experience.

Due to my uncertainty about the evaluation process, I became more uncertain about

how to prepare for tutorials toward the end of the semester. How could I change what I was doing in the tutorials to better prepare the students for the written assignments? What was my responsibility to them? The students did not have much time to practice thinking critically and were not disposed to do it for every topic. It seemed that the students who could write well and think critically possessed those abilities before beginning the course. The course was advertised as an introductory one, but students were expected to demonstrate a certain level of mastery of thinking and understanding of the topics in less than four months. The students who did not already have some mastery of writing and thinking critically were not likely to develop that mastery within the course. The students for whom this was truly an introduction were not given enough time to practice and develop those skills. This discrepancy seems unfair; an inherent inequality in university education. I was not able to compensate for this inequality, not unless a student approached me for individual assistance. I offered my assistance outside of class time throughout the semester. One student met with me to discuss her first essay and ways to improve it. Her work showed improvement across the semester. Out of six students, she is the only one who I believe learned something about writing during the course. I hope the other students learned as well. I can not say that I have evidence of their learning, an admission which disturbs my sense of purpose as a teacher.

My purpose in the tutorial was to prepare students to question, to look for something more; a deeper level of understanding, connections between ideas. My interpretation of that purpose contrasted with the purpose intended by the course coordinators and the students' purpose in taking the course. The course coordinators

wanted the students to learn to engage in a critical, rational mode of discourse. The students wanted to be successful which for them meant demonstrating that they knew the information presented in the course. These purposes did not merge harmoniously within the course. My frustration as a teacher in this context was as a result of seeing that what I was doing in the tutorial was not helping them achieve success within the course nor did it help them make sense of the information they learned. At most, I created a space for the students to doubt, to begin to be aware that some of the certain knowledge they possessed was open to question. In this context, I worked to prepare the students to be aware of the meaning of what and how they were learning.

Meaningful learning creates change in the learner and requires an openness to change. The learner must be prepared to undergo change for meaningful learning to occur. Significant moments of learning in our life, teachable moments, like the death of a loved one, the ending of a relationship, or a move to a new place, these moments can be painful because we are forced to change whether or not we are prepared to change. In teaching for the teachable moment, I am trying to create opportunities for learning that lead to change while minimizing the pain. By preparing the students to ask their own questions, to create their own answers, the students gain some measure of control over their own learning, the pace of their movement as they learn.

Although I am uncomfortable with causing students pain by challenging them to reconsider their knowledge about the world, I am committed to encouraging them to think critically about what they learn *and* to integrate their learning with their experiences in the world. I want students to be involved in their own learning, to break away from thinking of

learning as something that is done to them. I want students to move towards generating their own questions. This movement is a long term educational goal, something learners can take with them as they move in and out of informal and formal learning contexts. I want something more for students than answering someone else's questions, the something more that helps them be deciders, doers and creators.

The Karate Dojo[1]

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When I was still an orange belt[2] I remember an incident at a karate class that occurred while we were in the conditioning circle. Most of the other students that day were black belts. As we were training, three disreputable looking people came into the dojo. Their faces were hardened, their clothes were worn and dirty looking and they looked around the room as though they expected to be thrown out. The dojo is in a commercial area that is relatively dark and quiet in the evening, except for the karate dojo and nearby fitness club. I felt a tingly feeling on the back of my neck that made me think these people were going to become violent, the same feeling I had when I was in a restaurant that was robbed by a man with a gun. My attention kept going to these people, still standing in the doorway, wondering what would happen next. I remember thinking it was a good thing that most of the students were black belts and that I was probably safe even if something did happen. The sensei[3] entered the dojo from the change rooms. He looked around and then casually and slowly sauntered over to the three people. I watched as they literally stiffened their backs, preparing for a confrontation. I couldn't hear what they were talking about but he sat and talked with them for about 20 minutes. When they finally left, all three of them were smiling and their faces had softened. They looked very different from when they had walked into the room. I had assumed from the moment these people entered that a verbal confrontation or worse would occur. Now I realize that I did not have much of the karate mind. Of course, the sensei had made no such assumption - everyone is welcome in his dojo. These people, regardless of appearance, were curious enough to come inside and he met their curiosity with courtesy and respect. I thought at the time about the kind of invitation teachers give to their students. I have never before heard a teacher say, "I am happy when they come through the door." The sensei's invitation is extended to everyone, regardless of their physical condition or economic status. If the student is willing to learn and to work, he is willing to teach. (Personal journal entry, Nov. 16/97)

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Sayings posted on the dojo walls

When the student is ready, the Master appears.

Knowing others is wisdom; knowing your self is enlightenment

A man who has attained mastery of an art reveals it in every action.

Karate, in this particular dojo, is practised primarily as a martial art form as opposed to a sport. This distinction is important in terms of the goals of the school and how karate is taught and practiced. Like learning to play music, karate can be broken down into fundamental skills and techniques which need to be practised to a level of proficiency before the art can really be expressed. And like music, learning basic techniques whether they are notes, rhythms and tempos or kicks, punches and blocks, is not the same thing as being a proficient performer of those techniques. Evaluation of proficiency in karate is tied to a recognition of techniques as well as the perception of the successful integration of those techniques in the kata forms. In music, this integration results in a certain quality of performance. The quality of performance is based on proficiency of technique but also is transcendent of that proficiency. Without that transcendence, the musical performance is no more than accurate. The same qualitative evaluation applies to karate. The art emerges from a person who has trained in technique and creates with her/his body the expression of the form. The conformity of the routines for learning techniques does not necessarily translate into exact conformity of performance. In both karate and music, especially classical music, a good performance comes out of a disciplined and diligent practice of correctness in form, yet, the art of the expression is beyond a correct reproduction of the form.

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One day I was working with a white belt on basic moves. The rest of the students were working in small groups of three or four people, spread out around the dojo floor. Everyone stopped practising because the sensei was demonstrating one of the more graceful katas. To watch him move is a treat. We stood silently until he finished the form and then as he continued the lesson for the students he was with, we all turned back to our own practice. The woman I was with said, "Wow, I've never seen him do it [karate] before." I nodded my head and we continued to practice. When I think about what I see when I watch him practice, I know it is not just the movements of his body. He moves simply, easily, with easy power. When he is loose, he is very loose. But he can tighten his body in an instant. What draws me to watch him is the almost visible gathering of his concentration. His focus is like a blanket that he pulls towards himself and wraps himself in it. (Personal journal entry Jan 10/98)

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It is useful to begin with a description of a typical karate class. It should be noted that the customs and practices followed in this particular karate dojo are not necessarily representative of other karate clubs as there are many differences among the various schools or traditions of karate and even among teachers within the same school. The class I attend begins at 8:30 pm and ends at 10:00 pm every evening from Monday to Friday. Students start to come into the dojo from 15 to 30 minutes before class in order to change into their karate gi[4] and to warm up. Before going onto the dojo floor, students remove their shoes and socks and kneel down on the edge of the raised wooden floor in order to bow twice, once to the Shinden which represents those people who have practised karate before and once to the sensei. He will acknowledge the bow and then the students start to warm up. The class begins with the conditioning circle[5]. The ranking belt[6] will call everyone into the circle and leads the class through the series of exercises. He/she will

often check the other students' form and will suggest corrections if needed. The conditioning circle usually takes 30-45 minutes to complete, depending on the number of students in attendance. During this time, the sensei takes care of administrative duties, talks with students and/or parents of students and occasionally follows along with the conditioning circle exercises.

After a short break during which students drink water, stretch and talk with each other, the sensei calls the class together to perform kata[7]. The students stand before him in rows, ready to perform. The sensei begins by calling out the first kata and all the students perform the kata at the same time. The kata follow a sequence, becoming progressively more difficult and requiring a greater mastery of movement to perform correctly. As less advanced students finish the kata they have been taught, they bow and sit at the back of the dojo, watching the other students perform progressively more advanced kata forms. Once all the katas have been performed, all the students get up and again form rows in front of the sensei and bow to him. After another short break, students either work individually or in groups on kata, work in pairs or groups on defence techniques; alternatively, the ranking belt will lead the class in tensho, a technique used to move quickly with balance across the floor. The sensei indicates which of these activities he wants the class to do. If the class works on kata, he usually calls one student or a small group to work with him in one corner of the room for 15 - 20 minutes and then moves onto another student or group of students. This portion of the class activity is the most variable and fluid; the combination of practising kata, defence techniques and tensho varies from class to class.

At the end of the class, everyone participates in a ritual in which sensei goes to the

front of the dojo and sits down on his knees. The students sit down (only after the sensei has seated himself) and the ranking belt calls out for a minute of meditation. The goal of this meditation is to have a completely empty mind. He/she says "Mokuso hajime" which in Japanese[8] means begin meditating, we close our eyes and sit completely still. Then the leader says, "Mokuso yamen" which means stop meditating; we bow to the Shinden and say "Arigato gozaimasu" which means thank you. The sensei turns around to face the students looking every student directly in the eye and then we bow to him as a group repeating "Arigato gozaimasu" and he bows back. We bow to any other sensei ranking black belts present that night and then we bow to each other to show appreciation for what we have taught each other each time saying "thank you." Some students stay after class to practice sparring, a mock fight which allows students to put the theoretical movements of the kata into practice. Often, students linger to talk to each other and the sensei.

The description of a typical karate class above has left out some aspects of the karate class and glossed over others. In the following discussion of this learning context, I will attempt to tease out some of the individual strands that make up the tapestry of this context knowing that through the act of isolating different aspects of this context, I will be compromising the richness of the fabric and quite possibly distorting the image of the picture. I will make every effort to attach each strand into its place within the larger picture. The linear sensibility of text limits and shapes my attempt to represent the experience of learning in the karate dojo. Acknowledging that limitation, however, I will continue exploring the karate context by describing the learning that occurs there.

The karate curriculum is sequential only in terms of the order in which new

movements and concepts are introduced. The practice of those concepts and the understanding of them is cyclical; again and again the student comes back to basic concepts and relearns them with a deeper understanding. To learn the first kata as a white belt involves learning a combination of blocks, punches and kicks in a particular order. To practice the first kata as a green belt, the student incorporates power from hip movements, varies the speed of movements and focuses on body position and balance. To do the same kata as a black belt involves awareness of breathing, power, tension and looseness in muscles and other elements that I do not yet know about. Awareness of these elements is only possible in karate after an embodied understanding of the movements has been achieved. Unlike the tutorial context in which the classroom was used to convey information, the karate dojo is a place in which knowledge is built through the accumulation of practice.

Karate can only be understood by doing it. The knowledge gained by the student is grounded in the performance of the movements, the techniques and the forms. In a very real sense, the body has to be prepared, to be strengthened and trained in order to perform karate correctly. The sensei shows beginning students basic movements for the first few lessons separately from the rest of the class. The sensei works with them on the most basic punches and blocks, breaking them into small, easily imitated steps. He paces the first few lessons to allow the student's body to become accustomed to this unfamiliar type of movement. When he feels they are ready, he asks the beginner students to join the conditioning circle. During the conditioning portion of the class, the sensei urges all students to pace themselves according to their own strengths and weaknesses. The

conditioning circle is not intended to be a competitive activity, although some students view it as a contest and push themselves accordingly. Students can also push themselves in order to accomplish a personal training goal. Without a high level of physical conditioning, the student will not be able to perform karate well. A high level of physical conditioning is achieved through hundreds or thousands of repetitions of each movement. The conditioning of the body, in the conditioning circle, is controlled by the student. The student decides how often she or he will attend class and how hard he or she will practice. The student's experience of karate begins with his or her body which is literally shaped by his or her practice of karate.

The learning within the karate dojo seeks integration of experience that is centered in the body. The learning in the karate dojo happens through imitation, repetition and active learning that is student-paced and grounded in a meaningful context. Brown, Collings & Duguid, (1989) write,

> People who use tools actively rather than just acquire them. . . build an increasingly rich implicit understanding of the world in which they use the tools and of the tools themselves. The understanding, both of the world and of the tool, continually changes as a result of their interaction. Learning and acting are interestingly indistinct, learning being a continuously life-long process resulting from acting in situation. (p. 33)

If we consider karate as the tool, students learning to use it understand the world in a new way through their use of it. The tool metaphor, however, implies a workshop image that does not speak to the thrill of rediscovering bodily ways of knowing through the practice of karate.

Like other forces in the universe, human activity is also a playful blending of

> adventure, surprise, energy, circularity, trial and error, and interconnectedness. In order to know and understand, the many parts of the self must interact and bounce off each other randomly. Rather than ordered, sequential knowledge building, most of us 'follow our nose' in the quest to learn, filling and refilling, shifting emptying spaces within a lifetime. (Melamed cited in Boud & Griffin, 1987, p. 16)

As I practice karate, I am aware of how my learning in the dojo is an interplay of the elements Melamed names. Students in the karate dojo are allowed the time and space to explore karate, to discover and understand how their own body moves and how the practice of karate makes use of the body. This connection between the body and the practice of karate is literally life changing because we can not separate ourselves from our own bodies. Unlike the tutorial context, the body in the karate dojo is where learning begins, grounding knowledge in the body rather than the conscious mind.

In the karate dojo, students learn by doing, watching others, asking questions of others and being guided by others. This learning takes time and happens at different rates depending on the students and their purpose in practicing karate. The sensei understands the personal and unique nature of his students' learning. At each tournament and demonstration, he asks the students to try their best and to work hard. He asks the students' families to be patient, saying, "Be patient, give them time to learn, to try." He asks his students to be willing to learn, willing to try, to trust in the learning process and to recognize that learning takes time.

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When I complete a kata, what do I feel? When I understand how this move connects to that one, what do I feel? When I do kata, I feel centered, I try to move on the same level so my legs do most of the work and my arms and hands are loose until they are tight at the points of impact. I feel the way my weight shifts moving back and forth. I feel the way one move flows into the next one, when I step into the place where my hand is so it becomes a block rather than moving my hand to meet my chest. The punch always starts from the ribcage, leave your left hand there and bring your right hand underneath and then shift the hips and twist the arms to break the grip of the person holding you from behind. Bring your elbows around, so you can force them down between your attackers arms and rip their grip off of your body with hands ready to poke them in the face. I practice punching, poking, hitting, blocking, kicking with all of the parts of my body; I practice inflicting crippling damage, possibly fatal damage, perfecting the force, the timing so I can break the bone, pull the joint out of alignment; practice using my attacker's own body against him, practice 3 times a week; practice in my head while I'm waiting in line at the bank, practice while running on the treadmill - all so I will never have to do it. I do karate so I will never have to do karate. I even practice mock fighting with real enough bruises, looking my opponent in the eye without flinching, except when I do, trying to contain the adrenalin that rushes through my body and leaves me shaking afterward, so if, I ever, ever have to fight, I will walk away from it having defended myself well. There is the body in my experience, the part that is hard to explain to people who don't love it, who ask "why do you practice?" You must love violence. I have never believed that about myself. I would rather die than kill. But if it came down to you or me? I want to live. Every day that I practice I come closer to being able to control the outcome of the fight I hope I never have. (Personal journal entry, Feb 16/98)

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The sensei literally embodies a standard of excellence, attained through 30 years of practicing karate; a figurative descendant of a family of teachers who have founded this karate tradition. His own body, his own practice of techniques–how he punches, how he kicks, how he moves–is the physical standard with which we can measure our own

abilities. His presence reminds us of what is possible through the practice of karate. Even as he pushes people to work harder and to move closer to the ideal standard in karate, he is aware of and accepting of the limitations and idiosyncrasies that are part of every student.

The space for individual expression of karate comes, I believe, out of the sensei's artistic orientation to karate. The quality of attention the sensei uses to observe his students reflects his artistic orientation to karate. Elliot Eisner (1991) talks about a distinction that Dewey makes between two modes of attention. One mode is the process of categorization that Dewey calls "recognition." Another mode is the process of visual exploration called "perception" (p. 17). To engage one's attention in the second mode, to perceive what Eisner calls "qualities" of a phenomenon or an experience, is an aesthetic act. The sensei's attention to students while they perform karate includes both modes of attention. His appreciation of their performance transcends the recognition of correct or incorrect techniques to encompass the aesthetic qualities of the kata forms. The sensei's experienced aesthetic perception of the student's performance is what Eisner calls "educational connoisseurship" and is based on the sensei's own 30 year practice of the martial art (p. 115).

Experienced observation, however, does not fully capture the quality of the sensei's attention in the karate dojo. It is the combination of his expertise with his ability to be mindfully aware of the present moment that makes his observations and subsequent teachings powerful and relevant to the student. "...Mindfulness in simplest terms means to pay attention to 'right here, right now' and to invest the present moment with full awareness and concentration" (Tremmel, 1993, p. 443). While the sensei is aware of the

possibilities of attaining excellence in karate, the attentiveness to the present learning situation always takes pre-eminence over future goals. As Sensei has often said, "Each practice is important," meaning future improvement relies on a good practice today. In very practical terms, in karate it is important to pay full attention to each move in the kata form. One kick, properly executed with enough force, is all that is needed in a fight. A part of the practice of karate the untrained novice does not see is how mindfully the sensei executes each movement. Each punch, each kick should be practiced as if it is the only one. Practicing karate mindfully requires a focus of concentration, a connection between mind and body. A mindful state of consciousness is a life-long goal in the practice of karate.

The focus of concentration that is part of the sensei's attentiveness is not a narrowing focus but a widening awareness that includes the object in focus and everything around it at the same time. I experienced this kind of awareness while sparring with a brown belt. One problem I have in trying to spar is while I'm blocking a punch, I do not see the kick that follows it so I am not able to block it in time, and, I am kicked. The sensei instructs us to look our partner in the eyes, saying we can learn how to read the person's intentions before they move. I asked my partner how he can see everything that happens when he's looking me in the eyes. When I try it, I lose track of at least two of his four limbs. He had me look him in the eyes and asked, "what else can you see? Can you see my arms? My legs?" Then he told me to see the rest of the room at the same time. For the first time I realized that I could see all of him and the rest of the room at the same time. This experience of seeing everything at once made me realize awareness is different than concentration; that it is inclusive rather than exclusive. This session was a teachable

moment for me because the experience changed my understanding of the concept of awareness and attention. It is a state of awareness that still is not easy for me to maintain. When the sparring speeds up, I find myself narrowing in on the fist coming toward my face, or on my partner without seeing the rest of the room. But I can reset my vision to include everything at once and try to stay focussed and aware at the same time.

The learning in the karate dojo begins with the body and spreads out to include the mind. The practice of karate includes more than the mindless repetition of physical movements. The physical aspect of karate while important is only part of the experience. Mindful practice, including an awareness of a standard to work towards, an awareness of my own body and how it works, awareness of a greater capacity to see what the sensei is doing, what other students are doing in their practice of karate, is an integration of body and mind and an integration of learning and action. This mindfulness can not be taught directly by the sensei, but it is modelled and supported in many of the learning activities within the karate dojo. Through ongoing exposure to the different ways mindfulness is manifest in the practice of karate in this dojo, it may eventually be realized by the student and integrated into his or her own practice.

When a new student comes to the dojo and begins to practice karate, he or she is introduced to the other students at the end of the class and everyone introduces themselves. The sensei tells the new person to ask anyone questions and that everyone is here to help him or her. Then, he tells the rest of the students to watch out for the new person. This simple ritual is a clear statement of the sensei's expectations of the students' responsibilities. New students are responsible to ask for help and are told that everyone is responsible to help them. Experienced students are responsible for watching out for the new student. This responsibility goes farther than answering questions. The sensei is telling more advanced students to be mindful of the beginner student, to look for opportunities to help them, to correct their mistakes, to see when they are pushing too hard trying to keep up with the more physically conditioned students. The ritual nature of this exchange formally welcomes the new student into the learning community and sets the tone for the peer interactions.

Peer interaction in the karate class is ongoing. Everyone, including the sensei, is a learner and a teacher. As students, we are encouraged to work with each other to learn together. During individual practice time for katas or techniques, students may form groups to work on a particular kata or technique together or work by themselves. More advanced students in the dojo will spontaneously come to me to correct a fault in my form or will ask to see the kata I'm learning. The peer teaching is done respectfully and it is the custom to bow ritually to the person who teaches you when the mini-lesson is over. It can be frustrating as a student to have to perform and be evaluated in this way every class. Sometimes, I would prefer to work on my own in the corner and not have to show my

progress while I'm in the middle of working out a problem. My previous learning experiences often let me stay outside of the spotlight of the teacher's attention. But I have found I progress more quickly having more or less constant feedback; I save time unlearning bad habits because those bad habits are caught as they are being formed, not after I have practised them over time. As a karate student, I must necessarily strive for an appropriate level of humility in order to bear this kind of interaction with my peers. When I am frustrated by my lack of physical ability, it is not always easy to have someone else pay attention to what I am not doing well. I am accustomed to learning in isolation, not in a community. Yet the learning community at the karate dojo is a welcoming and supportive place to learn. Unlike the tutorial context, this sense of community is openly and successfully promoted by the sensei. Feeling a part of this community motivates me to be an active member in it, to widen my purpose for practicing karate to include being a member of the community.

When students, who are well acquainted with each other, work together, the deference paid to the ritual acknowledgement is lessened or dropped completely. In these cases, the mutual respect is known, having been built through shared experiences over time so ritual expression of it is not as important. In the adult evening class, the students flow easily and naturally from working on their own to working in groups and then going back to work by themselves or in other groups.

One class on a Friday was a particularly good day for this kind of interactivity. The energy level was high in the class which is a bit unusual for a Friday night as often people are tired after a week of work. There was a good mix of belts at the dojo, including a few

beginners. It seemed that after the conditioning circle and katas, people worked with each other very harmoniously, with groups forming to work on this particular move then re-forming to work on another. I helped teach a fellow green belt part of a kata that he had missed, then we worked with a higher ranking belt to refine that kata. I worked with two people to figure out how an awkward hand position would work in a defensive situation and I talked with a few people about the sparring we had observed at the end of the earlier class. The feel of the class is of busy, active engagement as students generate and pursue questions and problems in this interactive environment.

These interactions among students create a very strong sense of community based on mutual respect within the dojo. This sense of community is built through formal rituals and informal interactions. The formal rituals of bowing to enter and exit the dojo, the closing meditation ritual, bowing to the person who has just taught you and the ritual to welcome new students sets a tone of respect and appreciation. As with any ritual act, it is possible to go through the motions without considering the reason for the ritual. Usually in the adult class, these rituals are sincerely performed. For myself, the ritual time at the end of each class is a time to acknowledge what I've learned in the class and who has helped me learn. I believe these ritual acts also help to separate this learning time from the rest of daily life. Many students have commented to me they value karate because they can forget about the rest of their day and focus solely on the class. Even changing into the karate gi is a kind of a preparation for the class and gives me the space to switch my attention from my other life obligations to the activities of the karate class. The tone set through ritual says this is a special place and a special time given over to the practice of karate. The informal

interactions among students are guided by this tone; confrontations between students in the adult class are rare. In the adult karate class, students are more than respectful; many have developed friendships that often extend outside of the dojo.

Another notable aspect of learning in the karate dojo is the juxtaposition of student-centered learning with routine group practice. The combination of routine, structured activities and flexible student-driven practice enables the karate student to advance at her/his own pace, allowing people of different physical abilities to practice together. This classroom dynamic allows the student to follow their own path of learning while still participating as a full class member. Instructional flexibility is facilitated by ongoing peer teaching but also occurs in other ways. The class is scheduled every week night, allowing students to attend as frequently as they chose, on the nights that are best for them. The class size, due to this fluctuation of attendance, can vary from one student to over twenty students. The class size can affect what activities occur but do not necessarily affect the quality of those activities. The sensei decides what activities will occur based on what he feels is appropriate for the students in attendance.

The flexible structure of the class allows a variety of students to practice at the same time. For example, a family comes to the dojo during the adult evening class to receive semi-private instruction for an hour. This instruction occurs during the conditioning circle in the adult evening class allowing the sensei in essence to teach two classes at the same time and in the same space. This splitting of attention between the two classes does not, however, diminish the quality of instruction. The sensei's participation in the conditioning circle is minimal as this is a routine classroom activity which does not require

special instruction, leaving him free to teach a class within the regularly occurring class. The two classes are usually joined for the performance of katas in which all students benefit from performing katas as a group, and from observing their classmates performing kata. Where possible, individual or as in the above example, small group instruction is integrated into the class activities. Recently, a student suffered a leg injury. The sensei took care to work out variations of exercises so the student could participate without aggravating his injured leg, minimizing his time away from practice. The sensei believes any interaction with the subject matter, that is, karate, will benefit the student, so he works to facilitate interaction through instructional flexibility.

> It is of the essence of the question to have sense. Now sense involves direction. Hence the sense of the question is the direction in which alone the answer can be given if it is to be meaningful. A question places that which is questioned within a particular perspective. The emergence of the question opens up, as it were, the being of the object. Hence the logos that sets out this opened-up being is already an answer. Its sense lies in the sense of the question. (Gadamer, 1975, p. 326)

The question the karate dojo asks me is how far am I willing to go, how far am I willing to push myself when I practice karate. It is a burden and a challenge to take responsibility for how much you will learn. There is no external standard to limit how far you progress, no A+ to say you have exceeded the standard. Ellen Langer (1997) writes, "...when we are mindful, we are implicity aware that in any particular situation there is no absolute optimum standard for action" (p. 113). Seldom do we have the opportunity to push ourselves farther than we thought we could go, to exceed our perceived limits. The sensei does not push students unless they tell him they want to be pushed. He will show them how to work harder, give them exercises to do outside of class, give them a higher goal to work towards. This approach contrasts to the boot camp approach taken in many karate dojos which force students to exceed their perceived limits through strict, top-down discipline. The sensei allows students to come to their own decision about how hard they want to work. He talked recently about how we need to decide what our purpose is for practicing and how often and how long we need to practice to fulfill that purpose. He leaves it up to us to decide what our purpose is and how we will pursue it. He treats us like independently motivated adult learners and expects us to take responsibility for our own learning.

This question of responsibility begs another question: how willing am I to be changed by this experience? The disciplined practice of karate over several years will change me; I have been changed already after a year and a half. I believe in my own body's capabilities; things that once were impossible for me to do are now possible. I can look someone in the eyes without flinching. I walk differently, my hips are looser, the

composition of my muscles is different, stronger. I am more surefooted. I am stronger and I'm starting to be aware of where the power is coming from and how to use it. And I am aware of these things, aware of my body, how it moves and how it feels. It is my own work that has created that change, my practice combined with mindful teaching.

This transformation of self, the responsibility for it, rests on me and my willingness to become more than I already am, to incorporate my learning into myself. The transformation of self, the intention to strive for mastery in karate is the quest for self-mastery.

> A competent master of an art...approaches his art in the way of 'a mountain.' There is the same calmness and clearness of mind; a serenity that also can be marked by an intense creative energy in approaching an activity demanding a high level of awareness and skill. To be a master requires an intense practice which leads to techniques and skills becoming second nature. (Drengson, 1983, p. 40)

The karate sensei embodies his mastery of the art of karate. His knowledge of karate is fully integrated into his being without "inner conflicts," and without "wasted movements" (Drengson, 1983, p. 45). He does karate because of who he is and who is he has been shaped by his practice of karate. The goal of self-mastery, while implied in the tutorial context, is explicit in the karate dojo. The personal and complete involvement of the sensei contrasts with my more limited engagement in the tutorial classroom and has implications for the kind of relationship students develop with the topic of study in both contexts.

The discipline of karate is like the discipline of writing. Both disciplines are learned as rudimentary techniques, skills. Spelling, grammar, structure; punches, blocks, kicks - all are practiced over and over until these skills can be used without thinking, as a reflex. The

grammar of language, the grammar of karate; these constructions are the tools with which to create and express meaning. Without mastery of the parts, the parts would not merge into a whole. How to achieve mastery of the parts? The practice of the discipline is transformative; to master these skills is to be changed by them. Mastery of the discipline is to be transformed and to transcend the separateness of the skills. Practicing of the discipline is a kind of control which allows you to touch the formless depths of yourself. There is power in the mastery of the discipline of karate, of writing. With power comes a responsibility. Possessing knowledge, embodied knowledge should come with a sense of responsibility - a moral decision of how to act based on that knowledge.

The moral teaching in karate is intertwined with the abilities being developed. Control, control, is the lesson - push yourself but with control. Spar with each other with control. Until the karate student has come to respect the power she can generate and understands the consequences of its use, it is perilous for her to use it. The sensei cautions us to only practice karate in the dojo; it is a place where it is safe, where people understand the consequences of power and force. Taking that knowledge out into the world, where other people don't consider the consequences of power and force, requires self-mastery. The sensei always recommends running away as the first defence, to look for other ways to resolve the situation than through force. His advice reminds me of a karmic awareness of responsibility for thought and action. We act in ways that have repercussions far beyond our immediate horizon but don't give much thought to our responsibility for those repercussions.

Words have power. Writing what you know carries with it a great responsibility. Words have power and using them, writing them so others can read them can be a powerful act. As a woman, I have not often thought of my own use of words as being powerful. They are an expression of my will but I have not believed they have consequences for anyone besides me. But I can create, I am alive. "To live is to read texts, but to be alive is to write them. Reading is the process by which a reality is consumed; writing is the very production of that reality" (Block, 1988, p. 23). I create my reality through words, give structure to the structureless experience, imbue the words with meaning and display them for others so they can know the experience through words rather than through sweat.

Writing so you don't have to write anymore means finding the right words, the right combination, the right arrangement that says exactly what I want

This responsibility assumes the interconnectedness of all life. We act and the ripples spread outward from the act, changing the act(or) and others. A peaceful person is someone who understands the consequences of the use of force. This is a strange juxtaposition: developing as a person of peace who is prepared to inflict deadly force.

to say. I write to give the words their own life, so they can live independently of me, so I can walk away and let them be - to add more would only confuse their meaning. Writing to stop writing is a search for clarity, for essentials, for voice.

To understand the art of karate, the sensei tells us to watch other students, to watch how they perform kata because the nuances of their moves have a purpose. Seeing the form as a whole, over and over again gives a sense of what it means to do the kata.

To understand the art - beginning writers are told to read writers whose styles they like and admire and to try to write in that style, to experiment in ways of writing. Once a beginning writer is aware of the possibilities and has experimented with different ways to write, the writer develops their own toolkit of writing. But the experimentation and practice in writing is necessary to develop your own way of working.

For both writing and karate, the aesthetic sense of wholeness of the form, the meaning of the form and the quality of how it is executed has a life beyond the parts, the techniques and the how to's. The life of the text, the life of the application of kata requires more than parts to live–it requires spirit–spirit developed and grown from within, through the practice and transcendence of technique.

This discipline of learning grammar, technique and structure is freeing. Only after I have mastered the rules can I transcend them. They are a place to begin, a necessary place of departure. Without mastery of grammar and technique, form and function, as a

performer of language or karate, I am limited to what I can express, what I can create. Through disciplined practice, the spirit grows, blooms from the ground work laid down which feeds the roots of the creative spirit. At some point, I stop practicing and become a writer, become a karateka. The change happens over time but the roots of it are hidden. We only notice the transformation when we wake up one day to find we have bloomed; the growth has happened during the night, while we were unaware. The practice, the discipline is the same but inside, we know it differently; we are aware of the change and rediscover structure, rediscover grammar, technique, the function and the form.

What have I learned from this educational landscape, the karate dojo, that I can take away with me, to keep with me on my journey? What souvenirs can I keep if I look at this landscape as an educational connoisseur?

I bring away with me an appreciation of the continuum of learning, from beginner to master. I realized, perhaps for the first time, what mastery of something requires and how learning towards mastery is different than the learning experiences I've had in the past. In the past, I learned to be "good enough." I learned to satisfy requirements, to get the "A," to qualify for the certificate, to pass the exam. The possibility of learning to be more than good enough was not part of my learning experiences, even when I practiced flute. My learning lacked passion. Through revisiting the same kata forms, the same techniques in an increasingly accomplished way, learning about new ways to see them, perform them, I've come to know that the very point when I think I've learned something, a whole new area opens up that I was not prepared to know until reaching that plateau. Learning for mastery is a life-long commitment, one which I have not consciously made prior to my involvement

in graduate-level study.

I take away an appreciation of the art of teaching and how an aesthetic appreciation of teaching leads towards a mastery of teaching that transcends and integrates techniques into a way of being and acting. Alan Drengson (1983) eloquently discusses the mastery of an art, in particular the art of ruling, but I think his words apply to teaching as well.

> This is an alert, open attention which involves sensitivity to the nuances of each situation, ensures an appropriate, particular response, the right inflection of voice, and so on. Nothing is hidden to this open intelligence. When we do not know how to act, or how to do a given craft, we can be so confused by trying to control the many details that we have difficulty starting. We can be taught the details a little at a time by breaking the art into subunits, techniques and so forth. But sooner or later, if we are to master the art, we have to get the feel of it as a whole. (p. 40/41)

The sensei is a master teacher; his teaching is fluent and comes from who he is. His teaching is fully integrated into who he is. As a master, "doing is being, being doing, and concepts disappear as form in the unity of intelligent action" (Drengson, 1983, p. 46). Watching him teach over the last year and a half, I have come to know what the art of teaching can be when it is mindfully and whole-heartedly done.

I can take away an appreciation of the importance of active learning. In this context, my body is coming to school with me and learning with me, not as in the tutorial context, something to be controlled while my mind is engaged. The learning involves my body as much as my mind; beginning mostly with my body and, as I become more aware of the connection between mind and body, ending mostly with my mind. Dan Wakefield (1996) talks about the Hebrew word, "nefesh" which does not have an exact equivalent in English but can be expressed as "bodyspirit" (p. 132). The integration of body and mind or spirit,

thinking of them as together rather than separate is an interesting way to think about learning rather than through a mind-body hierarchy in which the body is the submissive partner. This experience of learning through my "bodyspirit" has occurred for me in karate; when I contrast other physical activities I do, they seem lacking the mind - body connection, requiring less of me. Learning through a unified body and mind is a powerful experience. Having experienced this kind of learning, I am less satisfied when the learning is limited to only an intellectual or a physical experience.

I can take away an appreciation of the importance of a respectful, safe environment to learn. The dojo is one of the most accepting, welcoming learning environments in which I've ever participated. In the dojo, there is a sincere invitation to learn and a sincere acceptance of the student regardless of ability, progress or level of engagement. The inclusiveness of the karate dojo as a formal learning context attracts me to it, how all students are welcome to try. The sensei works with people who have health problems, emotional or mental disabilities as well as healthy students. He is concerned with helping every student gain some benefit from the practice of karate. Through the practice of karate, all students improve their physical abilities, their concentration and their beliefs about what they can achieve. Students with health problems will not of course be able to perform karate as well as healthy students. But they can practice karate successfully, nonetheless, because they can fulfill their own purpose for practicing it. The community of learners in the dojo is a diverse population. The formal and informal respect and appreciation that is shown to the sensei and to the other students, builds a supportive community in which to learn. This community is modelled by and encouraged by the sensei as an important part of

learning karate.

The building of community is connected to the students' sense of responsibility. The students are expected to take responsibility for their own learning community, to take part in creating it, to respect and welcome each other. The sensei models the kind of community he wants to build through his relationships with his students and with everyone who visits the dojo. Students are also responsible for their own learning. Students are expected to take responsibility for their own learning, their own progress, to ask when they have a question, to watch others, to listen to the sensei and to remember what they have learned, even if it is not practiced in the dojo regularly. As students progress, their responsibility extends beyond themselves to other students. We are told we are all responsible to help each other out. When students achieve a black belt ranking, it is expected they have made a whole-hearted commitment to the practice of karate. This commitment involves a large amount of practice time as well as a willingness to take initiative to help others inside and outside of the dojo. Many students stop coming to the dojo when they have achieved a black belt. At this level, the mastery of karate and the mastery of self are intertwined. There is also the responsibility to decide how far I am willing to go, to be changed by my practice. As a student, I am not only responsible for what I learn, I am responsible for what kind of learner I want to be. The sensei creates a space, a community to allow individual students to grow in their responsibility. The community's strength comes from the cumulative strength of the individuals in the community and the force of their responsibility to it. My experience in the tutorial lacked this sense of responsibility, lacked the sense of commitment and involvement that I have

experienced in the karate dojo.

In the tutorial, the community of learners was transient; the professors, tutors and lab instructors had only a passing affiliation with the course and with the students. An ongoing relationship to this particular learning community was not expected by anyone associated with the course. An ongoing relationship to the learning community is expected and encouraged in the karate dojo. The friendship and sense of belonging to a community generated in the karate dojo adds another level of meaning to what and how I learn while I am there.

I take with me an appreciation for the importance of allowing students time to learn. I have observed students become frustrated with how long it takes to learn a new kata, to refine certain movements or to be frustrated with the limits of their body's physical condition. The sensei makes no comments on the pace of students learning. He emphasizes the importance of practicing often, working hard and practicing with right intentions. The belt rankings are as much a recognition of time spent practicing as of achievement level. Time is required to build a relationship with a topic of study, to incorporate new learning. It has taken me over a year to ready my body for the practice of karate. It will take me longer to fully understand the purpose of the moves I have already learned and how to apply them. In this context, an intellectual understanding of the purpose of the moves is not enough to be able to say I understand how and why to use this block instead of that one. The focussed, experiential learning I've experienced in the dojo takes times to develop; there is no way to learn karate other than by spending time doing it each day.

The karate class is different than the formal education classrooms I've experienced. How could the things that happen in a karate class have any meaning for what we think of as the typical classroom; a teacher, students, desks, curricula, evaluation standards, being part of a school system, an institution? Although most formal learning contexts look significantly different from the karate dojo, I believe the qualities I've seen and written about in the karate dojo exist in other learning contexts. The question of mastery of topic, of bringing the body into learning, of creating a safe environment to learn, the question of student responsibility and action, the understanding that learning takes time, the understanding of learning as integrating knowledge into the self, these are not irrelevant questions for any learning context. Based my experience in both the tutorial context and the karate context, I believe the qualities of the learning in the karate dojo are more closely related to the qualities favorable to the teachable moment than the qualities of learning in the tutorial classroom. I will explore the relationship between the kind of learning I experienced in both contexts to my understanding of the teachable moment in the next chapter.

Endnotes

1. Dojo is the place where karate is practiced. It literally means "place for studying the Way" (Frederic, 1991, p. 27). In this school, the dojo is a large, square room with a raised wooden floor and mirrors on two walls. Pictures of ancestral teachers are also on the walls.

2. In this karate school, the belt rankings range from white (beginner), yellow, orange, green (with 3 levels marked by a yellow stripe for each level), brown (3 levels) and black. The head teacher in Okinawa, Japan has a 10^{th} degree black belt. The head instructor in Lethbridge has an 8^{th} degree black belt.

3. The Dictionary of the Martial Arts describes the sensei as a teacher, literally meaning someone who was "born before." The title expresses deference and is used "towards those who have accomplished something of note" (Frederic, 1991, p. 195/196).

4. The gi is the karate uniform. It is a white, long-sleeved cotton, loose tunic shirt that ties on both sides of the hips and a white, loose, cotton pants. The belt is tied around the shirt with a specific knot and no socks or shoes are worn while on the dojo practice floor.

5. The conditioning circle is a routine training exercise in which the students gather in a circle and each student counts out 10 of each type of punch, block and kick. There are 11 different kinds of punches and blocks and 4 different kinds of kicks that are routinely practiced. When there are 15-20 people in the conditioning circle, the workout is strenuous and usually lasts for 30-40 minutes. These exercises are intended to strengthen the body. A high number of repetitions of basic movements are used to train the body to react using practiced movements.

6. The ranking belt is a term used to describe the most advanced student present in the class. The highest ranking belt tends to lead the class in the conditioning circle and in other group practice of technique unless otherwise specified by the sensei. The ranking belt is responsible for helping other students throughout the class and leads the closing ritual at the end of class. Usually the ranking belt is a brown or black belt which in this karate school usually means the student has practiced karate for a minimum of three or four years.

7. Katas are traditional forms consisting of a sequence of moves which include punches, blocks, grabs and kicks. Performance of kata is considered an art form in this karate dojo and elsewhere. Karate tournaments often include a competition for performance of kata as well as for kumite or controlled fighting. The Dictionary of the Martial Arts describes kata as "...constructed of sequences of basic, intermediate or advanced techniques which are meant to be performed with technical accuracy. They are studied so that their nature, purpose and the teaching implicit in them may be understood. They are practiced as much for the perfecting of technique as for the aesthetic experience to be derived from 'beautiful movement'" (Frederic, 1991, p. 104).

8. Karate originates from the Okinawa region of Japan. The Japanese culture is part of the karate tradition. The rituals, the names of movements, the concept of the teacher comes from Japanese language and culture. To fully understand karate requires an understanding of the cultural heritage surrounding its practice.

The Path

> People frequently believe the creative life is grounded in fantasy. The more difficult truth is that creativity is grounded in reality, in the particular, the focussed, the well observed or specifically imagined. As we lose our vagueness about our self, our values, our life situation, we become available to the moment. It is there, in the particular, that we contact the creative self. Until we experience the freedom of solitude, we cannot connect authentically. We may be enmeshed, but we are not encountered. Art lies in the moment of encounter: we meet our truth and we meet ourselves; we meet ourselves and we meet our self-expression. We become original because we become something specific: an origin from which work flows. (Cameron, 1992, p. 82)

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This fourth chapter is an offering, an offering of experience, thought and reflection. It hurts to offer it, hurts because I've hidden away my experiences, thoughts, observations and reflections for so long that I don't quite know how to do it, how to keep my emotional balance while in the act of offering. It is painful to own my experience, to hold it as valuable without reference to another person, without seeking an external authority to sanction it. Offering this text touches a place within myself I have denied most of my life. This offering itself is not revolutionary; what is revolutionary to me is that it is mine, the struggle and search for integrity has created an offspring which has emerged. The birth metaphor is often used to describe the act of creation. I am not a mother and do not feel a desire to be one, to surrender myself in that way. I have created through my inquiry but my surrender is incomplete, I feel I can hold back, reserve some of myself from the creation process. Perhaps this feeling is an illusion. I believe or pretend to believe I can go as far as I choose to go, able to stop when I choose. Such a choice has consequences, but liveable consequences, still within the realm of choice. Given what I have learned, I think I have stepped through a doorway through which I can not return. (Personal journal entry May 5/98)

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> Over any extended period of time, being an artist requires enthusiasm more than discipline. Enthusiasm is not an emotional state. It is a spiritual commitment, a loving surrender to our creative process, a loving recognition of all the creativity around us. (Cameron, 1992, p. 153)

My enthusiasm for my inquiry has grown rather than diminished. I am enthusiastic, passionate about my inquiry because I am learning, changing, creating. I can hardly describe what is happening to me because it is too new. I haven't had time to dry out my feathers, to peck away the shell from which I've emerged. It's impossible not to be passionate about your own re-creation. More than studying about it, my inquiry has been about creating the conditions for my own learning and my own teachable moments. I'm living my inquiry. I have had many teachable moments this year. I could describe them all to you but they are more significant to me than they would be for anyone else. How many times have I told someone with breathless voice and shining eyes of a new thing I have learned, something that has changed me forever and have the person reply, "Didn't you know that? I've known that for years." I retreat, telling myself that she didn't really understand the thing I learned or else she would be as excited as I am about it. My teachable moments in the tutorial classroom, in the karate dojo may strike the reader as commonplace occurrences. It is what happens because of those teachable moments, the learning that happens, the energy that is created to fuel this ongoing desire to know more, to travel farther that is more important than the specific learning in each moment.

What am I creating here with this thesis inquiry, this text? I'm creating my own understanding through words and through wordlessness. I've paid attention to the words educational connoisseurs use to write about teaching and learning. I've paid attention to the words that come close to my experiences: authority and authorship; obedience and listening; trust, awareness and uncertainty. I've paid attention to the limits of words, when they confuse meaning rather than communicate it and to the possibilities of creating meaning through words, through the unusual juxtaposition of words, through deep and wide definition of words. I've learned some experiences can not be fully articulated and communicated with words. Alan Watts (1951) writes,

> In the widest sense of the word, to name is to interpret experience by the past, to translate it into terms of memory, to bind the unknown into the system of the known. Civilized man knows of hardly any other way of understanding things. Everybody, everything, has to have its label, its number, certificate, registration, classification. What is not classified is irregular, unpredictable, and dangerous. (p. 100)

My practice of karate has included many experiences I can't express fully in words. I can't describe the harmony I feel at the karate dojo, the sense of rightness that I was meant to be here, to learn in this way. From the first karate class I attended, I knew I was meant to practice karate. My language implies destiny, fate. I don't like these words, how they take the power of choice and action away from me. Before I started karate, I was open to doing something new, knowing I wanted to use my mind and body together in a different way than I was accustomed to using them. Practicing karate appeared in answer to my decision, my intention. It was not the answer I was looking to find, because all I knew about karate was kicking and punching in a white uniform with a coloured belt. But karate was the

answer that fulfilled my need, my desire in a way that transcended my original intention. In the same way, my thesis inquiry has answered my desire to learn something more in a way that has transcended my expectations for my own learning.

I never knew learning could be like this, the energy, the awareness, the feeling of fulfilment. The feeling of fullness that comes from being a learner with the power to create my own learning, in a sense, to be my own teacher. This feeling also comes from a coherence, a confluence of action and purpose, when what I am studying shows through in all areas of my life. My learning was not created in isolation but rather in a community, through dialogue with other students, teachers and writers. I've lived and learned in my own house, through my own travels, but that house is in a neighbourhood, a community of other learners and teachers and the paths I have walked are also used by these people whose voices that have helped me learn.

What have I done with this inquiry? I've opened myself to a different way of asking, to a different way of listening to my questions and answers. I find it difficult to explain the purpose of my thesis inquiry to people who don't believe there might be another way to inquire than with the mind alone, who are content with the questions that are given to them and who are not kept awake at night by their own questions. I wasn't aware of how important my own questions are to me, how important they have always been and how often they have been ignored, silenced, re-interpreted away from my purpose in asking them. I didn't know before I started this inquiry how angry I felt, how angry I still feel about my previous experiences with questions in formal school contexts. My writing reveals an emotion I did not at first readily recall and then through writing about it,

moments flood back to me, all of the times I offered an answer in class that was dismissed because I did not understand the meaning and purpose of the question in the way the teacher asked it and the questions I did not ask because I could not break my own silence.

I remember one such moment in elementary school when my teacher asked, "What is the most sensitive part of the body?" My answer was the eye. I thought about how quickly the eyelid closes when something is about to make contact with the eye. Wrong. The answer is the hand, that's what we feel everything with, where our sense of touch is most developed. Oh, I *think*, so sensitive and sense of touch are the same thing. I remember this moment from my past when I try to put contact lenses in my eyes for the first time, my eyes red, streaming tears because I can't quite get the lens placed over my iris, can't feel that it has slipped off my finger. Remember, the hand is more sensitive than the eye. I'm angry when I think about the inauthentic questions with pre-selected right answers, the answers sanctioned by my teachers and all of the answers that were banished to exile because they did not suit the teacher's purpose of asking. I was a child feeling I had no power to say, "But Mrs. McKenzie, ..." I was a good girl, a good student; questioning the teacher's answer was unthinkable, unpardonable, the sign of a trouble maker. My silence kept until now, now when my questions have propelled me forward, here where I am changing, because I not only dared to question but I dared not accept an unsatisfactory answer, to live without an answer if necessary.

I have struggled throughout this inquiry with the question of clarity, trying to clearly see my topic and trying to clearly say what I want to say. I felt at times that I only glimpsed brief moments of clarity, times when I connected with my topic. Clarity is a clear

seeing, a clairvoyance which sees more than the immediately visible. The topic, the teachable moment, is not readily visible. It's existence is assumed because of the associated actions that occur before and after the moment but not because of its observable qualities. The ineffable quality of the topic is one barrier to clarity. I asked in the introductory chapter, how can I see something that is ineffable? If I can't change the ineffability of my topic, how do I change my perception of it? One way to change how I see this moment is to become familiar with the conditions surrounding it, the conditions which are favourable to its occurrence. My deep examination of the two learning contexts, the tutorial classroom and the karate dojo, contexts for which I had an intuitive sense the teachable moment would occur, was an attempt to prepare myself to see the moment, to build my knowledge of what is happening within these contexts and how that knowledge might be related to the teachable moment.

There is a difference in the purpose underlying questioning and learning in the two learning contexts. In the tutorial, the purpose of learning intended by the course designers is for the students to become thinkers who think critically and clearly about the ideas they study. The foundational purpose of this learning context is the rational explanation of the world in which critical thinking is the predominant mode of exploration. In order to achieve this purpose, the students need to be trained to think critically, to make distinctions between opinions, observations, facts and judgements in order to evaluate the topics, to sort through the ideas they are studying and if possible, reach a conclusion about them based on reasoned judgement. In this context, there is little space for intuition, emotion, spirituality or physicality. These capacities are implied but are not emphasized in comparison with

rationality. One of the course's long term goals is that students will become disposed to think critically, that they will integrate this kind of rationality into themselves, use it without external prompting and that this disposition to think critically will serve them well in their lives beyond the classroom. The purpose of questions within this learning context is to seek answers that explain phenomena, address and attempt to resolve ambiguities and compare and contrast ideas in the liberal arts tradition of discourse. In other words, the purpose of questioning is to figure out how the world works in order to understand it and control it rather than simply reacting to it. The slogan, "Knowledge is power" seen on university sweat shirts is based on this premise, the seeking of knowledge as a path to empowerment. This is the learning context with which I am the most familiar and the purposes of learning that I have accepted without question prior to my thesis inquiry. This understanding of learning informed my teaching practice in the tutorial even as I became aware of other learning purposes and other questions through my participation in the karate dojo.

In the karate dojo, the purpose of learning is to move towards self-mastery. In this context, rational ways of knowing are balanced with bodily knowing, spiritual or intuitive knowing and emotional knowing. The purpose of learning, of knowing through many capacities, is to become an integrated person, someone who balances these ways of knowing using any one of them or combination of them to act in the world. The actions arising from an integration of knowledge are appropriate to who the person is, appropriate to the situation in which he/she acts. A.R. Drengson (1983) writes, "To do our best, we must be our best, and this best is found in pure, untranscendental, non-conceptual

consciousness" (p. 44). Or as the sensei says, "I don't know how I will act in a situation until I've done it." This is a Zen idea, in which "doing is being, being doing, and concepts disappear as form in the unity of intelligent action" (Drengson, 1983, p. 46). At the moment of intelligent action, the moment a teacher responds to a student's question, the moment a student tries another alternative approach to a question, the distinction of rationality, physicality, spirituality, intuition and emotion ceases to matter; these elements merge into the unified being of the person in action. The questions in the karate dojo seek new possibilities. Seldom does the sensei give a direct answer to a question. He demonstrates, he tells stories, he tells us to listen and to think about the question and to talk about it with each other. The sensei's response to the students' questions places the responsibility for learning back onto the student, showing his belief that self-mastery comes from realization within the student, not from the teacher.

Both learning traditions, the Western, rational tradition found in the tutorial classroom and the Eastern, self-enlightenment tradition found in the karate dojo end with the learner acting in the world. The rational tradition that distinguishes, separates the learner from that which he or she seeks to know and labels the world engenders one kind of relationship between the learner and the world. When control, certainty and power are the long term goals of knowing, the learner is more likely to develop inflexibilities in thought, staking and claiming known territory against the unknown and perceiving the unknown only in relation to the known. The patterns of thought, the reliance on thought reinforce the boundaries of what it is possible to think about and how it is possible to know it. When learning is perceived as more inclusive, as in the self-enlightenment tradition, including

ways of knowing besides rationality, the possibilities for what and how we know increase, the boundaries of known territory expand and the need to defend the boundaries becomes less imperative because the long term goal of learning is control of self rather than control of the world. These two traditions are different ways of answering the question of how to live in the world. The focus of attention is different; one on the things being learned and the other on the learner.

Over the span of this inquiry, my perception of what is happening within these contexts has changed, deepened. My observations and perceptions of the karate dojo are more complete, more finely attuned because my participation in the karate dojo is still happening. By contrast, the tutorial context was an experience in the past before I began to write about it, before I started to interpret what was happening and what the learning meant. For the tutorial context, my opportunity for new insights is limited because I am not experiencing the tutorial context in the present. Also, my participation in the karate dojo context engaged me more fully than did the tutorial context. My learning in the dojo is not limited to the acquisition of information. Through this context, I am experiencing integrative learning. Even though my learning in the tutorial was associated with development of my teaching practice, the context in which I was teaching supported only a rational inquiry of that learning. The pre-dominance of rationality as the mode of discourse distanced me from my own experiences while teaching. Without the experience of learning within the dojo and through my thesis inquiry, I would probably not be able to name the dissonance I experienced in the tutorial other than as a vague feeling of dis-satisfaction. I hope I will continue to be sensitive to unsatisfactory qualities in future teaching contexts,

acting on those feelings appropriately.

My perception of the topic, the teachable moment, and of the learning contexts has changed not only because the passage of time but because during that time, I've gone through a cyclical movement in my own inquiry, returning to what I know, what I've learned and realizing new insights, creating a new awareness of the topic for myself. My writing of this thesis text has been based on a cyclical movement of revisiting my own texts again and again, generating new texts and new insights. This cyclical learning movement was modelled for me by the karate sensei, in how he guided learning within the karate dojo. Within the context of karate, this cyclical movement means returning over and over again to basic movements and knowledge about the body. Recently, I was practicing a low side kick which requires a lot of hip movement that I found difficult to perform well. The sensei brought another student over, demonstrated the kick and explained that beginning karate movements come from the parts of the body used when the body walks forward. These movements are easier to perform because they are movements that use the body in a way in which it is accustomed to moving. More advanced karate moves, like this low side kick, exert force while the body is moving to the side or moving backward. These movements are more difficult because the body has to become accustomed to moving in this way. With this explanation, I will have to rethink all of the basic movements I perform with the side of my body, concentrating on strengthening those muscles during the conditioning circle. His explanation, while not directly addressing what I was doing wrong in my kicks, has given me an awareness of another level of information about what is happening during this movement and if I am to understand his words, forces me to re-

examine a whole series of movements that I already know. This is what I call a cyclical learning movement. The moment I understood what he was saying and what that implied for changing my practice of karate, for me, that was a teachable moment.

In my thesis inquiry, my learning has been cyclical because I make sense of the new things I've learned through what I already know. Without the flow back and forth, around and around, I would stop learning in the sense that I would become satisfied with what I know without knowing what else there is to learn. This movement over ground I have already covered increases my awareness of it; each time I pass over it I notice another thing I missed the last time around. I'm learning how to look as well as learning about what I'm seeing. An increased awareness, a prepared perception that lets me appreciate my own learning as I learn is what gives me the possibility to create something new, something more with my own knowledge. My inquiry learning has been an attempt to create possibilities for my own questions rather than to seek the best answer for them. Attempting to do this has created a capacity within myself to create, an openness to creativity as a possible way to come to know something and has weakened the bond, the dependency I've developed during my formal schooling on using only my capacity for rational thought to know about the world. Thinking is a good way to know about the world but I can no longer only depend on it to define how I learn about the world. I do not question the usefulness of rationality; I do question its perceived pre-eminence as the most valid way to approach learning.

The discipline of writing has been the medium through which I have explored my capacity to learn in an integrated way and create meaning for myself. By using a variety of

approaches to writing, the familiar expository essay, personal and professional journals, exploratory free flow writing and the creation of the thesis document, I have practiced bringing together my thoughts, emotions, spirit and body. When I tried to approach my thesis writing in a way that was inappropriate to the way in which I was learning, my writing became physically blocked. What I have named earlier in this chapter as a search for clarity, for what I believed was clarity of thought, was a search for voice, for a voice that is supported by a balanced person, a voice that speaks to my learning and teaching experiences meaningfully.

The pace of learning in my inquiry has been more like the learning in the karate dojo than in the tutorial classroom. As I pursued my questions, other questions emerged and lead me back to the same ideas again and again, each time with a slightly different focus, with a new insight. I've been a slow learner, trying with each thesis chapter I write to return to my old understanding of learning, of knowledge, trying to write in a way that does not fit how I am learning. I have not unlearned the discourse of my academic education; I am still unlearning that tradition and learning to write in the life story, experiential tradition. I am still working to balance my own rationality with other ways of knowing. It is a difficult thing to let go of the hierarchical understanding I have of mind over body, mind as controller of emotions, of intuition, separate from spirit. I have spent sixteen years in formal learning contexts learning about this hierarchy. I will need more than a year to knock it over and recreate it. I'm engaged in slow learning for what David Orr calls "slow knowledge." He describes slow knowledge as a "thorough and patient pursuit of knowledge," the aim of which is "resilience, harmony and the preservation of long-

standing patterns that give our lives aesthetic, spiritual and social meaning" (cited in Spayde, 1998, p. 47). Having had the luxury of a full year to turn my attention to building slow knowledge, I will ask for each new learning context I enter what meaning it has in relation to this slower knowledge. I can not consider immediate learning goals without considering also the implications of quick learning for my slower learning. Like the awareness I came to know in the karate dojo, the way of seeing clearly the whole and the parts at the same time, I can engage in immediate learning goals both as a teacher and a learner while still seeing everything else, while also paying attention to long term learning goals.

Through my experiences in the karate dojo and with my thesis inquiry, I've changed my understanding of what learning is, what it means, how it is done. I've widened and deepened my definition of learning to include more than thought and I understand that sometimes learning begins with the body or the spirit or with emotions or intuition and, given favourable learning environments, moves outward from that beginning point. Understanding learning as a process of integration rather than separation and distinction changes me as a learner and challenges the teacher I am becoming. When I integrate my own learning, understanding self-mastery as my long-term goal, I perceive learning in other contexts in light of this understanding. Based on my newly formed understanding of learning, I will seek to become a teacher that teaches for this kind of learning.

My growth and development as a teacher must include my new understanding of learning for my work as a teacher to feel authentic, genuine. The word, authentic, is closely associated with a word I questioned earlier in my inquiry, authority. Derived from the

Greek word, authentes, an authority is a doer, a master, one who does a thing himself (Onions, 1966, p. 63). My thesis inquiry has shown me a way to teach myself. My next challenge is to use this understanding in my relationship with my students, in contexts in which I am responsible to teach others, to ensure the teaching activities I engage in lead toward self mastery as well as more immediate learning goals.

What of uncertainty and its role in my development as a teacher seeking authentic questions and answers? My basic uncertainty as a teacher is not knowing for certain what the students are learning. Floden and Clark (1988) assert that "uncertainty about influence arises because teachers can never be sure how student understanding is changing, let alone about whether what they do will have its desired effect on students" (p. 506). To borrow an idea from physics, from the "paradox of Shrodinger's cat," my uncertainty is not necessarily a reflection of the students' state of knowing or not knowing (Powers, 1982, p. 148). Rather, it is a commentary on my knowledge of what the students may or may not know. My intentions for the students' learning are guided by my perceptions of what they know or don't know rather than what they actually know or don't know.

This distinction is an important one to me, one that I can easily overlook when I try to devise ways to evaluate what the students do know. When I use evaluative instruments that try to reduce the variables involved, to reduce the uncertainty by limiting the possible correct outcomes, to reduce the number of valid ways to achieve a right answer, I can limit my uncertainty of what the students have learned from the planned lesson. It is easier to create these kinds of evaluative instruments if I structure the lesson towards the evaluation, if I teach for the test. In this environment, the answer to the question, "What did the

students learn today?" is answerable; the exercise was completed with so many right answers, the model was reproduced, the experiment was performed with the predicted results.

But what else did the students learn? What does this approach teach students about the nature of knowledge? In my experience in the tutorial, I found the students had been trained to see knowledge as separate, distinct and unconditional. They wanted to know what was the right path to the correct answer. The students' response to uncertainty, to conditional, dependent knowledge was to say that "everyone has their own opinion and experiences." The students moved from a philosophical position of absolutism, that there is a right answer to every question, to a position of absolute relativism, that every answer is equally valid.

The most notable effect of this conception of knowledge on the students was their disengagement from asking their own questions. Because as a teacher, I can not know for certain how the students' understanding is changing, it is important to develop their ability to question for themselves. They did not seem prepared to ask questions and, for some topics, did not see the necessity of questioning; their pre-existing, common sense explanation of the topic was satisfactory to them. As their tutor, I needed to rouse the students from this comfortable state of knowing. I tried to draw their attention toward uncertainties, ambiguities and contradictions in their apparently seamless map of the world. The students did not question for themselves because they equated learning with receiving unconditional, unquestionable facts. Even if the facts they received directly contradicted what they had already learned, they were not disposed to question the disparity. They

accepted the contradiction as part of the way things are.

By modelling the relationship I want the students to have with knowledge, I have a better chance of having them respond than by talking about uncertainty and teaching for certainty. I can demonstrate ways to face uncertainty through my approach to teaching. Heaton and Lampert (1993) suggest improvisation, another word meaning attention to the moment, as one way to cope with uncertainty.

> Improvisation takes a combination of knowledge and self-confidence; it follows some framework, but loosely. It requires that knowledge be held in flexible ways so that it can be called upon when it is needed, not in the form of a script, but in the form of a web of multiply connected ideas for things to try. It is not a matter of learning the rules and then following them; it is a matter of casing out the situation you are in on a moment-by-moment basis and responding, watching how students react to your response, constructing a new response, in a cyclical improvisation. (p. 58)

If I want students to face the tension and discomfort of uncertainty, I must share the experience. Otherwise, the challenge feels inauthentic, another exercise to be performed for the teacher's approval. Being a teacher, a reflective and active practitioner who is willing and able to improvise in the classroom, teaches students something more about the use of knowledge.

The movement from a passive, receptive role to an active, exploratory role as a student is an important one. Students accustomed to working through ambiguous situations, to using what they know and what they've learned, are active, questioning, and open to exploring possible solutions. They trust themselves to be able to learn, to find workable solutions. Their relationship with knowledge is alive, open to change without threatening their identities as learners. In the karate dojo, student questions determine what

students do outside of the routine learning activities. Students are told to ask when they have questions. With peer teaching and a clear expectation that all students will help each other, it is customary that students work on the questions that concern them the most. The students' questions bring them closer to the learning community. Students work alone when they do not ask questions. Sometimes practicing alone is necessary. The student-generated question is a routine part of student learning in the karate dojo and every student, regardless of ability or experience, is responsible to ask their own questions.

The teachable moment originates from a question, a recognized uncertainty. Students need to be prepared to recognize uncertainties and also to act upon that recognition. Without being prepared for such a move, students rely on their training in previous schooling and pay more attention to answers than questions, to solutions than problems. In focussing more on answers than questions, the student is dependent on others to pose questions. To create one's own questions and then devise a method or methods to seek an answer or answers is the path to self-directed learning.

What does preparation of students to question, to seek on their own, entail? In my experience in the karate dojo, the sensei creates space for student questioning to occur. As I progress, become more experienced, my learning is limited if I do not question. I can practice the same moves over and over mindlessly, or I can question what I am doing and why. When I am engaged in learning an aspect of karate, for example, balance and body alignment, I watch my peers with greater awareness of those skills. I'm learning to watch as a connoisseur, to watch for details, to assess what I'm seeing, to pay attention. I ask about the thing that I'm engaged in learning. In the tutorial, I found I needed to not only

make the classroom a safe place to ask questions but I had to model asking questions, to challenge the students when they had no questions, to push them to look beyond the surface of what they had learned, of what they knew. In order to develop the student's capacity for self-directed learning, student-generated questioning needs to become part of the student's identity as a learner, a routine learning activity. Like any other skill, the ability to question must be developed and practiced. The question is the essential first step on the path to learning.

Openness to change as a result of learning is an essential part of that preparation. How much a student is willing to change affects how much they will learn. Learning with an openness for change is different than learning to remain the same. The latter is training to fit into a system, to be passive. I wonder about my own learning to be a teacher, how much is conditioning, training so I will fit into a system and how much is education towards my ongoing development as a teacher. Learning and being changed by that learning leads toward action. If I do not take action after learning, what have I learned? Learning and undergoing change as a result of that learning is a draining thing, requiring energy; the fuel for learning towards transformation is passion, a love for learning and the topic learned. It is far easier to be less involved in learning, to control my involvement, to limit how much I am willing to change as a result of my learning, to seek training instead of an education. It is easier to teach for less involvement, to limit my responsibility as a teacher to providing information, to teaching the topic rather than teaching the students. Teaching towards change demands much from the teacher and the student. Students may not want to change, may not see the relationship between learning and change.

In my inquiry, the learning I experienced transformed me. I created conditions for my own teachable moments because I created a space, through writing, reflection, and discussing my inquiry with others, in which to interpretively and imaginatively dwell in the tutorial and the karate educational landscapes. Dennis Sumara (1996) makes a distinction between touring and dwelling in an interpretive space created through a shared reading of literature. He writes,

> the quality of the shared...experience seems to be most directly related to the interpretive location within which we became situated...We leave our readings and discussions knowing that something has been created--some interpretive locations have been announced—that transcends the experience of reading the novel and discussing it with others. Something has been 'built' that has altered the way in which we understand our past, present and projected lived experiences."(p. 161-162)

At the end of chapters two and three, I discuss the souvenirs I took from each educational landscape, those things I will take with me on my journey of interpretation and understanding. The word souvenir, implies touring, travel without lasting impact on myself or on the landscape over which I travelled. My experience during this inquiry, in these educational landscapes, was closer to dwelling than touring. Creating a space so I could live with my questions, in the way Rainer Maria Rilke describes, transformed me. The word, transformation, from the Latin, transformare, means to "change the shape of." The shape of my learning, my understanding of myself and what it means to learn has changed form. To continue to learn and teach without obedience to my newly shaped understanding would deny the validity of my experiences during this inquiry.

How does this shift in my perception and understanding of learning relate to the

teachable moment? The teachable moment starts with the student's question, their desire to know something more. Teaching for a teachable moment is teaching to facilitate the student's own questions. When the teacher recognizes and acknowledges the student's question at the time it is asked, student questions become part of the routine of the classroom. In a trusting environment, students expect their questions will be heard, although not necessarily answered. Students must feel free and safe enough to pose the question, to dare not to know. To teach at that moment means listening to the question, being aware of who the student is, what it is they are asking, from where the question is emerging. Students must also have a question to ask. To teach in the moment means being open to possible questions and answers, ones that speak to the student's level of preparedness to know and that are obedient to the truth, that seek the truth. It means being aware of the possibility that there is no satisfactory answer to the student's question, that the teacher and the student need to do more work to be able to address the question. It means accepting the conditional nature of the answer, that the best answer for that moment and the right answer may not necessarily be the same answer. It means the teacher will not know how she or he will respond to the question until it is asked so the teacher must trust herself or himself to act appropriately in that moment. The teachable moment can not be predicted, prepared for in the sense of preparing a game plan, strategies to employ when the moment is recognized. Pre-planning for the unexpected leads to inauthentic questions and answers. The act of repeating a student's question but in the teacher's words changes the purpose of the question, rendering it inauthentic for the student. A unity of action, of response from the teacher, coming from all that she is, all that she has experienced, felt,

thought, dreamed and believed is the most authentic response, the most appropriate response and the one which is most likely to result in meaningful learning. The student knows she or he has been heard and for this moment, connects with the teacher. This authentic response is a gift from teacher to student, a gift the student will take when he or she leaves the classroom.

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