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By
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HOW CARING INFORMS TEACHING

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND ACADEMIC CURRICULUM

BY

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Abstract

This study is a qualitative investigation into the concept of care based on a heuristic research design constructed by Clark Moustakas. The researcher relied on the belief that teachers are knowers through lived experience and can rely on their own "personal practical knowledge" to understand better the classroom and the world around them. Since I have been a classroom teacher for the past 32 years, I explored the phenomenon of caring and its true and deeper meaning in an attempt to illuminate basic structures and essences through memories and personal narratives. Based on Michael Polanyi's concept that human beings know things implicitly or unconsciously through tacit knowledge, I began this study prompted by a serendipitous encounter with a special student. This led me to want to know more about how to care for my students, but first I wanted to know explore more fully this concept of care. From this initial encounter I was able to develop my research question.

My heuristic research design fit perfectly into my desire to understand care through the relationships and experiences of my private and public life. Through my personal journaling, I reflected upon those administrators, teachers, and students who I will never forget for one reason or another. As I began to immerse myself deeply into the caring relationships with those students, memories with family and friends also began to surface. Finally, I realized that these memories would provide the rich data that I needed to study care. Once the data had been collected, I had separated the data

according to essential themes. I tried to distance myself from the study for a while only to return with a deeper sense of purpose and commitment to the study. Finally, I interviewed the teaching faculty at my school as well as students to broaden my sense of perspective, to reaffirm my own insights, and to provide additional and alternative ways of thinking.

In my conclusion, I offer my insights about care and its importance in the classroom, schools, and world today. I also show a few ways in which I implement care in my classroom from simple teaching techniques to class projects. Finally, I recommend further study that is important if we are to transform education and if we really do care about our children.

Chapter 1

An Introduction to Care

In this chapter I will begin by telling a story which affected me so deeply that it seemed to call out to me and consequently represents my initial inquiry into the phenomenon of care. As classroom teachers, we hope to change our students' lives or at least to shape our students into useful and productive human beings, but we often find that in our attempts we are the ones that have been changed radically. This transformation took place in me about 5 years ago and thus began my initial engagement into self-discovery. The reader will find much of my scholarly research is provided through similar narratives about students, teachers, principals that I have encountered over the past 32 years of my teaching career as well as family members and close friends whom I care for and who care about me.

I have included my own reflections about these individuals as I began to immerse myself in this heuristic research study. Throughout this chapter, I will discuss how I began to look inward for greater awareness and self-knowledge to clarify and illuminate a passionate concern that I have as a human being and educator—what does it mean to care? From this, I will retrace the steps that I have taken in arriving at my research question: what is the phenomenon of caring? I will also introduce the names and appropriate thoughts of a few philosophers, feminist theorists, linguists, and educators who will surface throughout this scholarly endeavor (but will give them greater attention in the ensuing chapters). Next, I will turn my attention to define key

terms to assure that we are on common ground and sure footing. Finally, I will delineate the limitations and delimitations of my research. My hope is that through my own study others may develop more caring environments in their own classrooms, homes, and businesses; but most of all can create more caring relationships with their students, patients, friends, and family members.

Background to the Study

In the 2000-2001 school year, I pursued the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification for Adolescence and Young Adulthood in English Language Arts AYA/ELA. Unlike many teachers pursuing certification, I did not believe that the certification process had anything to teach me. I was a veteran teacher. It was not long into the process that I learned differently. My first of six assessments had to do with students' writing and my assessment. I needed to find three of my students to help them improve their writing. A colleague and mentor teacher of mine advised me that I should not select students from my Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition classes. Often, these students did not show as great an improvement as those in regular English IV classes so I took this advice and identified five possible candidates. One in particular was Natalie (a pseudonym).

Natalie had caught my eye as a student on the first day of class. She was eager to learn and listened to my every word. She came to class early, always had her textbooks and writing notebook open, pen in hand ready to

begin. She struck me as the student that we teachers never really get to know but performs well in class. Natalie was quiet, did not socialize much, and was kind of a loner. She was not going to be the next Eudora Welty or Emily Dickinson, but she was not going to be a problem either. She was just going to be a student that showed up for class every day, turned in every assignment, made a solid "B" in the class, smiled at me and said "hi" in the halls, and went her separate way—one that we teachers barely remember and never get to know. I chose Natalie so that she could help me with my National Board portfolio. *Little did I know that she would help me change my life and my teaching practices forever.*

One of the first writing assignments in my English class is a personal narrative. This gives me a chance to talk about writer's voice and gives me a chance to get to know my students. Natalie wrote about what I assumed to be her newborn baby sister. Her narrative was free from glaring mechanical and structural errors and with some work, I felt, we could strengthen her paragraph development, polish the essay a bit through proofreading techniques, and generally improve the piece. I asked Natalie to stay after class; we talked about her corrections, and I asked her to revise the essay for the next day. She was waiting at my door before school the next morning. She was as proud of her revisions as I was. Then it struck me that the child in her essay was not a new sister but her daughter. Natalie was a single mother who was trying hard to take care of her newborn baby daughter, to

work a part-time job, and to continue her education. *I was determined to improve her essay; she was determined to improve her life.*

We continued to work on her narrative, and I selfishly decided that my teaching practices would look impressive to the assessors of the National Board certification if Natalie would create a poem based upon her essay. So Natalie and I worked during class on writing a poem, and she took it home with her as a homework assignment. If I wanted to look at it before school the next day, I would have to pick it up at an all night business where she worked. I discovered that Natalie worked early into the morning at a self-service laundromat to make enough money to take care of her new family. We continued to work on her poem for some time. I even suggested that we send the autobiographical poem to a national poetry contest. We read the submission requirements, and I gave Natalie her final assignment assuring her that once she had typed her poem for submission, our conferencing and extra work would come to an end.

Before school the next day, Natalie walked into my classroom with tears in her eyes. “Mr. Baker, I am sorry that this is over. You are the only teacher who has ever taken an interest in me.” It was then and there that I realized what I should have known throughout all those years of teaching: we have to know our kids and show them that we truly care for them. It is the National Board’s first and most important standard: We need to know our students not just as learners, but as individuals, as human beings, as our own children under our care.

Since then, I have asked myself numerous times: how many of my students have had similar stories? How many of my own students needed an attentive and caring adult, and I never even noticed them? I knew deep down inside that if it had not been for selfish reasons, I would never have known that Natalie was a single mother. I would never have known that Natalie worked until the early hours of the morning and had come to class with little or no sleep each day still eager to meet the challenges that I offered her. How could I as an English teacher help her develop her writer's voice when I really had never heard the voice of this special and unique human being? I would have treated Natalie as I have done hundreds of other students—students whose names I cannot even recall right now. I would have treated her as a faceless, voiceless presence in my classroom. I just could not continue to teach like that—*the sense of loss, irresponsibility, emptiness, and disappointment was too great.*

Fellow colleagues told me that I should not let this bother me. There is just so much that we can do, but sometimes I felt like I was becoming the kind of teacher that I promised myself that I would never become: I was becoming a teacher who only went through the motions of his daily activities, one who never inspired, one who seemed distant and remote, and one who never really cared about his students as his own children. I had become a teacher because I wanted to do more, because I loved children and wanted them to love me, and because I had something to offer them–the love of literature and

language, and I wanted to share that love with them-- the same way that my favorite teachers had shared with me.

I swore on that last day of my meeting with Natalie that I would really get to know my students and find ways to show each one that I really cared for him or her. I would give myself fully to the experience. I would make my students the focus of my classroom not me. But where would I begin? I knew that I had similar feelings for my students that I had for my own family members—that in some way these feelings and emotions were similar. I wanted both family and friends and students to be successful and to be happy. I wanted them to be safe and secure. I wanted them to be loved and cared for. I began to think about the concept of care and wondered if the care that we experience in our personal lives can be extended, in fact, to our public lives as well; and realized through this research project that it must if we are to change ourselves, our classrooms, and our nation. I always knew tacitly that I needed to teach *people* not just a language arts curriculum designed and created by people who didn't know anything about me or my students. I reflected on the old adage that my own supervising teacher at the University of Oklahoma Dorothy Fritz told me years ago in my own methods class: "Students will not care about English until they know that you care about them." I knew that this was true. I see it every day.

As I began to organize my thoughts, I read about a statement by John Jay Chapman (1915), essayist, poet, and critic who said that "the gift of teaching is a peculiar talent and implies a need and a craving in the teacher

himself" (*Memories and Milestones,* p. 29*)*. I began to realize that need which lies within each human being is the "need and a craving" to care for someone and in some way for that care to be returned. This same need "to care" and to be cared for has impacted and challenged me repeatedly as a classroom teacher throughout my career and was made even clearer to me in my relationship with Natalie. I knew that those young men and women in my classroom were not only my students, but also my friends who trusted me, who I cared about, and who cared about me, too. I just needed to understand what it truly means to care and to find ways to express it more fully to *all* of my students.

As I began to immerse myself in this phenomenon of care, I began with philosophy and quickly discovered that to many philosophers care is at the core of our existence as human beings. Philosopher Martin Heidegger (1962) defines care as the essence or our Being as humans. To Heidegger (1962), care entails our desire to act with specific regard to others, our expression of concern and consideration for all living and non-living forms, our existential desire to find meaning and purpose in our own lives, and the joys and struggles that we experience as human beings throughout our lives. Heidegger stresses that care defines who we are as human beings which is also directly related to how we treat the world around us both living and non-living life forms. To look at care in another way, Berenice Fisher and Joan Tronto (1990) defined care this way

> On the most general level, we suggest that caring be viewed as a species activity that includes everything we do to maintain, continue, and repair our "world" so that we can live in it as well as possible. That world includes our bodies, our selves, and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web. (p. 103)

Fisher and Tronto's broad definition would include even the caring acts of our attendance secretaries, who record our daily attendance for the classroom teacher; our custodial staff, who clean the tables during lunch in our cafeterias; our school nurse who treats students with everything from a headache to a serious case of test anxiety; and even the many volunteer parents, who "run copies" of handouts to make our lives as teachers easier. Their definition focuses on the fact that care is a practice and a vital force which may sustain and transform the world in which we live. Today more than ever our world needs it.

It did not take long to recognize that everything around me became the raw material for my research, but my scholarly discoveries in the literature were endless and intertwined in many issues. I became aware immediately that there are many ways of looking at care. Tronto (1993) in her work *Moral Boundaries: A Political Argument for an Ethic of Care* stresses that care connotes an engagement. She stresses that care implies the reaching out to someone or something other than the self and that care implies an action and an encounter. Other critics have also pointed that care is universally accessible in that all of us can relate to our own earliest memories of care as

we depended upon the care and protection of our own mothers in childhood (Ruddick 1995; Chodorow 1978). Thus, care is also concretely connected with relationships and influenced by a sense of connection.

In recent years, I have had to face what many of the baby-boomers are facing today—aged parents. My father suffered and died not long ago from a slowly debilitating and horrifying encounter with Alzheimer's disease, and my family and I are trying now to care for our elderly mother whose mind is sharp, but whose body is weak. Virginia Held (2006) makes clear that "caring includes also the care given by extended families, by many domestic workers and workers in hospitals, by teachers and others in their practices and by others in many other ways" (p. 31). Caring, in addition, may encompass a public or private service (in the past relegated to professional care providers)—a service providing for the care of our young children, our aged or infirm parents, or needy abused friends—more and more today the responsibility of caring family members rather than professional health care services. All of these acts of caring or caring services require work, and "the expenditure of energy on the part of the person doing the caring" (Held, 2006, p. 30); and this too becomes a part of my exploration as I became more aware of the many dimensions of the concept of care.

Need for the Study

My immersion into care was overwhelming. I needed only look around to realize the importance of care and its wide range of meanings. Care is used,

often rather loosely, in every aspect of our society especially if we want to give something special meaning and greater significance. For instance, we often say "Take *care*" when wishing someone well and leaving an acquaintance. In our schools, in describing a wonderful teacher, our students often say "This teacher really *cares*." Those faithful companions, our dogs and cats, must be given special veterinary *pet care*. We purchase our beautiful trees, plants and flowers at *TLC (Tender Loving Care)*, and our front and back yards are given meticulous *lawn care*. We desperately hope that the abused and neglected children of our society are provided a safe, loving and homelike environment through *foster care*. When we or our loved ones suffer from serious medical problems, they are given the most careful monitoring in the *Intensive Care Unit (ICU)* of the hospital, and our senior citizens pray that *Medicare* covers those rising hospital costs. Our pharmacists employ *"True Care"* when dispensing our medications; and when entrusting our dearest loved ones with responsible and loving *caregivers,* we expect the finest *health care, child care, or assisted-living care* as possible. We will not accept anything less; and, finally, when our loved ones are laid to rest in the *"memory gardens of care,"* we pray that they will be given *eternal care* and will rest in peace. There is no concept we cherish more or word that we hold in higher esteem than care. Virginia Held (2006) describes care as "the most deeply fundamental value" (p. 17) in human beings.

In education, researchers have pointed to care not only as an essential quality of living but in effective teaching especially in the language arts.

Langer (2000) in her 5 year study of literacy programs sought to identify "the characteristics of teachers' professional lives that accompany student achievement in writing, reading, and English" (p. 397). She (2000) identifies six features in the teachers' professional lives that cut across exemplary classrooms in 25 schools both middle and high schools from four states. Only one has to do with the direct relationship between the teacher and others (both students and colleagues). Langer (2000) writes that: "the fifth cross-cutting characteristic of the exemplary programs is an ethos of caring" (p. 429). Langer (2000) goes on to declare that effective teachers:

> care about their students and about the people with whom they work. In some schools, they hug each other a lot, in others they show affection more subtly. They ask each other how things are going and go beyond small talk at the coffee machine. (p. 429)

Langer (2000) gives examples of caring acts, acts of kindness; but she does not explore with any depth the phenomenon of care. However, she does insist that it is this experience of care that sets apart the successful and the unsuccessful schools in terms of student achievement and learning. She leaves this further understanding of care to many others.

A wide range of authors have viewed care as a means to transform the ever-increasing violence in American society. Nel Noddings (2003a) in her seminal work *Caring* declares that "When we look clear-eyed at the world today, we see it wracked with fighting, killing, vandalism, and psychic pain of all sorts" (p. 1). Child Trends (2005), a non-profit research center, reports

that 1 out of every 11 United States high school students was a victim of dating violence in 2005. In the last year alone, numbers rose by nearly 20,000 incidents. More than 1 in 3 students (39% in middle school and 36% in high school) say they don't feel safe in public schools. 43% of high school and 37% of middle school boys believe it is acceptable to hit or threaten a person who makes them angry. Nearly 1 in 5 (19%) of the girls agree.

Yale psychologist Edward Zigler, co-founder of Head Start, along with Elizabeth Gilman, writes: "In the past 30 years of monitoring the indicators of child well-being, never have the indicators looked so negative" (Myers, 2000, pp. 6). Urie Bronfenbrenner, a distinguished developmental psychologist, concurs when he evinces that: "The present state of children and families in the United States represents the greatest domestic problem our nation has faced since the founding of the Republic. It is sapping our very roots" (Myers, 2000, pp. 6-7). If statistics do not reveal an immediate need for care, social critics seem to call out for a transformation that only care can perform.

Peter R Breggin (2000) suggests in *Reclaiming Our Children: A Healing Plan for a Nation in Crisis* that we need to reclaim our children and to renew the importance of children in our lives. Breggin writes:

> For the sake of our children, we must find new solutions to society-wide crises involving poverty, racism, sexism, and violence, as well as pedism itself—prejudice against children. We must, on this national level, address the reform of our families, schools, churches, police, and other community institutions. Yet solutions on this level will come

> slowly—while the alienation and suffering of our children require an immediate response. We must begin immediately as individuals to transform our personal relationships with the children in our lives by making them a higher priority and especially by creating meaningful relationships with them. When we practice and experience the kind of meaningful relationships that children really need from us, we will also become more able to guide our communities toward creating a more child-friendly society. (p. 16)

In essence, our children need us to care, and they need it now. As Breggin sees it, many of our children live in homes with overly permissive parents, absentee fathers, working mothers, and disconnected families. Consequently, we as educators must take responsibility for these neglected children. Mulcahy & Casella (2005) in *Violence and Caring in School and Society* stress that "The subject of caring has been viewed mostly positively by a range of authors who have described how caring is essential to a peaceful society" (p. 245). The remedy to violence in our society is care. "Caring is essential to identify formation and creates the bonds through which we experience our connection with humanity" (2005, p. 247). Therein, in fulfilling this responsibility of care, educators experience a strong sense of connection with humanity and become more caring with those around them.

The *problem* is that care is a slippery and elusive term; and in exploring this concept a number of tightly intertwined, contentious issues arise which deal with deeply rooted and entrenched philosophical paradigms and beliefs:

difficult questions of ethics and morality; complex issues of gender, culture, class, and ethnicity; and subtle differences in communicative styles and relationships. To make matters even worse, a shrill that is often heard in the classrooms of our schools and in the streets of our nation today is that care does not exist, that "Nobody cares!" It will be difficult to identify care, when so many say that care is not there! It doesn't exist.

Noddings (1992) reaffirms that lack of care when she declares in *The Challenge to Care in Schools*: "Patients feel uncared for in our medical system; clients feel uncared for in our welfare system; old people feel uncared for in the facilities provided for them; and children, especially adolescents, feel uncared for in schools" (p. xi). Benner (1994) described the public's general consideration of care in the United States when she stated that "caring practices continue to be rather invisible, devalued, and typically inadequately accounted for in our institutional designs and public policy" (p. 43). If caring is all around us and touches upon the most fundamental aspects of our natures as human beings, how can care remain invisible, devalued and unaccounted for? Tronto (1993) addresses this issue when she points out that:

> A key issue for us to consider is why care, which seems to be such a central part of human life, is treated as so marginal a part of existence. In our present culture there is a great ideological advantage to gain from keeping care from coming into focus. By not noticing how pervasive and central care is to human life, those who are in positions

> of power and privilege can continue to ignore and to degrade the activities of care and those who give care. To call attention to care is to raise questions about the adequacy of care in our society. Such an inquiry will lead to a profound rethinking of moral and political life. (p. 111)

We know that we need it; we know how important it is to our lives and well-being; we know it can be complicated and some feel that no one shows it, but we must (1) explore the concept and (2) determine who has it and who does not, (3) learn how to show it, (4) and truly understand it if we are to transform our classrooms, our teacher education programs, our own homes, and our society.

I realized that I had to seek to explore the concept of care myself and learn how to extend that care to those around me in my own life both public and private. I knew that care was basic to human life, but what was it? Is care an Aristotelian virtue? an act of service? a heart-felt sentiment? a basic human necessity? nothing more than benevolence? or a phenomenon beyond definition? And what about those students who cry out repeatedly: “I don’t care! or I don’t want you to care, Mr. Baker!”? Are some students and teachers born without a need or the capacity to care or be cared for? Can we overestimate the influence of care in solving our problems? Can care really turn a violent society into a peaceful one?

To answer these questions, I had to place care at the center of my consciousness. I had to immerse myself in the notion of care with a

disciplined research design and total commitment. When I was first introduced to the heuristic research methodology proffered by Clark Moustakas (1961, 1978, 1990) supported by its epistemological basis and tacit knowledge, as clarified by Michael Polanyi (1958, 1962, 1966, 1969), I realized that my research design was already in place and that I could use my own past to discover meanings of human experience. By choosing this research design, I realized that the intuitions, remembrances, reflections, and past observations which would surface in various forms—often narrative in structure—already existed within me. As Schutz (1998) points out "we have access to our past only in reconstructing it in narrative" ("Confirmation": Reconstructing a Unique Narrative of Self, ¶ 5). In a sense I would use narrative structure to make my own past comprehensible and meaningful.

Research Question and Research Design

Since I wished to explore this phenomenon of caring and its true and deeper meaning, a qualitative anti-naturalistic approach best suited my purpose. Through Moustakas' (1961, 1978, 1990) heuristic design, my research question--what is the phenomenon of caring?--could best be explored. Moustakas (1990) emphasized that the heuristic design enables the researcher to turn inward for deepened and "extended awareness that would further illuminate structures and essences" (p. 10). Moustakas' (1961, 1978, 1990) model of heuristic research is based on the Polanyi's concept of tacit knowledge. Polanyi (1958, 1962, 1966, 1969) avers that we as human

beings know things implicitly or unconsciously which he calls our tacit knowledge. This tacit knowledge, the basis for all knowledge, exists in all of us but can only be expressed when intuition links the unconscious with our conscious awareness. Since I have been a language arts teacher for the past 32 years and have taught thousands of students in countless classrooms, I felt that it would be meaningful to, as Moustakas (1990) suggests, "recognize whatever exists in my consciousness as a fundamental awareness, to receive and accept it, and then to dwell on its nature and possible meanings" (p. 11).

The "initial engagement" in this preliminary research project began with daily journal entries. I did not determine whom or what I might write about. I decided to open myself up completely and passionately to the experience. I would try to reach back into my memory and write about caring relationships and provide them in narrative form. Since I had attended school in some way or another for the past 50 years, it would not surprise me if I centered on students and family members. The free-writing, stream of consciousness approach, proved extremely useful. The writings themselves took the form of journal entries, lyrical poetry, dream visions, personal conversations with students, dialogue between my own interior voices, fictional stories, and real life experiences.

I realized, as Moustakas (1990, p. 28) also avers that I would have to immerse myself completely in the subject of caring. I would have to absorb everything around me and process all observations, intuitions, reflections, and

impulses for it did not take long to realize that: caring was everywhere. As I began in late March of 2005 the exuberance of life was all around me. I realized that the German philosopher Martin Heidegger (1962) was not being vague but quite accurate when he described care as "the Being of human life." We human beings exult in the glory of creation and revel in Mother Nature's beauty. My own neighbors were outside mowing their green-weeded lawns, trimming dead branches, and planting spring flowers—red, yellow, and white roses; dark orange and yellow begonias; red, orange, and pink hibiscus; and multi-colored pink and yellow petunias. Glorious green and gold sailboats glided gingerly on the nearby lake as families returned from their winter seclusion. Examples of care were everywhere both in visual and graphic forms: signs, posters, newspaper headlines, and bumper stickers grabbed my attention.

Definition of Terms

Aesthetics of care – This term refers to the care we show towards things (such as trees and plants) or ideas. Today our society has placed great importance on the care of things. The problem here is that engrossment cannot take place. There is no engrossment. The carer is often left without a sense of completion.

Attentiveness – This is a term used by care theorists and applies directly to the classroom teacher who must be responsive to the needs of the child in

the classroom. This sense of receptiveness is essential to living fully as a human being. When we move from a receptive or attentive relational position into abstractions, the domain of objective and impersonal problem solving, we lose the one cared-for. Also, caring is considered a burden. The carer can carry too much burden, too heavy a load and can become overburdened with care.

Carer – This is a term coined by Noddings (*Caring*, 2003a, p. xiii) which is used instead of caregiver. The term giver does not accurately identify the encounter. The term interaction or "co-construction of meaning" would be more accurate as carer and cared-for interact. In this interaction, the carer helps the cared-for actualize her better self. Caring stresses an encounter, a relationship between carer and cared-for where engrossment takes place. Since I am a male, I will use the masculine gender for the carer and the feminine gender for the cared-for throughout this writing. The **cared-for** is the child, patient, or the individual who is receiving the care. The **cared-about** is a term which has brought about much debate and controversy. Much of this stems from Noddings' early writings which suggest that care essentially has to do with a concrete one-on-one relationship between carer and cared-for. Some have suggested that this relationship is too narrow and is restricted to the private realm. Noddings has tried to clarify her position in recent writings. Should we extend our care to strangers?

Care(ing) – Some say that caring is a "viable moral and political concept," an affection or emotional attachment, a reconceptualized practice rather than a moral orientation, a process and relationship which seeks to meet the basic needs or by alleviating pain. Noddings says that caring is a reflective fidelity to someone or something. Classroom teachers must understand that it has to do with the teacher's responsiveness to the needs of the student. Mulcahy & Casella (2005) aver that "caring is essential to identity formation and creates the bonds through which we experience our connection to humanity" (p. 247). Hunt (1999) posits that "caring is the foundation and provokes the framework for nursing practice." The debate beginning with the seminal work of Gilligan (1982) suggests that the maternal, nurturing, feminine voice has been silenced over the centuries and has been socially constructed. Noddings suggests that the care ethic is an essentially feminine response; the male response is one of an ethic of justice. Ultimately, the most crucial criterion for caring is that the carer creates a nurturing attitude in the cared-for so that the cared-for becomes a carer herself.

Chains of caring (sometimes called **"the web of dependency**" or "circles of care") – Most of the time caring extends to those within our close chains of connection: family, close friends, and intimates who are part of our close chains of affection.

"Co-construction of meaning" – This relationship is based upon responsiveness of both the carer and cared-for. Both listen, respond, mutually disclose and interact. Whether the relationship is one of teacher-student, nurse-patient, therapist-patient, both are seen as partners where care is not viewed as mere intuition but mutual agreement.

Confirmation – Noddings (2003a), relying on the philosophies of Martin Buber (1958), uses the term to show that the carer must reveal to the cared-for "an attainable image of himself that is lovelier than that manifested in his present acts" (p.193). Confirmation, therefore, presents to us a vision of a more ethical self.

Duty theories – These are ethical theories which base morality on specific principles of obligation. Kant (1959) believed that we have moral duties to ourselves and others. The **categorical imperative** is the Kantian term which is a single self-evident principle of reason that simply mandates an individual action irrespective of one's personal desires. To Kant, morality of actions can be determined by appealing to this single principle of duty.

Engrossment – According to Noddings (2003a), engrossment is not to be confused with empathy (p. 30). In empathy, "feeling with," the carer projects himself into the world of the cared-for and attempts to see the world through her eyes. In engrossment, the carer does not project himself but receives the

cared-for into himself and becomes of a dual nature. To describe this notion as Buber (1958) does in *I and Thou,* the cared-for "fills the firmament." In the engrossment of caring, one becomes the motive power behind desires of the other. According to care ethicists, care theory through engrossment brings us closer to humanity; rules and principles distance us from one another.

Ethics (or moral philosophy) – Ethics generally has so do with defending and recommending concepts of right and wrong behavior.

Ethics of care – There are quite a few formal ethics that have been theorized by care theorists but most have a common thread whereby there is a concrete, not abstract, relationship between individuals. Noddings (2003a) polemically presents this argument in *Caring.* A caring relationship is one of direct human connection which takes precedence over principle(s). Critics of the "ethic of care" have targeted their criticism to the fact that care ethic may be too weak to resist systemic oppression.

Feminist ethics – This ethics deals with a re-visiting of traditional Western ethics which has tended to devaluate women's moral experience.

Heuristic research – This research design is proffered by Clark Moustakas (1990) in his seminal work entitled *Heuristic Research: Design, Methodology, and Applications.* Moustakas bases his design epistemologically on the

writings of Michael Polanyi (1962) in *Personal knowledge: Towards a Post-critical Philosophy.* Polanyi (1962) maintains that we as human beings know things implicitly or unconsciously which he calls our tacit knowledge. This tacit knowledge, the basis for all knowledge, exists in all of us but can only be expressed when intuition links the unconscious with our own conscious awareness. Polanyi emphasizes that tacit knowledge is the foundation for all knowledge. In this heuristic research design, the researcher experiences six phase of introspection: initial engagement, immersion, incubation, illumination, explication, and creative synthesis. Upon completion, the research shares and communicates the essence of the experience through writings and other creative forms with others.

Justice theory or an ethics of justice – The ethics of justice is often associated with Kantian ethics and in present day with the writings of John Rawls (1999) in *A Theory of Justice.* Justice theories generally are based on principles, rules, or rights which are universal. Rawls' rules for his social contract can best be understood by "imagining" a "veil of ignorance" which will be discussed in detail in the next chapter. For Noddings (2003a) rules and principles create "artificial situations" and abstractions.

Motivational displacement (motivational shift) – This is a term used by Noddings (2003a, p. 33) when she discusses the energy that flows from the carer toward the cared-for. The carer shares his motive energy to be shared

by the cared-for. This caring interaction placed the carer in a vulnerable position and the carer can be hurt by the other as well as by himself. Sometimes this displacement may be extended to extremes where the carer loses sense of himself and only becomes aware of his self through the other.

Reciprocity – The cared- for must respond to the carer in some way. This response makes the relationship continue to grow. This may be projected in a number of ways but may cause confusion when it is gender specific. The carer in turn must also meet the cared-for as a subject not as an object.

Social contract theories - With the exception of Plato, Western philosophy throughout history has developed social and political theory based on a division between the public and private realms based on a paternalistic and hierarchical construct. It was not until Thomas Hobbes and John Locke in the 18th century and later Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill in the 19th century that this assumption of a hierarchical world view is questioned.

Un-caring – This is the term used to express the desire by some not to extend care or the wish by the cared-for not to receive care.

Utilitarianism (sometimes called consequential theory) – This theory holds that an action is considered morally right if the consequences are favorable rather than unfavorable to everyone. As early as the 19th century with

Jeremy Bentham, the theory was based on the belief that what was ethical was that which achieved the greatest amount of happiness for the greatest number of people.

Virtue theories – These theories stress the importance in developing good habits in character. Plato emphasized four virtues in particular: wisdom, courage, justice, and temperance. Virtue theory emphasizes moral education since the virtuous character traits are developed in youth. **Virtue ethics** – This form of ethics strives for the highest moral value in the development of persons.

Significance of the Project

This project can be significant to classroom teachers who need to reclaim a sense of balance in the classroom. With added demands placed upon the high school teacher by federal and state mandates, local school districts, and language arts departments and with a growing concern by local communities, the classroom teacher can easily lose sight of what is truly important in the classroom. This study focuses on the need for caring relationships in the classroom. With the prospects of a better understanding of care, teacher education programs can better prepare teacher candidates as caring teachers and assist them in creating caring atmospheres in their classrooms. Although this study reaches beyond the world of education to observe care in other caring professions, those other carers too may better understand how they

might improve upon caring relationships so that care for both the carer and the cared-for are enhanced.

Limitations and Delimitations

This qualitative research project focuses on my attempt to immerse myself completely in the phenomenon of care. This immersion is not limited to my professional life as a classroom teacher but will extend to my private life as well. I will respond through daily logs as I delve into those relationships that surface. Often my response to those glimmers of the past materialize through dream visions, various forms of lyrical poetry, dialogues, short narratives, and formal modes of writing such as eulogies and newspaper articles. To provide me with other perspectives, I have included students' responses from my classroom in the fall semester of the 2006-2007 school year. I also conducted "informal conversational interviews" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 47) with retired and active classroom teachers by asking them open-ended questions which allow for a spontaneous generation of questions and responses in order to create a conversational and uninhibited atmosphere. This atmosphere encouraged honest and authentic responses. Each interview lasted approximately one half hour. This interviewing time period was limited to a 30 day period and respondents were completely voluntary and selected through sampling convenience. Consideration to race, ethnicity, gender, and economic background was not given in determining interview participants.

Respondents were also given an opportunity to validate the narrative that I created from the tape recording of the interviews to confirm accuracy.

Summary

In 1996, the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (February 1997) declared that by the year 2006 every student in America would be provided with what "should be his or her educational birthright: access to competent, caring and qualified teaching in schools organized for success" (p. 1). The commission identified a number of "barriers" which might provide obstacles in achieving this goal such as "low expectations for student performance," "major flaws in teacher preparation," and an "inadequate induction for beginning teacher" to name only a few of these barriers (p. 2). This study should have clarified the phenomenon of caring which would in turn improve teacher and student relationships for high school classroom teachers, provide understanding for teacher preparation and professional development programs, which would improve student test scores in all areas, and finally improve one-one-one relationships in other caring professions.

The five major recommendations to overcome these inadequacies and to meet this ambitious goal are noteworthy. None of the five consider how to develop those caring teachers. Care is demanded but never addressed. As we will see care is expected in every encounter of our daily lives, but few of us know what we mean when we say "I just want someone to care."

In sum, the history of care as a philosophical basis of understanding dates back to Plato and the ancients. The subject of care as a viable social and political ethic dates back to the last 30 years or so. A review of the scholarship takes one to many disciplines and areas of study including gender and feminist scholarship, nursing and health care, interpersonal communication, global and political concerns which will be detailed in the next chapter—the literature review.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Martin Heidegger (1962) in *Being and Time* presents the following Latin version of an ancient fable:

> Once upon a time, Care was crossing a stream when she saw some clay. She deliberately picked up the clay and began to mold it. When she was thinking about what she had made, Jupiter came by. Care asked Jupiter to give it spirit which he did. But when she wanted to give it her name, Jupiter forbids this since he had given it his spirit. He demanded that the creature be given his name instead. While Care and Jupiter were arguing, Earth stood up and asked that her name be assigned to the creature since she had provided the material for the creature's body. Finally, Jupiter, Care, and Earth asked Saturn to arbitrate for them in this matter. Saturn made the following decision which seemed to be a just one: Saturn said, "Since you Jupiter provided the spirit, you shall receive the spirit at the creature's death. And, you, Earth, since you provided the basic materials for the creature's body, you shall have its body. And, finally, since Care molded the creature, she shall possess it as long as it lives. And since there is still an argument among you concerning the name of the creature, it will be called 'homo' for it is made out of humus (the earth)." (p. 242).

Heidegger points out that this fable is significant for two reasons: care is seen here as not only the source of human existence but the fable adds a new perspective: human beings are held fast, if not dominated, by Care as long as humans exist in this world. Ancients have been intrigued by this phenomenon of care and moderns today continually re-visit the writings of previous scholars to understand care.

The writings of Aristotle, Rousseau, Mill, Hume, Kant, Heidegger, Buber, Arendt, Freud, Piaget, and Dewey have been cited, debated, and re-examined by modern philosophers, psychologists, ethicists, linguists, educators, health care professionals, feminists, theologians, and political theorists in an attempt to define what care is (Noddings 2003a; Fisher & Tronto 1990; Baier 1994; Kittay 1999; Blustein 1991; Mayeroff 1971) what takes place in a caring experience (Noddings 2003a; Held 2006; Fisher & Tronto 1990; Schutz 1998; Tronto 1993; Chodorow 1978; Benhabib 1987), how it affects our private lives (Gilligan 1982; Tronto 1993; Noddings 2002, 2003a) and might transform our public lives (Kohlberg 1981; Puka 1989; Tronto 1993; Engster 2004; Grumet 1988; Abel 1990; Lundgren & Browner 1990; Nelson 1990; Martin 1994; Watson 1979; Taylor & Watson 1980).

However, it was not until approximately 25 years ago that the concept of care and eventually "the ethic of care" became widely discussed and debated. Since then, scholars have challenged old ideas and have offered new perspectives through a deluge of scholarship from many disciplines. I will try to avoid this morass of arguments and counter arguments. For my study, I

will concentrate on only a few of these conversations primarily through the works of philosopher Sara Ruddick (1995); psychologist Carol Gilligan (1982; Gilligan, C., & Attanucci, J. 1988); philosopher Nel Noddings (1988, 1992, 2002, 2003a, 2003b, 2005); educational philosopher Jane Roland Martin (1994, 1995); nurse scholar, educator Jean Watson (1979); and educator, linguist Deborah Tannen (1991, 1994, 2001).

Sara Ruddick and "Maternal Thinking"

Ruddick (1995) led the way with her ground-breaking essay "Maternal Thinking." Ruddick (1995) associates caring with the maternal relationship between mother and child, the values involved in caring for children, and the standards that can be ascertained from this practice. According to Ruddick, it only makes sense that one must consider a woman's perspective when exploring the concept of care since women in our society have been relegated as caregivers. Lindemann also (2006) emphasizes that

> In the United States, but also in many other societies, women do far more unpaid, hands-on caregiving than men—they change the diapers, wash the dishes, clean the bathrooms, do the shopping, take the dog to the vet, feed and dress the children, take care of sick or disabled family members, and provide long-term care for elderly relatives. (pp. 88-89)

Lindemann (2006) also purports that "Paid caregivers are mostly women, too. Almost 96 percent of professional nurses are women, and the percentage of

women providing day care for children is close to 99 percent. The practice of care, then, is overwhelmingly a woman's practice" (p. 89).

Ruddick (1995) suggests that the practice of mothering gives rise to a specific moral outlook and that the values thus arrived can be applied to other social realms. Mothers reproduce children, teach their children language (unlike other species), in essence, recreate human culture. Their children can transform themselves and also transform a hostile society into a peaceful one.

Ruddick (1995) purports that a mother's sense of responsibility can be divided into three areas: protection, nurturance, and trainings. The most important of these divisions is protection. The mother must protect the child from harm, and this often requires prevention rather than intervention; the mother must recognize possibly harmful situations and respond with firm guidance. Sometimes, as Ruddick (1995) points out the child must be protected from the mother herself. Nurturance involves helping the child grow. The mother must first ascertain the child's needs; then, the mother must provide the nourishment that helps the child satisfy those needs. Finally, the mother trains to help the child integrate into society. This requires many facets of training: training the child to respect others, to be kind, to be generous, and to be honest. This also requires the mother to examine her own values to determine which ones are strong and should be shared and which ones need more thought or adjustment. The mother must learn to discipline and base that discipline on sound judgments.

Ruddick's (1995) concept of mothering is noteworthy in two respects: the belief that the private world of mothering (or parenting) has much to offer the world outside the home; and, secondly, the concrete relationships that take place between mother and child have much to offer educators as well.

In Chapter 1 entitled "Love's Reason" in *Maternal Thinking,* Ruddick (1995) makes an interesting observation. In her first essay on maternal thinking she cites a popular Victorian poem (provided here):

There was a young man loved a maid
Who taunted him. "Are you afraid,"
She asked, "to bring me today
Your mother's heart upon a tray?"

He went and slew his mother dead,
Tore from her breast her heart so red,
Then toward his lady love he raced,
But tripped and fell in all his haste.

As the heart rolled on the ground
It gave forth a plaintive sound.
And it spoke in accents mild:
"Did you hurt yourself, my child?"

Ruddick says that many of her "fears and wishes" were familiar in this poem. She stresses that to maintain "normalcy" and "masculinity" mothers

allow their sons to show contempt and rage against them. They are also willing to "sacrifice their minds and hearts," for it is only the well-being of the child that counts ("Did you hurt yourself, my child?"). What appealed to Ruddick in this poem was the twist at the end and the ambivalence of the maid who "fears and respects" the maternal love. Ruddick (1995) concludes her discussion of the poem by stating that this ambivalence about maternal thinking remains for some time until she spent years reflecting on maternal thinking. She talked to friends, casual acquaintances, and mothers. She became preoccupied with "children's conflicts and changes." Moreover, she reflected on how her "own choices, disappointments, and pleasures affected" her own children (p. 11). Ruddick (1995) concludes that all of the literature is *addressed to mothers about mothering and maternal instincts.* She avers that it is time to listen to mothers, that what they have to say can be valuable, that it can transform a violent society into a peaceful one, and that "in a misogynist society that routinely misdescribes or silences the suppressed and developing voices of women, in a competitive society that adores Motherhood but barely notices maternal thinking, it is not surprising that such maternal conversations are as difficult as they are rare" (p. 102).

Carol Gilligan and "A Different Voice"

Similarly, Carol Gilligan has much to offer on the subject of care. As Joan Tronto (1993) points out "It would be difficult to exaggerate the influence of Carol Gilligan's critique of Lawrence Kohlberg" (p. 77). Carol

Gilligan (1982) *In a Different Voice*: *Psychological Theory and Women's Development* posited a different perspective on Lawrence Kohlberg's studies on the cognitive theory of moral development. "In every field of academic thought touched by feminist thought, from literary criticism to public policy, from business and law to nursing and veterinary medicine, Gilligan's work has been suggestive and important" (Tronto, 1993, p. 77).

Kohlberg in his dissertation, completed in 1958 at the University of Chicago presented similar hypothetical moral problems to his research participants who were all boys at a Chicago preparatory school. The most famous of these moral dilemmas had to do with Heinz.

Basically, Heinz, who lived in a faraway country, had a critically sick wife who needed an expensive medicine to live. She would die without the medicine. When Heinz, who could not afford the necessary drug, approached the druggist, the druggist demanded payment and refused just to give Heinz the drug. Kohlberg asked his research respondents: What should Heinz do? Kohlberg recorded his students' responses to determine the level of moral reasoning of each.

By asking them to solve this and similar moral problems, Kohlberg hoped to support his research theory that human beings progress in their cognitive moral reasoning in a series of six identifiable stages which were classified by three levels—the pre-conventional level (decisions based on socially acceptable norms), the conventional level (decisions which were initially characterized by gaining the approval of others and then advancing to abiding

by the law and accepting the obligations of duty) and finally the post-conventional level (decisions initially characterized by a concern for others and finally by a respect for universal principles and an individual conscience), a stage not achieved by many adults. Individuals, according to Kohlberg, could only progress one stage at a time. Just as Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget had emphasized that human beings develop psychologically in a progressive manner, Kohlberg emphasized that humans develop morally in hierarchical stages as well. At the highest stage, the individual reaches a sense of moral maturity and autonomy. Moral reasoning according to Kohlberg is based on an "ethic of justice." The morally mature individual is rational, objective, and thinks on an abstract level. Gilligan's studies and data proved otherwise.

Gilligan (1982, 1987) posited that there are distinct differences between women and men when studying moral reasoning based on her studies. Gilligan (1982) wrote that

> I have been listening to people talking about morality and about themselves. Halfway through that time, I began to hear a distinction in these voices, two ways of speaking about moral problems, two modes of describing the relationship between other and self. (p. 1)

Women, according to Gilligan (1982), are more concerned with caring, relationships and connections with other people. Men are more concerned with justice, rights, principles, and abstract reasoning. Gilligan based her findings on three studies: "a college student study of college girls" who had

chosen to take a course on moral and political choice; “an abortion decision study of women,” ranging from 15 to 33 years old of diverse ethnic background and social class who were pregnant and considering abortion; and “a rights and responsibilities study group” which was a sample of “males and females matched for age, intelligence, education, occupation, and social class” (1982, p. 3). Gilligan (1982) concluded that

> the moral imperative that emerges repeatedly in interviews with women is an injunction to care, a responsibility to discern and alleviate the ‘real and recognizable trouble’ of this world. For men, the moral imperative appears rather as an injunction to respect the rights of others and thus to protect form interference the rights to life and self-fulfillment. (p. 100)

In addition, Gilligan (1982) points out that not only have women been taken for granted and devalued but so has the phenomenon of care:

> Women’s place in man’s life cycle has been that of nurturer, caretaker, and helpmate, the weaver of those networks of relationships on which she in turn relies. But while women have thus taken care of men, men have in their theories of psychological development, as in their economic arrangements, tended to assume or devalue that care. (p. 17)

Later, Gilligan (1982) offers a challenge that

> As we have listened for centuries to the voices of men and the theories of development that their experience informs, so we have come more recently to notice not only the silence of women but the difficulty in

> hearing what they say when they speak. Yet in the *different voice of women* [italics added] lies the truth of an ethic of care, the tie between relationship and responsibility, and the origins of aggression in the failure to connect. (p. 173)

Gilligan avers that the failure to hear the different voice in women lies in the assumption (incidentally, made by Kohlberg) that there is a single mode of human experience (p. 174). Gilligan believed that the reason that women are excluded from Kohlberg's highest stages of morality is because the reasoning of women is particularistic and contextual. Women are concerned with concrete, face-to-face, individual relationships and personal connections. Gilligan (1987) later in her essay "Moral Orientation and Moral Development" compares the acceptance of her findings to "an ambiguous figure like the drawing that can be seen as a young or old woman" (p. 19). She stresses that often one only sees the drawing one way and even after another perspective is pointed out the initial one often seems more compelling. She is aware that this has to do with "the phenomenon of visual grouping," but that it also has to do with "a tendency to view reality as unequivocal and, thus, to argue that there is one right or better way of seeing" (1987, p. 19).

Gilligan's theory, which initiated the "ethic of care," opposed not only Kohlberg's principles of moral development but challenged the historical tradition of the "ethic of justice" associated with Locke (17th century), Kant (19th century), and Rawls (21st century), but it also propelled a re-examination of perspectives and understandings in a number of fields such as

psychology, early childhood development in education, philosophy, sociology, political science, and gender studies, to name a few. Her theories on care have led to research and theories on morality such as Nussbaum's human capabilities theory (Nussbaum 2000), and renewed interest in an ethics based on justice, care, or both (Baier 1985; Benhabib 1987; Puka 1989; Eugene 1989; Houston 1989; Hoagland 1991; Blustein 1991; Okin 1989; Larrabee 1992; Groenhout 2004), and the experience of women and gender differences (Tuana 1992; Sher 1987; Friedman 1987; Hekman 1995).

Gilligan's research and findings have not been without controversy. Christina Hoff Sommers (2001), a former university philosophy professor in Ethics, in her book *The War Against Boys: How Misguided Feminism is Harming Our Young Men* challenges Gilligan's research methods and Gilligan's resistance to release her data to peer review. And Simon (2002) views her attackers as "conservative thinkers who doubt her research and perhaps wish to undermine her feminist findings" (¶ 2). Incidentally, after almost three decades of discourse, findings still remain sketchy whether there are differences in the moral experiences of men and women.

Nel Noddings and *Caring: A Feminine Approach*

However, the notion of an "ethic of care" was explored more thoroughly and in greater depth by another of its architects Nel Noddings (2003a) in her *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics: and Moral Education.* It is in this seminal work that Noddings (2003a) discusses her care theory and tries to

demonstrate what “a practice of caring might entail” (Schutz, 1998). She explores the phenomenon of care in terms of a dyadic relationship between the care-giver and the cared-for and stresses that care involves “time spans, intensity, and certain formal aspects of caring” (p. 17). Based on Martin Buber’s *I-Thou* relationship, Noddings (2003a) stresses that caring is a moving away from self and a movement towards “formal chains of caring” which put individuals in a “state of readiness to care” (p.17). Espousing views mindful of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1987, 2003), Noddings posits that for caring to take place the cared-for as learner does not become an object but a subject in this dyadic relationship. This is an area where Noddings’ theories have come into question. When the carer transacts with the cared-for, Schutz (1998) questions the “public space” left for the cared-for. Some even sense potential forms of oppression. To Freire (2003), the cared-for must “become involved” actively in the struggle for her own individual liberation which requires not only action but also reflection, thus praxis takes place (p. 65). This is initiated through “critical and liberating dialogue” between the carer and the cared-for (p. 65). According to Freire (2003), the learner must see herself engaged in a process of becoming fully human. Noddings also elaborates on two important concepts which clarify the caring relationship--engrossment and motivational displacement:

> Caring involves stepping out of one’s own personal frame of reference into the other’s. When we care, we consider the other’s point of view,

> his objective needs, and what he expects of us. Our attention, our mental engrossment is on the cared-for, not on ourselves. (p. 24)

Noddings (2003a) goes on to write that "To act as one-caring, then, is to act with special regard for the particular person in a concrete situation" (p. 24). This caring act is a way of generosity. Human beings wish to care not for their own benefit but for the benefit of the cared-for. Noddings (2003a) uses the relationship between teacher and student as an example:

> When the student associates with the teacher, feeling free to initiate conversation and to suggest areas of interest, he or she is better able to detect the characteristic attitude even in formal, goal-oriented situations such as lectures. Then a brief contact of eyes may say, "I am still the one interested in you. All of this is of variable importance and significance, but you still matter more." (p. 20)

Noddings (2003a) points out that

> It is no use saying that the teacher who "really cares" wants her students to learn the basic skills which are necessary to a comfortable life; I am not denying that, but the notion is impoverished on both ends. On the one extreme, it is not enough to want one's students to master basic skills, I would not want to choose, but if I had to choose whether my child would be a reader or a loving human being, I would choose the latter with alacrity…The student is infinitely more important than the subject. (p. 20)

"Engrossment," according to Noddings (2003a), "need not be intense nor need it be pervasive in the life of the one-caring, but it must occur" (p. 17). One must displace his or her own reality to that of the Other. Noddings (2003a) writes that one must see the Other's reality as a possibility of his or her own. When the Other's reality does indeed become a possibility for the carer, then the carer truly cares.

Noddings (2003a) discusses those relationships where care does not come naturally—where the "motivational energies" may or may not flow easily toward the individual or student. The individual may be incorrigible or intolerable, but the sense of care is extended because the carer cares about his or her own ethical self (p. 18). Noddings (2003a) also addresses the limitations of care: situations where engrossment is impossible or care is beyond the carer's reach—these individuals who need care are called "cared-about." Here Noddings (2003a) enters an area that has brought about considerable debate—the concept of universal caring. Noddings (2003a) rejects the concept of universal caring on the grounds that caring must be concrete and universal caring leads one to abstract reasoning and abstract problem solving and "mere talk for genuine caring" (p. 18). Noddings (2003a) argues that each situation is grounded in its own context between the carer and the cared-for. Even though there may be similar situations; each is unique and to construct a body of knowledge based on former situations and ascertain their generalizability is to move to abstraction which "tends to destroy the uniqueness of the caring itself" (p. 33).

Noddings (2003a) also elaborates upon her concept of motivational displacement. When the carer receives the cared-for through engrossment, there is more than an exchange of sentiments—there is a motivational shift (p. 33). Noddings (2003a) stresses that

> My motive energy flows toward the other and perhaps, although not necessarily, towards his ends. I do not relinquish myself; I cannot excuse myself for what I do. But I allow my motive energy to be shared; I put it at the service of the other. It is clear that my vulnerability is potentially increased when I care, for I can be hurt through the other as well as through myself. But my strength and hope are also increased, for if I am weakened, this other, which is part of me, may remain strong and insistent. (p. 33)

Noddings (2003a) also addresses an important aspect of care: what if the caring is not returned? What if the carer extends his care, but the cared-for does not receive or acknowledge it? Does the carer at that time truly care? Noddings replies to this situation in a number of ways. The carer may be able to affirmatively answer the question that "yes," even though the care is not received the carer does indeed care and will continue to care. However, a negative response may be given also. The care has turned into "cares and burdens" (p. 37). The cared-for has not reciprocated: he or she has not shared his or her accomplishments, appraisals, or aspirations. It is at this time that the carer becomes the object of the care. The carer needs the "pity, compassion, and sympathy." When accused of not caring, the carer may feel

guilt. Noddings (2003a) suggests there is no way to avoid this. She believes that as caring is at times a risk, and caring can open the carer to vulnerability. Parker Palmer (1998) in *The Courage to Teach* calls this vulnerability a concealing of his "own heart" which prevented him from weaving "the fabric of connectedness that teaching and learning require" (p. 29). Noddings says that there are two requirements of courage in caring: the carer must have the courage to accept the situation in which the carer participated in, and the carer must have the courage to go on caring.

Noddings (2003a) also elaborates on the concept of "circles and chains." In the inner concentric circles of care, the carer has his loved ones, his family and intimate friends. Within these circles, the carer cares naturally and at times he cares through his ethical sense. As the carer moves from the inner circles outwardly, he encounters those for whom he has a personal regard. These individuals usually do not place the same demands upon the carer as those in his most intimate circles. Beyond these circles are those that the carer has not encountered yet. In these cases the carer must remain receptive.

In the classroom, the teacher must remain receptive to the caring demands of each student. "The strain on one who would care can be great," (Noddings, 2003a, p. 47). Noddings also avers that if the demands of caring become too great, then the carer may withdraw. The carer must reject the other. Here Noddings (2003a) re-emphasizes that the carer is concerned with developing his own ethical self, and this is directly dependent upon the

cared-for. In turn, as the ethic of care is developed in society and especially in the classroom "the greatest obligation of educators, inside and outside formal schooling, is to nurture the ethical ideals of those with whom they come in contact" (p. 49).

For the language arts instructor, Noddings (2003a) introduces the idea that literature is filled with situations and encounters of this sort: the dread of one caring, the caring acceptance, and the rejection of the inner voice which calls to the carer that he must care. It is often in literature that one can see the merging of the public and private life. In my own literature classes, my students are intrigued by Shakespeare's exploration of the public self and its relationship to the private self. The course of events may have changed for Brutus in *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar* had he merged these two domains and shared the events of his public life with his caring wife Portia.

Whereas Noddings (2003a) led the way, other care theorists have sought to re-define and refine Noddings' care theory and to broaden it to a strong "ethic of care" with various social and political implications. Since her early work, Noddings has expanded her own care theory and ethic. In *Starting at Home,* Noddings (2002) reconsiders her notion of caring-about and reiterates strongly her belief that political and social theory often leads toward abstraction and that "individuals become elements in a collection" and "those needing care may be all but forgotten" (p. 23). She (2003a) avers that "the primary aim of every educational institution and of every education effort must

be the maintenance and enhancement of caring" (p. 172). Today, there are many *ethics of care*.

Virginia Held (2006) in *The Ethics of Care: Personal, Political, and Global* stresses the multiple versions and identifies the problem by calling it an "ethics of care." Her "ethics of care" extends far beyond education "not only to the so-called private realms of family and friendship but to medical practice, law, political life, the organization of society, war, and international relations" (Held, 2006, p. 9). Consequently, research on this phenomenon takes on social, cultural, and global significance.

In sum, Noddings (2203a) also addresses the concept of feminine caring. Like Gilligan, she points out that women "are not so much concerned with the arrangement of priorities among principles; they are concerned, rather, with maintaining and enhancing caring" (p. 42). She goes on to write that "women's 'lack of experience in the world' keeps them at an inferior stage in moral development"; however, she believes "that a powerful and coherent ethic, and, indeed, a different sort of world may be built on the natural caring so familiar with women" (p. 46).

Noddings and Gilligan launched a rich discourse in many fields which expanded the concept of care ethics (Benhabib 1987; Hickman 1995; Manning 1992; Ruddick 1995; Tronto 1993;), explored the interpersonal relationships of caring (Noddings 2003a; Martin 1985; Engster 2004; Chodorow 1978; Tannen 1991, 1994, 2001), the diversity of views on care (Gatens 1998; Held 2005), the aims of care (Noddings, 2003a, 2002; Tronto

1993), core virtues (Noddings, 2003a, 2002; Tronto 1993; Engster 2004), the need to be cared for (Martin 1992; Noddings 2003a), care through a feminist point of view (Lindemann 2006; Held 1995; Tronto 1993), political theory based on care (Kohlberg 1981; Puka 1989; Tronto 1993; Engster 2004),and care in the caring professions (Hunt 1999; Abel & Nelson1990; Lundgren & Browner 1990; Diamond 1990; Sacks 1990; Nelson 1990; Enarson 1990; Marshall, Barnett, Baruch, & Pleck 1990; Bowers 1990; Wrigley 1990). Some have even pointed out that care is inadequate as an ethic and that care may promote un-caring relationships (Tronto 1993; White 2003; Bubeck 1995) or pathologies (Copper, Hanson & Hillman 1994; Houston; Grimshaw 1986). Others have posited that Noddings' ethic of care does not give enough attention to the carer (Clement 1996; Lykes 1989), or the cared-for (Held 1993; Kittay 1999), or that there is no separateness or public space (Shutz 1998). Still others emphasize that Noddings' care may result in "smothering paternalism" and parochialism (Tronto 1993). Finally, as Noddings does, educational theorists have applied the ethic of care to education (Noddings 1992; Martin 1992; White 2003; Goodlad, J. I., Soder, R., & Sirotnik, K.A.1990; Pope 2001; Hayes, C.B., Ryan, A., & Zseller, E. B. 1994).

Jane Roland Martin and *The Schoolhome*

The conversations of care in the world of education may best be envisioned by the writings Jane Roland Martin. Martin in her *The Schoolhome* (1995) and *Changing the Educational Landscape: Philosophy, Women, and Children* (1994) extended the discussion of care theory to the

classroom. Martin (1989) in her *Transforming Moral Education* writes passionately about today's educated person who

> will have knowledge about others but will not have been taught to care about their welfare. That person will have some understanding of society but will not have been taught to feel its injustices or even be concerned about its fate. Our educated person is an ivory tower person: one who can reason but has no desire to solve real problems in the real world; one who understands science but does not worry about the uses to which it is put; one who can reach flawless moral conclusions but has neither the sensitivity nor the skill to carry them out effectively. Alternatively, he or she is a technological person: one who wants to solve real-life problems and has the requisite skills but cares nothing about the real-life consequences of solutions to them. (p. 186)

Martin (1989) asserts that in education

> the ability to sustain human relationships, a desire to care for and nurture other living beings, a sense of oneness with nature—these are not considered relevant. The ideal guiding education today divorces self from other even as it alienates each separate self from its own body and emotion (p. 186).

Martin (1989) demonstrates her concern for the present day trends in education and especially the education of women, and she asserts that educators must be "gender sensitive" in our schools.

American schools currently emphasize cognitive skills “where school is thought of as an instrument for developing children's minds, not their bodies; their thinking and reasoning skills, not their emotional capacities or active propensities" (*The Schoolhome*, 1995, p. 85-87) because this gives little curriculum space to the enormous ways of acting and living that our young people are going to have to learn for their futures. To some degree, the thread that Ruddick (1982) initiates with the maternal relationship between mother and child, the thread that invigorates scholarly discourse in a number of fields represented by the Kohlberg-Gilligan dichotomy of justice/reasoning vs. care takes form in the current trends in education represented by Martin when she asks questions such as What is the “true object” of education? What is the educated person? Why are we only concerned today with cognitive skills rather than caring relationships? These are some of the questions that Martin (1989) considers in “Transforming Moral Education” and what she addresses when she proposes a school-home.

Martin’s vision for a caring school--what she calls Schoolhome—is based on Maria Montessori’s approach to pedagogy and practices sensitive to the needs of the child as human being and learner. Martin (2002) often cites John Dewey in *The School and Society* (1990) when she writes “What the best and wisest parent wants for his own child, that must the community want for all its children” (p. 40). Martin considers the current ills in education and shows how Schoolhome would be different. At once, Schoolhome

> will have to try out new combinations of collaborative and individualized learning. But regardless of the type of instruction employed, teachers there will need to know their students as the complex people they are. Even to decide what kind of instruction is best suited to a particular child, one must have more information than grades and standardized test scores reveal. Besides, how can a girl or boy feel at home if she or he feels unknown? How can an atmosphere of love and trust develop if the children are not appreciated for themselves? (p. 39)

Schoolhome will be the moral equivalent of home, and it will seek to avoid the ills of American education—one of which is boredom.

> Boredom is a fact of life in American classrooms but love is not its source—at least not the kind of love that honors children, respects their abilities, and encourages them to take responsibility. Rather, this perennial schoolhouse problem is a function of the mindless repetition of meaningless tasks. As workers on assembly lines are benumbed by having to perform a single motion over and over, children are rendered insensible in school by having to memorize facts that have been detached from real-life contexts, fill in answers on worksheets that turn living, throbbing ideas into inert, disconnected facts, and hear the same old story again and again—nouns, the Pilgrims, Patrick Henry, state capitals, the multiplication facts. (pp. 134-135)

Martin (1989) in her writings distinguishes between the reproductive and productive processes of society: the academy both inside and out is only concerned with the productive processes (political, social, cultural and economic activities). She also writes that

> The reproductive processes include not simply the biological reproduction of the species, but the rearing of children to maturity and the related activities of managing a household, caring for the sick and elderly, and serving the needs and purposes of family members. (p. 187)

This division is represented by the public and private realms of our society. The reproductive processes are carried on at home in the private sector, and the productive processes are carried on in the business world. Martin (1989) asserts that the function of education, therefore, is to prepare the student for the productive processes not the reproductive ones because in our culture

> the private world and its associated processes is thought to be the natural location of feeling and emotion, intimacy and connection, and hence a realm of the nonrational. In contrast, the public world and its associated processes is considered the realm of the rational. Feeling and emotion have no place in it, and neither do intimacy and connection. Instead, analysis, critical thinking, and self-sufficiency are the dominant values. (p. 188)

Finally, Martin (1989) sees two processes very genderized. The productive process associated with business and the public world is

masculine. Men in our culture have had the responsibility to go out in society and make a living; the role of women has been to make a home, take care of the children—the reproductive process. The objective, rational, analytical way of dealing with things and people—those attributes used in the business world—are masculine. The three C's of caring, connection, compassion are feminine qualities and are cultural stereotypes associated with women. This way of thinking affects education. Martin (1989) says that "Whereas a male will be admired for his rational powers, a woman who is analytical and critical will be derided or shunned or will be told that she thinks like a man" and "similarly, although a female will be praised for her daintiness, a male will be judged effeminate and scorned for possessing this characteristic" (p. 189).

Martin (1992) addresses the issue of combating stereotypes in the classroom:

> All this means that while boys in the Schoolhome are learning to replace violence to others and themselves with positive acts of courage and self-assertion, the girls will have to learn to speak their minds and stand up for themselves. (p. 112)

The school once again is the area in which violence is confronted, and care is the weapon to combat that violence. Martin too believes that values often associated with women in the home may be called upon to combat violence.

Whereas Martin addresses care in education, Noddings also extends the ethic of care to the individual classroom. Noddings (1992) in her *The Challenge to Care in Schools* focuses on a school which exhibits care. She

envisions a school where students participate in creating individual projects throughout school which support care. According to Noddings (2003a), we learn to care from our earliest memories of our childhood and this must be continued through moral education. However, as Engster (2005) remarks

> The need for caring is most urgent and obvious during childhood, illness, disability, and old age, but even during times of relative health and vigor, most individuals depend upon the care of family and friends to help them satisfy their basic needs, develop or maintain their basic capabilities, or alleviate pain. (p. 59)

Consequently, our exploration of care cannot limit itself to education if we are to understand this concept in its entirety. Care is the center of the health care professions as well. "Nursing is a profession whose members are expected to be caring. Caring is the foundation and provides the framework for nursing practice" (Hunt 1999). As student learning depends on care, so does human growth and healing. As classroom teachers must be able to define care, so do "nurses need to understand what caring is, how to be caring and the impact of caring and non caring on others" (Hunt 1999).

Jean Watson and *Nursing: The Philosophy and Science of Caring*

In health professions, the writings of nurse theorist Jean Watson also represent an important conversation in caring theory scholarship. Watson (1979) in her *Nursing: The Philosophy and Science of Caring* stresses that "nursing is concerned with the knowledge and understanding of "care" (p. 8). She provides a list of the basic tenets of caring which provide for the

foundation for the "usefulness of caring." Every society has had nursing (and caring). According to Watson (1979), a caring attitude is not biological but is transmitted by culture as a way of dealing with the environment. "Nursing has always held a caring stance in regard to other human beings. That stance has been threatened by a long history of procedure-oriented demands and the development of different levels of nursing" (p. 8). There is "often a discrepancy between theory and practice or between the scientific and artistic aspects of caring," and Watson (1979) attributes this discrepancy to the tension between scientific and humanistic values.

Watson (1979) also provides the basic assumptions of nursing which are useful to the study of caring. Generally, these assumptions have to do with the interpersonal relationship of caring, how caring satisfies human needs, and how it promotes and maintains growth. Nursing assume that the caring environment aids in the "development of potential," and that care integrates "biophysical knowledge with knowledge of human behavior." Finally, Watson (1979) stresses that care is central to nursing. In essence, what Watson (1979) suggests in her "theory of care" in nursing is that care can be identified through caring practices and caring attitudes what she calls carative factors. In *Philosophy of Nursing: A New Vision for Health Care* by Brencick & Webster's (2000), the authors have a similar quest as I do in their desire for an "illumination of caring that is deeper, richer and more complete." They determine that Watson's understanding of care is extremely lacking. They are less than satisfied. In "Human Caring and Suffering: A Subjective Model

for Health Sciences," Taylor & Watson (1980) write that "human caring involves values, a will, a commitment to care, knowledge, caring action, and consequences" (p. 125). Watson cautions that rationality alone where there is no subjective response and no emotions such as compassion are felt can lead to uncaring and apathy. Watson suggests another definition of caring when she says that "caring is a state of mental suffering in that to care means a stir of the emotion, a call to the heart rather than the mind" (p. 126). Therefore, just like teaching and the interaction between the student and the teacher, the nurse and the patient must gather in a caring concrete interaction. Watson writes that

> caring as a moral ideal requires a process of concretization and an embeddedness in subjective human responses, so that compassion is stirred rather than abstraction, strict rationalism, and objectivity. Again, the nursing profession parallels the caring ethic, while the medical profession parallels the ethic of principles, rationalism, and objectivity. (p. 126)

Watson stresses the risk of treating the patient, in this case the cared-for as an object—to objectify the disease in order to focus upon it. This objectification negates the experience of the cared-for and her inner-experience. Watson (1980) also emphasizes another aspect of the motivational flow of energies between carer and cared-for that Noddings (2003a) writes about when she stresses that "the intersubjective human flow from one to the other has the potential to allow the care giver to become the

care receiver, receiving the awareness of suffering experienced by the other, and vice versa" (p. 127). This relationship what she calls intersubjectivity allows for "a new vision of the caring relationship" to take place. Both the carer and the cared-for become aware of the "two poles of their archetype (objective–subjective, masculine–feminine, compassion–rationality). The caring relationship transcends the traditional hierarchical stratification and goes beyond, so that neither care giver nor receiver stands above the other" (p. 132).

In sum, caring relationships require intersubjectivity or as Watson (1980) points out an alliance with the humanities such as in art or music or literature. The "subject matter of both human caring and the humanities comes from human life and the search for meaning, expressivity, and relatedness in human existence" (p.137).

I felt that it was important to extend my exploration of the health care field to also include care for the Alzheimer's patient. I researched the literature in this area and focused on the words of James Lindemann Nelson and Hilde Lindemann Nelson (1997) and their work *Alzheimer's: Answers to Hard Questions for Families.* The two authors are leaders at the Hastings Center which has been devoted for many years in seeking to understand how to act ethically in the ever-changing world of technology in the health sciences.

Many of the topics involved in this work deal with issues that are directly related to the concept of care such as issues of vulnerability between carer and Alzheimer's patient, issues of care and dignity, care for the severely

demented pass the point of understanding, and maternal love. Lindemann & Lindemann (1997) write, for example, that "Love has to be given as well as received; when your mom is loving you, she's teaching you to love her back. In this respect, learning to love is like learning to talk" (p. 61). The same holds true for caring. Issues of gender when it comes to communication take us to the field of linguistics where another conversation on care takes place represented by the popular author and linguist Deborah Tannen.

Deborah Tannen and *You Just Don't Understand*

Deborah Tannen (1990, 1991, 1994, 2001), a professor of linguistics at Georgetown University, has analyzed in depth this intersubjectivity with its many complexities. Tannen (1990) acknowledges that some critics suggest that there are no differences between men and women, "only reparable social injustice" (p. 17), but her research tells her this just isn't so. "There are gender differences in ways of speaking, and we need to identify and understand them" (p. 17). She goes on to indicate that "Without such understanding, we are doomed to blame others or ourselves—or the relationship—for the otherwise mystifying and damaging effects of our contrasting conversational styles" (p. 17). By recognizing the differences in communicative styles between men and women, individuals can adjust to the differences. If individuals approach the world as many women do, conversations will exist which are opportunities for closeness and can give

one confirmation and support. Life, to women, is an attempt to create intimacy and to avoid loneliness.

When it comes to intimacy and independence, women will dwell on the former—intimacy; men will dwell on the latter—independence. To put it another way, men seek status and women seek connection. Another dualism is that of messages and metamessages which are important in communication. Messages have to do with the information expressed; metamessages have to do with the underlying relations among the communicants and their attitudes towards what is being said and the people they are saying it to. Another way of understanding metamessages is that they frame the conversation.

Metamessages help us understand what is being said. Conflicting metamessages become especially apparent when people are in a hierarchical relationship to each other such as employer and employee, coach and athlete, student and teacher. This may well have to do with carer and cared-for. The metamessage is determined by how things are communicated by the teacher. If just a teacher's tone of voice is interpreted as condescending or scolding or pedantic, then the act may not be interpreted as a caring one. The teacher has to be aware of these potentially conflicting metamessages especially since the communication is not between equals as in a symmetrical relationship, but an asymmetrical one between teacher and student.

Tannen (1990) directs her attention to this asymmetry when she writes

> There is always a paradox entailed in offering or giving help. Insofar as it serves the needs of the one helped, it is a generous move that shows caring and builds rapport. But insofar as it is asymmetrical, giving help puts one person in a superior position with respect to the other (p. 32).

Asymmetrical relationships have to do with status and power. An individual who merely gives information, praise, or even a lecture is establishing an asymmetrical relationship. This frames the speaker as higher in status. "Women can also be framed as one-up by their classic helping activities as mothers, social workers, nurses, counselors, and psychologists. But in many of these roles—especially mothers and nurses—they may also be seen as doing others' bidding" (p. 69). Tannen also describes the conversation of men as "report talk" and women converse through "rapport talk." Men talk as a means to preserve independence and maintain status in hierarchy. This is accomplished through knowledge and skill. Women talk as a means to develop intimacy and rapport.

Tannen (2001) finally writes about caretaking in that

> Parents spend the first dozen years of their children's lives taking care of them [children]; you might say they are in a caretaking frame, where when they say or do something. As children get older the emphasis gradually shifts to enjoying their company, a socializing frame. But the shift can't happen overnight….There is a period when it's all a

> muddle—you can't figure out which frame you think you're in, which your child thinks you're in, and which you should be in. (p. 163)

Family, according to Tannen (2001), is a popular word today with great impact. Family has become the ideal of safety and security. It is a place where one can turn to for solace and contentment and caring. She writes

> Family represents a sense of belonging—a foundation for everything else we are or do. It feels that if we can fit into our families, we can fit into the world. And if our families can see us for who we really are, we can be who we are not only in the family but also in the world. But the coin has another side: If members of our family—those who, presumably, know us best and care the most—are critical, find us wanting, then who will love us? The more impersonal, complex, and overwhelming the world gets, the more we turn to our families for comfort and belonging. Though it's possible to reject our families completely—and sometimes that becomes necessary—in most cases we want to keep contact, keep the caring. Yet at times we feel frustrated by the very contact we seek. (p. xvi)

Conclusion

As one can see, there is a vast wealth of literature on the subject of care. There are many issues involved when one seeks to define care. These issues vary from philosophical discussions dating back to Plato and Aristotle to feminist concerns of dominance and oppression to questions of educational

philosophy to health care to the nature of the educated person. Care cannot be limited to education if we are to understand it through a heuristic design in which will be discussed in full in the next chapter. In this chapter, I have tried to follow a few of the strands of interest while avoiding the charges and counter-charges by focusing on the writings of a few of the important names in the different fields. I have tried to provide more than just an identification of works. I have tried to provide the basic themes of the works so that these can be useful when looking at my own relationships—both public and private.

Chapter 3

Methodology

I will begin this chapter by restating my research question and illustrating once again the serious need for the study. I will describe my search for deeper understandings as I journeyed along the research paths and how the qualitative design enabled me to inform my own practices. I will discuss the sequence of steps that I took as I spiraled deeper and deeper into the cycles of this heuristic research process. I will identify the population and the methods that I used to collect data. Next, I will discuss the organizing and analyzing of data; and, finally, I will identify the means of creative synthesis—the original presentation of integrated material that appropriately reflects my research into the phenomenon of the concept of care.

Need for the Study

Clark Moustakas (1961) in *Loneliness* writes intensely about "a little boy's crying" in the hospital during his daughter's fragile heart surgery. Moustakas recalls the experience quite vividly:

> The boy's eyes were transfixed, glued to the windows, looking below—expectant, watchful, waiting. Waiting for someone to come to protect and comfort him. Waiting for someone to rescue him from abandonment. Waiting. There was no one. He was alone—totally, utterly alone. Outside, people moved rapidly up and down steps and along the walk. Cars hurried down the highway. Inside, the public address blared out doctors' names. Nurses' aides shouted to children

to get to sleep. But this child sat up in bed—his small body rigid—his heart breaking. Waiting. I knew in that moment he experienced a crushing loneliness, a feeling of being deserted and forsaken. He was quiet and frightened. Silent tears slipped down his face…

When I could no longer bear his suffering I entered the room. I stood quietly beside him for several minutes. Then the words came, "I know. Right now there's no one. No one at all. Your Mama has left you." He burst into painful, racking sobs and sighs. His grief was momentarily broken. All his silent agony burst into convulsive moans and piercing cries. A nurse entered. She glared at me. She spoke angrily, "Now see what you've done. Why don't you leave him alone?" Then, turning to him, she spoke firmly, "You know your mother isn't here. She left you after supper. She told you she'd be back in the morning. All the crying and shouting you can do will not bring her back. Stop. Stop now. You're keeping the other children awake. Lie down. Go to sleep. Your mother will come tomorrow." I stood by silently; as the nurse left the room, I followed her.

Walking beside her, I said, "You can't leave him that way. He is painfully lonely. He feels cut-off from all meaningful ties. He will harbor this terror a long time. Go back. *Tell him you care*. [italics added] Hold his hand. Say something gentle." She answered, "I can't. I have other duties." I suggested, "Tell him you would like to stay but you have certain duties to finish first—that you will look in again soon."

> Hesitating a few moments, the nurse returned to the child's room. She spoke softly this time, "I'm sorry your mother isn't here with you now when you want her. I must give out medicine to other children but I'll be back. Maybe this will help" and she handed him a sucker.… There was a moment of peace. Then the silent tears continued to flow until he slipped into heavy, uncomfortable sleep with the sucker still in his mouth. (pp. 2-3)

Although Moustakas' (1961, 1978, 1990) goal is to illustrate the sheer loneliness of a child and the great comfort that only a mother can give her crying little boy, Moustakas actually provides another compelling example of the need for maternal-like caring. When Moustakas tells the nurse to "Go back. Tell him you care." What is she to say? How do we put care into words? What are we really saying (metamessage)? How can we show care to all of our children? How do we find the time to care? If we do not, what will be the price?

This brings us once again to my research question: what is the phenomenon of care? The intent of my initial research was to gain deeper understandings of this concept of care within the context of my own classroom practices. Connelly & Clandinin (1999) call this the teacher's "personal practical knowledge" (p. 1) and they too became fascinated with teachers as knowers. They write that teachers are "knowers of themselves, of their situations, of children, of subject matter, of teaching, of learning" (p. 1). However, I realized that it was impossible to restrict my study as knower

to the classroom—that care pervades every aspect of my lived experiences. It did not take long in my own studies to realize that the heuristic design itself was a part of that lived experience. Being a veteran classroom teacher of 32 years, I have known for some time that I had much to offer the teaching profession; and intuitively I knew that I could offer some valuable and meaningful insights. Epistemologically, I believe that the teacher's own thoughts, reflections, judgments, observations, and narratives about teaching practice can advance the teaching profession. In my own case, the problem was how to connect with that source of knowledge: I knew intuitively that I would have to look deep within myself for those answers and that writing would be one of the tools that I would use for that self-exploration. Gauss stated my own feelings quite well: "'I have had my solutions for a long time but I do not yet know how I am to arrive at them" (quoted in Polanyi, 1962, pp, 130-131).

Once I began to study more fully the heuristic design. I realized that my investigation would cross into interdisciplinary studies in psychology, philosophy, medicine, linguistics and education. For me to fully immerse myself into the process, I could not limit and restrict myself. As Moustakas (1990) points out, I must allow the research question itself to direct my study.

Heuristic Research Methodology

Background

Moustakas (1990) in *Heuristic Research: Design, Methodology, and Applications* writes that other works influenced development of his heuristic research design: Maslow's research on self-actualization(1987), Jourard's (1971) exploration of self-disclosure, Polanyi's (1958, 1962, 1966, 1969) study of the tacit dimension and personal knowledge, Buber's (1958) study of interpersonal relationships, Gendlin's (1962) study of the meaning of "felt experience," and Roger's work (1989) on human science (pp. 9-10). I investigated the works of each of these researchers to better inform myself of the ideological foundation of this qualitative study.

Primary Task in Heuristic Research

Moustakas (1990) emphasizes that the primary task in heuristic research is "to recognize whatever exists in my consciousness as a fundamental awareness, to receive and accept it, and then to dwell on its nature and possible meanings" (p. 11). What I learned throughout this study is that the researcher must commit himself wholly and fully to the research question. Once this is done, I became aware that the phenomenon in which I was studying was all around me. In my particular case, I also realized that one must feel passionately about the question and that this sense of passion must lead the researcher through to the conclusion. Douglas and Moustakas (1985) also posit that heuristic research is based on the notion "to awaken

and inspire researchers to make contact with and respect their own questions and problems" and "to affirm imagination, intuition, self-reflections, and the tacit dimension as valid ways in the search for knowledge and understanding" (p. 40).

As I journeyed deeper and deeper into my consciousness, I began to touch on very sensitive issues of my own inner being. My entire mood and disposition began to be affected and to change. I became very sensitive to the slightest remarks made to me. I felt that my inquiry was taking me into uncharted terrain within my own inner landscape. Moustakas (1990) stresses that the heuristic process requires "sustained immersion and focused concentration on one central question, to risk the opening of wounds and passionate concerns, and to undergo the personal transformation that exists as a possibility in every heuristic journey" (p. 14). However, there was another aspect to consider. Not only did I become more emotional and aware, but I also seemed to become a more caring and sensitive person without any conscious effort on my part to do so. Initially, I decided just to record my personal reflections and to try to explain these mood swings and changes in attitudes later.

I was determined, however, to learn from my responses and to perceive, understand, appreciate, interpret, and criticize these experiences and to come closer to an understanding of care. Moustakas (1990) suggests that one must remain patient "until an essential insight is achieved, one that will throw a beginning light onto a critical human experience (p. 11), and he was right.

Developing the Research Question

Moustakas (1990) stresses that "the [research] question is one that has been a personal challenge and puzzlement in the search to understand one's self and the world in which one lives" (p. 15). The research question itself "provides the crucial beginning and meaning, the nature of the searcher's quest" (p. 41). The impetus for my own question began when Natalie told me that I was the only teacher who had taken an interest in her. This began my initial engagement with the phenomenon of care. As I began to talk to colleagues, to explore my own memories of former students and human relationships, I began to conceptualize my research question: what is the phenomenon of care?

I was also concerned that my question should meet definite characteristics which Moustakas (1990) states are essential:

1. It [research question] seeks to reveal more fully the essence or meaning of a phenomenon of human experience.
2. It [research question] seeks to discover the qualitative aspects, rather than quantitative dimensions, of the phenomenon.
3. It [research question] engages one's total self and evokes a personal and passionate involvement and active participation in the process.
4. It [research question] does not seek to predict or to determine causal relationships.

5. It [research question] is illuminated through careful descriptions, illustrations, metaphors, poetry, dialogue, and other creative renderings rather than by measurements, ratings or scores.

Once this was done I began to immerse myself in the experience. The more that I thought about care the more it began to obsess me. It was not long before I was totally and passionately immersed into: what is the phenomenon of care? Care had me in thrall; for the heuristic research process. Polanyi (1974) identified my heuristic passion when he wrote that "obsession with one's problem is in fact the mainspring of all inventive power" (p. 127). Polanyi (1974) goes on to say that

> We have to cross the logical gap between a problem and its solution by relying on the unspecifiable impulse of our heuristic passion, and must undergo as we do so a change of our intellectual personality. Like all ventures in which we comprehensively dispose of ourselves, such an intentional change of our personality requires a passionate motive to accomplish it. Originality must be passionate. (p 143)

To further this idea, Polanyi (1974) offers the example of Pavlov who was asked in jest by his own students what they could do to become a "Pavlov" also. The great master answered "Get up in the morning with your problem before you. Breakfast with it. Go to the laboratory with it. Eat your lunch with it. Keep it before you after dinner. Go to bed with it in your mind. Dream about it" (p. 127). It is this obsession that I have experienced since my journey first began.

Tacit Knowledge

Moustakas (1990) avers that "at the base of all heuristic discovery is the power of revelation in *tacit knowing* [italics added]" (p. 20). Polanyi attempts to define tacit knowing in a number of his writings. In "The Tacit Dimension," Polanyi (1966) clarifies *tacit knowing* when he says that "we can know more than we can tell" (p. 4). As Polanyi admits, this concept is easier to phrase than to explain. However, Polanyi (1966) tries to explain this concept of *tacit knowing* elsewhere by comparing tacit knowledge to the art of diagnosing. In diagnosing a patient, the nurse "intimately combines skillful testing with expert observation" (p. 7). Knowing, therefore, to Polanyi has to do with both practical and theoretical knowledge. Elsewhere, Polanyi defines *tacit knowing* when he states that *tacit knowing* basically has to do with both perceptions and explicit knowledge. He continues to explain this concept in detail. However, Polanyi (1969) best explains this concept for me in his *Knowing and Being*; here he posits that "the pursuit of science is determined at every stage by unspecifiable powers of thought" (p. 155). Polanyi (1969) evinces that

> tacit knowing is the fundamental power of the mind, which creates explicit knowing, lends meaning to it and controls its uses. Formalization of tacit knowing immensely expands the powers of the mind, by creating a machinery of precise thought, but it also opens up new paths to intuition; any attempt to gain complete control of thought by explicit rules is self-contradictory, systematically misleading and

> culturally destruction. The pursuit of formalization will find its true place in a tacit framework. (p. 156)

As a classroom teacher, I knew that in many aspects Polanyi was right. I know that there are many aspects of teaching and curriculum that are performed in the name of education that are not beneficial to students—they don't need it or will never use. However, department, school, district, state, federal mandates or community standards demand that I teach certain things, stay clear of certain issues, or approach my students in certain ways while still keeping a sense of balance and a positive attitude. Ultimately, a teacher must constantly rely on practical knowledge, basic instincts and intuition—these and common sense and a sense of humor are the teacher's greatest allies.

The next question that I asked myself was "how do I tap into this rich source of knowledge?" Moustakas (1990) emphasizes that the researcher must "turn inward and dig down deep within oneself" (p. 24) (indwelling) and "clear an inward space to enable one to tap into thoughts and feelings that are essential to clarifying a question" (p. 25) (focusing). Polanyi (1974) also writes that the qualitative researcher can use tacit knowing by "dwelling in it [the phenomenon], and this indwelling can be consciously experienced" (p. 195). Polanyi (1974) points out that the astronomer "reflects on its [astronomy's] theoretic vision" (p. 195), and the mathematician taps his tacit knowing by "losing himself in the contemplation of its [mathematics] greatness" (p. 195). The observer of art surrenders himself not to gaze at the

work of art but to live in the work (p. 195). It is through indwelling that man not only has dominion over the external world but gains control over himself. Needless to say, the prospects of this journey excited me; although the journey would be a long and tumultuous one, I felt some of the same apprehensions and enthusiasm that other famous travelers felt like Dante—excited before he too embarked on a perilous ontological and allegorical journey of self-discovery and introspection in this case Moustakas, rather than Virgil would be my guide.

Heuristic Design

My heuristic journey included 6 phases: "the initial engagement, immersion into the topic and question, incubation, illumination, explication, and culmination of the research in a creative synthesis" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 27). These phases were not linear but were recursive. It is difficult to delineate the process without portraying the heuristic design as a lock-step sequence of stages—it is not. It is like a lazy river that can only truly be appreciated by an aerial view of the entire river with its many twists and turns, turbulent and subtle movements and shifts in directions. The beauty of the heuristic design is that it is not prescriptive but is free flowing and progresses very naturally.

Not long after my *initial engagement*, I began to *immerse* myself into my topic and question. This took place in the form of daily journal entries consisting of dream visions, fictional stories, non-fictional accounts,

free writings (stream of consciousness approach), personal reflections, lyrical and narrative poetry, and personal narratives. Often, my journal entries took the form of personal conversations and interior monologues with myself. I began to realize also that my self had many voices. Each of these voices wished to be heard.

The more that I wrote the keener my own sense of observation became. With this heightened awareness, I realized in my attempt to discovery the meaning of care that I was also tapping into my own sources of creativity. Moustakas (1978) writes about this in *The Self* when he stresses that "in true experience every expression is creative, the creation of the person one is and is becoming. There is only the exploring, spontaneously expressing self, finding satisfaction in personal being" (p. 3). I realized that I must keep myself open to new thoughts and not to place strict rules upon my writing. I could not be judgmental. I needed to be open to new experiences and write whenever the need occurred. Moustakas reaffirms this notion as well when he says that there should be "no goals to pursue, directions to follow, or techniques to use. There is the growing, experiencing self, significance and meaning in personal experience, and exploration and discovery" (p. 3).

In the immersion process, I did not limit myself to descriptions and thoughts about students. I included various associations and relationships including fellow teachers, administrators, custodial and secretarial staff, and my own family relations—brothers, sisters, son, daughter, mother, and father. As I began to tap into my past memories of people, places, time frames,

events, and specific details of my own lived experiences, I began to remember discrete events that I had not remembered in years—ones that had been lost and found--such is the nature of the heuristic process. My literature review also became a part of the immersion process. I once again did not restrict myself to areas of education but expanded and broadened my research to include fields of philosophy, feminine criticism, the health care professions, and linguistics.

Although I believe that I could have limited my data gathering to my own writings and reflections, I also included informal, conversational interviews with research participants to include new and diverse perspectives. Moustakas (1990) recommends that the researcher elicit understandings and perceptions of others to add to the study. These interviews were audio taped to insure accuracy and were first hand experiences that the research participants (students and teachers) also encountered.

After some time, I withdrew from the experience and allowed for incubation to take place, to collect my thoughts and to allow some personal insights into the experience to surface. Incubation can best be defined by using a typical comparison of one who is trying to remember a name. After one has gone through the alphabet countless times with no luck, the individual gives up and accepts the fact that the name has been lost forever. Sometimes hours or days later, the name emerges when least expected. This is the incubation stage, and this is an aspect of the process that cannot be overlooked for long

forgotten thoughts and insights and understandings, as in my case, are likely to return to consciousness.

Initially, my writing and self-exploration took me to my student teaching experience in a small private school in my home town. This school has maintained a rich tradition of providing "excellent and innovative Catholic education" for the past 100 years (*History*, p. 1). Approximately, 300 students, 18 teachers, 3 administrative staff, 9 support personnel, countless parents, and a predominately Hispanic community had much to offer me as I began to learn what it meant to engage my students and to care about a school community.

I was amazed that names, faces, stories could be recovered from my memories that had not been thought about for over 30 years. Each year of my teaching career was defined by those young men and women that I encountered as a teacher and coach. After three years of my education at the private school, I moved on to a strong public middle school, but not before being warned about the "raging hormones" of 9th graders. This middle school had a strong reputation for being the "starting point" for a number of famous athletes and celebrities in our state. At that time, middle school consisted of grades 7, 8, and 9. The school followed a traditional school concept which has since changed into "the middle school team-concept." Those years were memorable too and a strong outpouring of specific events and activities were brought to mind. Finally, my writings took me to the year 1980 and my present high school in a large suburban school district.

In the 1988-89 school year, this high school was recognized as a School of Excellence by the United States Department of Education. I wrote for hours and hours about anything that occurred to me from those early years to the present. These journal entries took many forms and traversed a wide range of people, events, and subjects. It was here that my journaling ended and the incubation and illumination began.

As Moustakas (1990) emphasizes the crucial processes in heuristics are "concentrated gazing on something that attracts or compels one into a search for meaning: focus on a topic or formulation of the question; and methods of preparing, collecting, organizing, analyzing, and synthesizing data" (p. 39).

My first entries focused on my early teaching duties: job descriptions, teaching load, classroom management, lesson preparation, coaching duties, and the general teaching experience. However, I found that my narratives always led me to people. Connelly and Clandinin (1999) call this "the narrative understandings of knowledge and context" (p. 4). It was not until I began to write about specific students did those clear memories of my students and our relationships begin to reveal themselves to me. This first encounter with the phenomenon awakened me to its true nature. I began to realize that the needs of others were gifts to me, that although I was seeking to affect the lives of my students even more dramatically were they affecting me. Mayeroff (1971) emphasizes that "In caring for the other, in helping it grow, [the teacher] actualize[s] [himself]" (p. 40).

At the end of the incubation period, I read and reread my entries hoping to find a number of the hidden meanings—those not readily apparent. The immersion process had been very difficult for me. I had reached the very of my core of my existence and found a well of emotions. The slightest mention of an idea, a former student, or a salient event would bring forth intense emotions and strong feelings. However, rather than avoid these feelings I wrote about them and let them lie dormant for a while; then I returned to reflect upon them once again. Moustakas (1990) emphasizes that "a degree of reflectiveness is essential, but the mystery of situations requires tacit workings to uncover meanings and essences" (p. 29).

Population

According to the district website, in the school year 2005-2006 there were 19,207students in the district consisting of 9,284 elementary, 4,117 middle school, and 5,806 high school students. There are 18 elementary schools, 5 middle schools, 3 high schools, and 1 alternative high school. The school district employed 1,432-time certified personnel and 705 support employees in 2005-2006. The average elementary class size was 20.4 students.

I teach in one of the three high schools in a large suburban school district located to the far northwest of a metropolitan area. Our school consists of approximately 2,250 students in a growing area of the school system. Our students' ethnicity is 14% African American, 3% American Indian, 5% Asian American, 2% Hispanic American, and 76% Caucasian. Only 8% of our

student body receives free and reduced lunches; most of our families are upper middle class.

I teach three Advanced Placement English IV classes each day. Our school, grades 9 through 12, is on the 4 x 4 block schedule system which means that I have my Advanced Placement English IV students in my classroom for one hour and twenty-seven minutes each day from August 16, 2006 through December 20, 2006. Then I will have a new group of students in my classes the next term which runs from January 8, 2007 through May, 18, 2007.

I have been teaching at this school for 26 years and so I am an established and veteran teacher. Most of my students are the best students that attend this high school. Each of my classes consists of 20 to 35 students. Ages range from 16 to 19 years of age. Although I teach Advanced Placement classes, our school district maintains an open enrollment policy, which means that any student, regardless of past grades, standardized test scores, or teacher recommendations, may enroll in and take the course. Therefore, my students range in ability levels. Students are not discriminated by race, gender, grades, and religion in placement. There is a growing movement to include our special education children into the mainstream of our classes.

My sample was limited to those students who were at least 18 years of age and who volunteered for the study. Those students who were willing to meet before or after school for 30 minutes also reduced the population. My

sample was strictly a convenience sample: those students who, were 18 years of age and who volunteered were accepted for my study.

This year we have over 115 faculty members. My interviews were conducted with 10 teachers. I chose those teachers who volunteered and who had taught at least 5 years so that they had some experience to draw upon. I also chose teachers from various departments (language arts, social studies, physical education, mathematics, and sciences), both male and female, young and old alike.

Procedure

Methods of Collecting Data: Primary Researcher

Before I began my study, I received Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval as well as approval from my school district before conducting my research. Much of the following information also appears in the IRB application.

My study population consisted of teachers, both male and female, with a range of ages between 18 and 65 years of age. The maximum number of participants was 20 (10 students and 10 teachers). Students and teachers were told that there were no rewards or benefits for participating in this research study as well as no risk or harm associated with the study. All participants (students and teachers) were asked to sign an informed consent form and to participate in two interview session. Each session would not take longer than 30 minutes. Participant involvement was strictly voluntary, and participants were assured that they could choose not to participate and to

stop involvement at any time. These co-researchers were also informed that the results of the research study may be published, but their names would never be used. Their identity would not be associated with their response in any published format. Co-researchers were also told that the records of this study would be kept private. In published reports, there would be no information included that would make it possible to identify the research participant. Research records would be stored securely at my home office, and only approved researchers would have access to the records.

No direct identifiers, names, social security numbers, addresses, telephone numbers would be recorded. All data would be kept on compact disc. The discs were destroyed at the end of the project. Any data that was placed on computer would be password protected and would be destroyed at the end of the project.

All interviews were informal, conversational interviews. These interviews rely on "a spontaneous generation of questions and conversations in which the co-researcher participates in a natural, unfolding dialogue with the primary investigator (Patton quoted in Moustakas, 1990, p. 47). Guidelines, however, were established to begin each interview (adapted from Richards, 2006, p. 219):

Steps in beginning the informal, conversational interview:

1. Introduce the researcher and inform participants of the project.
2. Discuss privacy issues and how privacy will be maintained.

3. Tell participant that his or her views are very important to the researcher and will be taken very seriously.

4. Ask permission of the participant to tape record and take notes during the interview process.

5. Begin with small talk such as how are you doing? how has your day gone? and other culturally appropriate talk to calm the participant.

6. Begin by asking the following questions:

To Students: Think of a favorite teacher that you have this year or have had in the past. What made this teacher special? How did this teacher show you that he or she cared about you as a person and as a learner? How did you return that care? Can you give me an example?

To Teachers: Think of a special student that you have this year or any time throughout your teaching career. What made this student special? How did you as a teacher show this student that you care about him or her as a person and as a student? How did he or she return that care? Can you give me an example?

Hints to the researcher in conducting the informal, conversational interview:

1. Return to topics and terms which were unclear.

2. Ask for narratives for explanation.

Examples: What do you mean by the word _____?

Would you explain for me _____?

What is the difference between _____ and _____?

Would you mind repeating____?

Would you mind explaining this _____to me again?

I missed your explanation of ____. Can you repeat that again?

Once the interviews were conducted and scripts were written based on the notes and audiotapes, the research participants were asked to assist in the "judging correctness and incorrectness" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 33). As Moustakas points out, it is essential in heuristic research for verification to take place. "Verification is enhanced by returning to the research participants, sharing with them the meanings and essences of the phenomenon as derived from reflection on and analysis of the verbatim transcribed interviews and other material, an seeking their assessment for comprehensiveness and accuracy" (p. 33).

The final phase of the heuristic process was the creative synthesis of data. Once again I needed to rely on my own intuitive and tacit powers to portray a coherent body of data as an integrated whole which "illuminates and explicates the question" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 31). The creative synthesis took the form of "narrative depiction utilizing verbatim material and examples" (p. 31). Through the creative synthesis I wished to reveal the intuitions, tacit knowing, practice personal knowledge that I had discovered and revealed to

myself. Kroeber emphasizes that the narrative has the ability to concretize the unique aspects of our world. Kroeber argues that "The very act of narrating pushes abstract principles into the dust, heat, and pollution of the arena of contingent experience" (quoted in Schutz 1998). Kroeber goes on to point out that "Narrative creates patterns that do not diminish the fortuitiveness of the contingencies they organize" (Schutz 1998) as a matter of fact it makes the past comprehensible. However, as Polanyi points out, the final synthesis of perceptions and the meaning of human experience rest on the primary researcher's judgment.

Analysis of Data

Throughout my data collection and literature review, I refused to begin with theory and progress in my data collection theory driven. This is not the nature of the heuristic design. I would not allow myself to become prescriptive but to remain open to new ideas and observations. Even at the end of my data collection, after interviews with students and teachers, I still had not attempted to create themes. I wanted to allow these themes to emerge as I went back and read and reread the material.

To provide a creative synthesis of my heuristic design, I needed to take a step back to get a sense of the total picture. I had no idea initially of how to assemble and integrate the isolated pieces of narratives, anecdotes, vignettes, poems, eulogies, and personal reflections together. It was such a hodgepodge of many genres. What was I to do? I decided that the only

solution to my problem was to read and re-read my data, over and over again until a sense of pattern surfaced. I realized that my dilemma could be a part of the heuristic process too and that I needed to write about my difficulties and allow the writing help me to sort my material. Moustakas emphasizes (1990) this step when he says

> The heuristic researcher returns again and again to the data to check the depictions of the experience to determine whether the qualities or constituents that have been derived from the data embrace the necessary and sufficient meanings. The heuristic researcher's "constant appraisal of significance" and "checking and judging" facilitate the process of achieving a valid depiction of the experience being investigated. They enable the researcher to achieve repeated verification that the explication of the phenomenon and the creative synthesis of essences and meanings actually portray the phenomenon investigated. (p. 33)

Truly, this is where I relied on tacit knowing to provide unconscious knowledge to help me. My frustration became part of my journaling where I developed a conversation with myself to use writing and the heuristic design to help me with the way to represent the various works in an integrated whole. As Jerome Bruner (2002) makes us aware that "perhaps it is a literary exaggeration to call our multiple inner voices characters. But they are there to be heard, trying to come to terms with each other, sometimes at

loggerheads" (p. 85). However, this dilemma does not discourage us because we continue "constructing ourselves through narrative" (p. 85).

Finally, my sister Shelley provided me with a rich metaphor to help me continue on my journey. She equated her own buying pieces of material to design a quilt to my own creative synthesis. Here I used this rich metaphor to conceptualize what I was doing: I was creating a beautiful and magnificent tapestry of many textured pieces of my life and those unique and special relationships that I would have to connect together. There were some final complexities that begged for reflective activity. These I handled with special care and sewed these final pieces together. This helped me overcome my fear. I could do this, and I did.

Summary

Polanyi (1962) in *Personal Knowledge* writes

> Scientists—that is, creative scientists—spend their lives in trying to guess right. They are sustained and guided therein by their heuristic passion. We call their work creative because it changes the world as we see it, by deepening our understanding of it. The change is irrevocable. A problem that I have once solved can no longer puzzle me; I cannot guess what I already know. Having made a discovery, I shall never see the world again as before. My eyes have become different; I have made myself into a person seeing and thinking

differently. I have crossed a gap, the heuristic gap which lies between problem and discovery. (p. 143)

This heuristic passion motivated me throughout my heuristic inquiry. As it is in most intellectual and literary journeys, it is not the destination but what is learned along the way that matters. I learned that the research topic, the research question, a teacher's practice, and the research design are all critically interwoven. I also learned that in our attempts today to specialize we lose sight of how inter-related are all disciplines.

In this chapter, I discussed once again the serious need for this study with reference to my research question. I delineated my methodology—Moustakas' heuristic qualitative research design. I offered the primary task of the heuristic design and tried to show the path of conceptualizing the research question. I provided Polanyi's concept of tacit knowing which is the foundation of the heuristic design. I discussed the recursive nature of the heuristic design. Next, I described my data collection techniques and the data analysis. Finally, I showed how I integrated data to provide a creative synthesis for further study. In the next chapter, I will provide that creative synthesis.

Chapter 4

Data Collection

Caring

1. Saying nice things and sharing compliments with others
2. Being considerate, kind, and respectful in all your actions
3. Lending a helping hand to those around you
4. Being the person that others can count on

(A poster on the wall of our school's counselor's office)

The purpose of my study is to explore the concept of care through the heuristic method of inquiry conceptualized by Clark Moustakas (1990). My inquiry has proven meaningful to me in my professional life with my students and colleagues and in my private life with my family members and close friends. In addition I hope that this study will prove useful to those who wish to transform relationships in their own public and private lives. I do not think we as educators can continue down our present path of using a *competitive capitalist metaphor* or *treat our children as abstractions* if we want to shape our young men and women not only into productive but also caring and loving human beings. In recent years my Advanced Placement (AP) students have voiced a desire to become lawyers not to become the voice of the silent in our society or an advocate for the marginalized and oppressed; or to become a surgeon not to relieve the suffering of others. All too often in recent years my students really do not think of others; they are too busy thinking of themselves, their careers, their large houses, their new cars, their theater rooms full of technological systems and gadgets—these students are our

leaders, our CEOs, our bank presidents, our elected officials, and I hope our philanthropists and humanitarians.

In this chapter I will briefly describe my research question, the heuristic design; and I will review my methodology with its goal to better understand the phenomenon of care. I will discuss the data gathering techniques that I used: my own self-discovery, the data collection, the selection of co-researchers and participants, and their involvement in this heuristic inquiry. Finally, I will present the creative synthesis of the data. This synthesis will reflect on the connections, relationships, and creative outpourings that emerged from my total immersion into this phenomenon. Much of my personal reflections took the creative form of narrative prose and poetry, and I will offer my belief that in constructing narrative I am reconstructing myself through tacit knowledge.

Psychologist Jerome Bruner (1990) remarks that narrative is “one of the crowning achievements of human development” (67). I will elaborate more on this “crowning achievement” known as narrative for I believe (and am supported by others) that narrative helps human beings make sense of the world, our involvement in it, and our relationships with others. Along with these narratives about students, teachers, principals, family, and friends, I will provide analysis of how the concept of care and its many dimensions was at the heart of those relationships. Each encounter broadened my understandings and perceptions of care.

Research Question

My research study actually began with a special relationship that I had with a student while working on my National Board for Professional Teaching Standards portfolio. Although my intention was to show competence as a "teacher of writing" and fulfill the requirements of my first National Board portfolio entry, I learned something more important: I realized then that to be an effective teacher that I must know my students both as people and as learners. Since then I have learned that I must connect with those wonderful children who have been given to my care and to find the time and the way to show that care to all of them, but first I must know: *what is the concept of care?*

I knew that this would be no easy task, but I had not entered the teaching profession because it would be easy. I became a teacher to make a difference in the lives of my students. Although I did feel that I was affecting the lives of some, I knew that there were too many students that I did not really know and that I should have done more.

For many years in my college methods courses, I worked hard to learn teaching strategies. I read the great authors and studied their works, analyzed literary movements, and memorized literary terms. I learned traditional grammar on my own; studied writing from popular writing instructors; read professional literature and scholarly journals; and confronted issues in modern and classical literature. I wanted to be the best teacher possible which meant that I had to know more about American literature than

my fellow classmates. It seems silly now that I think about it: I haven't taught American literature in the 32 years of my teaching career. However, at the time I felt that the only way to show my students that I cared for them was to know my subject well and to learn very creative ways to teach it, to be aware of those things that they would need to be successful in higher education as well as the business world, and to prepare them to the best of my ability for the "real" world of competition and standardization.

I also watched and listened to the best teachers in my school to pick up on those intangibles that make great teachers, and somehow I knew that caring had more to do than knowledge of subject matter, more than classroom management and discipline, more than popular teaching strategies, and even more than just getting to know students. Through my total immersion into caring—the indwelling and focusing into this phenomenon and through tacit knowing, I searched and yearned for a "more extended comprehension of the nature or meaning of a quality or theme of human experience" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 24).

Heuristic Research Design

The heuristic research design conceptualized by Moustakas (1990) provided me with the disciplined construct to explore my own understandings. Douglass & Moustakas (1985) point out that heuristic methodology demands "a subjective process of reflecting, exploring, sifting, and elucidating the nature of the phenomenon under investigation" (p. 40). Through daily journal

entries consisting of personal reflections, narratives, lyrical poetry and many other literary art forms which are italicized in my data, I focused on my own self-discovery, self-dialogue, and self- knowledge. Along with these personal reflections, I have offered later reactions and reflections (not in italics). However, just as Moustakas and other qualitative researchers point out heuristic research demands self-disclosure. I must share my understandings with others to aid my own self-search.

This began in a professional development workshop offered to our entire faculty prior to the start of the 2006-2007 school year. The focus of this professional development workshop was small learning communities based on the book *Whatever It Takes: How Professional Learning Communities Respond When Kids Don't Learn* by DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, and Karhanek (2004). Our principal encouraged faculty input and reaction to a short film *Through New Eyes: Examining the Culture of Your School* demonstrating a "traditional approach to a student who is not learning versus the Stevenson Pyramid of Interventions approach" (p. 65). The film showed a mother trying to interact with her son who was entering into high school as a freshman. The mother tried to involve herself in her son's life. However, the son was too plugged into his MP3 player and with large earphones was trying to tune his mother out. She was relentless and would not be ignored to the frustration of her son. In the traditional school, the mother's involvement was put on hold until reporting time when her son's near failing grades were sent to her and phone calls and conferences with the guidance counselors proved

unsatisfactory. In the "Stevenson Pyramid of Interventions approach," the teachers, coaches, and counselors were proactive rather than reactive and demanded that the 9th grader work, study, and learn.

One collective reaction made by a number of faculty members in our school to this film sounded something like this: "Today's school is a business, knowledge is our product, and our students are our customers. We must respond to the needs of our customers if our school is going to succeed in the 21st century." I immediately stood up and all of my past studies of care and my own self-reflections and emotional involvement erupted. I said that this metaphor of business and competition draws us farther from the needs of our children, that we must know these young people not as a salesclerk knows her customers and treat them not as a banker loans out the bank's money but as a mother treats her own child—with relentless love and care and to see the world not through teachers' eyes but through the eyes of our students'. The 112 faculty members, principals, and counselors were stunned and silent. This signaled the beginning of my open disclosure of care with teachers and students (research participants). Douglass & Moustakas (1985) confirm the need for disclosure when they write: "At the heart of heuristic lies an emphasis on disclosing the self as a way of facilitating disclosure from others—a response to the tacit dimension within oneself sparks a similar call from others" (p. 50).

Methodology and Data Gathering

These teachers and students answered my call, aided me in my exploration of care, and offered me a wide range of insights and frames of reference. With IRB approval, I selected a convenience sample of 10 students from my Advanced Placement English IV classes who were at least 18 years of age. This seriously restricted the number of students participating in my research. I only had 10 students who were 18 years of age. I interviewed these 10 students at the beginning of my interviewing process for about 30 minutes while taking notes and audio taping the conversations. These interviews were informal conversations, and I allowed the students to explore their own understanding of teaching and learning but directed them to issues of care and personal connections with teachers. I allowed the students to validate my transcriptions at the conclusion of the first interview. At the end of the data collection process, I interviewed these students once again to confirm some of the themes that I had drawn from the first interviews. These interviews confirmed my earlier findings.

I also found 10 teachers who would allow me to interview them, also. Once again I allowed these teachers to explore their own notions of teaching and learning but directed our conversations towards their personal connections with students and their caring techniques. I encouraged these teachers to provide examples of caring attitudes and caring relationships in the form of stories. Teachers are great storytellers, and they provided me with rich stories of their present and former students. These too helped me

become aware of emerging themes. I allowed teachers to validate my transcriptions to ensure accuracy. As I had done with students, I interviewed these teachers a second time to confirm my earlier perceptions. As I amassed more and more raw material, I became overwhelmed with my project and realized that I must allow time for incubation and further illumination.

I knew that much of my journaling had taken the form of storytelling and narrative. I had reached a point that I tried to express my relationships with others through stories that had occurred in my life. With this understanding, I explored the meaning of the narrative form on human experience and discovered that as Donald Polkinghorne (1988) stresses: "Our lives are ceaselessly intertwined with narrative….We lived immersed in narrative. Recounting and reassessing the meanings of past actions, anticipating the outcomes of our future projects, situating ourselves at the intersection of several stories not yet completed" (p. 160).

Psychologists tell us that narrative takes an important role in the construction of identity. In effect, my stories told me not only about others (students, colleagues, family members, and close friends), but they also provided valuable insights about me—who I am, who I want to be, and how I interact with others, which all are used to construct my sense of identify. Eisner (1985) chimes in when he writes that "all experience is the product of both the features of the world and the biography of the individual" (p. 25). I believe that if I can change the stories in my creative synthesis that in some

way I can both change others and change myself. Moustakas (1990) also suggests that narrative is a form of heuristic inquiry when he posits that "essentially in the heuristic process, I am *creating a story* [italics added] that portrays the qualities, meanings, and essences of universally unique experiences" (p. 130).

Creative Synthesis of Data

I spent many hours trying to arrive at underlying thematic structures of my study. In my passionate attempt to discover deeply thoughtful and ground-breaking insights, I overlooked the obvious. It was not until that I looked at the phenomenon of care holistically that I realized that my many narratives had surfaced to voice both the breadth and depth of care. The depictions illuminate the various levels of meaning of the concept of care and offer the reader a broad and deep sense of the positive intensity, wonder, and joy that care offers the carer and cared-for as well as the sense of loss, frustration, guilt, and destruction when care is not returned or misdirected, or obsessive. The analysis of these caring relationships provides rich material for serious thought and further discussion. I discovered that as a human being and as an educator I cherish these memories—the thoughts, ideas, and images and hope to return to them again in memory and by exploring these concepts through new caring relationships with family, friends and, of course, my students.

Finally, these wonderful stories depict my experience of care as a whole. I discovered that the more accurate, vivid, and comprehensive that I could reconstruct these narratives the more vivid would be the understanding of the phenomenon. I have organized my data into two areas the caring relationships (when care is reciprocated between carer and cared-for). In this section, one can sense the nature of the caring relationship as the carer or cared-for seems to grow through the experience. In the second section, a caring relationship is sought but various challenges affected the relationships. Both sections offer much data for further research and study. The integration of this data will provide a composite depiction of experience which reflects my own imagination and personal essences of the experience.

This data include individual stories, lyrical reactions, dream visions, actual and fictional conversations, a eulogy, imaginative musings, and quite a few individual portraits with an analysis of the concept of care at the conclusion of many of these. Unlike many research presentations, this researcher as family member and teacher will remain in tact throughout the synthesis of the data.

The Caring Relationship: Caring to Completion

"Our personal identity builds upon our experiences with other people, from parents who nurture and guide us to friends who sustain us to teachers who inspire us and leaders who give us direction. For children, these relationships are primary factors in their growth and development. For adults they determine much of the quality of our lives and what we accomplish" (Breggin, 2000, p. 275).

Parker Palmer (1998) in *The Courage to Teach* also defines this thematic division of my data entitled “The Caring Relationship” when he writes

> Good teaching is an act of hospitality toward the young, and hospitality is always an act that benefits the host even more than the guest. The concept of hospitality arose in ancient times when this reciprocity was easier to see: in nomadic cultures, the food and shelter one gave to a stranger yesterday is the food and shelter one hopes to receive from a stranger tomorrow. By offering hospitality, one participates in the endless reweaving of a social fabric on which all can depend—thus the gift of sustenance for the guest becomes a gift of hope for the host. It is that way in teaching as well; the teacher’s hospitality to the student results in a world more hospitable to the teacher.
>
> One of the blessings of teaching is the chance it gives us for continuing encounters with the young, but whatever eventually blesses us may at first feel like a curse! We are more likely to survive the curse and arrive at the blessing if we understand that we may be an afraid of our students as they are of us—and then learn to decode our own fears, as well as theirs, for the sake of creativity in the service of the young. (p. 50)

One might expect for me to begin with those students for whom I showed exceeding care. However, I wish to begin the theme of carer (care-giver) with my own parents. I believe it is here where the caring is learned from both mother and father. Each shows care but in different “socially constructed”

ways. I believe that when I show care to others I am repeating the caring practices that my own parents (not just my mother) exhibited towards me and my own brothers and my sisters.

Narrative #1 – Dorothy Lee Pezzetti, My Caring Mother

What does it mean to care? Where do we learn to care? Are these deep psychological structures that we "learn from our parents"? Does care or the need to care and be cared-for lie deeper than that? Does it exist at the core of our being? Are the old Roman philosophers right when they say that care has to do with the old Roman and ancient goddess *Cura* who instilled in man the basic need to care for the well-being and growth of oneself and for that of others? This is the question.

Why do I as a human being wish to extend that care to others and ask for care in return? To find the answer will make me a better human being? If I become a better human being, will I become a better teacher? My desire to answer these and other questions directed my personal journals and my exploration into the spiraling depths of care. It was not long into those journals that I found myself writing about my own childhood and my own parents—both mother and father. Thus my journey began:

My mother was injured in her home and broke her ankle not long ago. All of my brothers and sisters gave her [my mother] round the clock care for three or four days. This was an especially hard time for me because my mother was not in a very good mood. Good mood is being extremely kind. She was downright hostile, and she ridiculed every nice thing I tried to do for

her. I realized that she knew everything about me. She knew my greatest fears, my weaknesses, my strengths, my hopes and my dreams. Although I knew that she was in pain and scared and didn't know what was going to happen to her next, it didn't lighten my burden. I felt guilty and hurt, but I still wanted to help her.

I began to think of all of the wonderful things that she had done for me in my childhood—things that I could never repay her for. I thought of the many times as a child that I was sick in bed and she had stayed up with me—to check my temperature, to give me medicine, or just to comfort me. She sat up late at night just to let me know that she cared, that I was not alone in the world, and that my sickness was her sickness, that my troubles were her troubles, that when I felt bad that she felt bad, too. I realized that my mother had always been concerned about my growth as a human being and in the development of my life and survival skills and that had not stopped when I had become an adult and had left my childhood home. My mother was still concerned about these things and would always be the nurturing, caring, selfless, relentless caring individual—that she knew me not as one of her sons (an abstraction), but concretely and made me feel that I was the most special child in the world to her: this is called a mother's love.

Two of the fondest memories that I have of my childhood have to do with her: I can still remember like it were yesterday the many times that she would awaken me early in the morning so that we could go to church. In the cold of winter we would get up very early 5:30 a.m. or so, and would drive some

distance so that I could serve in the liturgy of the Mass. My mother would do this all by herself. My mother was the one in the family who instilled a sense of faith and religious beliefs in her children, and this is something that has carried me through difficult times in my adult life. I could never repay her for this.

The other memory that I have of my childhood has to do with our family summer vacations. I don't think that families take those summer vacations anymore. If they do, they fly rather than load up in the family station wagon like we did. My dad was also a part of this. My dad provided the logistics, and my mother provided the care. It was my father who would sit in his large lounge chair and all of my brothers and sisters would hunt for the family atlas, and we would plan our vacation. One year we might travel out west to California or Arizona, and the next year we would travel south to South Padre Island or Galveston, Texas. The Rocky Mountains in Colorado at Estes Park was a family favorite. It really didn't make any difference where we went it was the planning that was most important.

We would plan where we would stop each day, what motel we would stay in, and what sights we might want to stop and see. If we found something interesting on the way, our father was always happy to stop and sightsee. However, it was the efforts of my mother that remain vividly in my mind. My mother would lay out each day's clothes for all of us. She would stock up our ice chest full of sandwiches, chips, cold drinks, and snacks. We would eat out in local restaurants for our dinner meal, but our mother would not

entertain the notion of eating at a café for breakfast or lunch. It was just too expensive. She was prepared for every eventuality: she had planned for every expense.

In my adult life, my mother and I have become good friends. When I recently purchased an old 1940s HUD home, she offered to help me in the restoration process. Each summer I have tried to work on a different room beginning with the living room, moving to the kitchen and connecting outside deck, and finally the bathroom. I did have two bedrooms which needed aggressive remodeling, but after the bathroom, I decided to wait—wait for a different house or a different lifetime. The bathroom had been an ordeal which took most of the summer. I had to endure going to the local convenience store for restroom use or showering at friends' homes, or dealing with dust, dirt, broken pink tile, chips of concrete everywhere, leaking pipes, and poorly measured and cut drywall. My life was a nightmare that summer and I vowed that I would gladly reconstruct my philosophy of aesthetics rather than renovate my bedrooms. My mother thought otherwise.

One day my mother telephoned me and said that she needed something to keep her busy. I suggested a new hobby; she suggested tackling my bedrooms. I futilely debated the issue with her and I finally acquiesced to her insistence as long as she realized that I did not get home until 4:00 or 5:00 p.m. in the evening and by that time I was tired and that at best we could begin the project on the weekend in hopes that we could finish in two days

and that my routine would not be too disrupted. She agreed, and she would begin the work the very next day—Monday!

I left the key to my house in the mail box and all of my tools that she might need in my bedroom and went to school that Monday morning. When I returned home, my bedroom had undergone intense renovation. Everything had been moved out of my bedroom into the living room. My mother, a small woman of 5'5" tall and 138 pounds, had lifted the old, soiled carpet and had dragged it out into the curb for the city to pick up later that week. She had begun to sand the old wood floors by hand and had almost finished by my arrival. She had spent most of the day not only moving large furniture by herself and that old ugly carpet but had sat for hours with sandpaper in hand listening to the radio (her favorite talk shows) as she spent hours of laborious effort sanding those bedroom floors.

It did not take long for my mother to complete the job; of course, I had to work each evening with her. I would come home to find her dirty, sweaty, tired and sore with red blisters on her hands; she waited for the time that we could spend together—time that she could share with me. My mother is an extraordinary woman: I am sure that she is no more extraordinary than many women who have accepted willingly and lovingly the role of mother which extends way beyond our own childhood memories. By the way on that first Monday when I returned home to find my mother working on my bedroom, she left me with these words: "Don't worry about leaving your key to the

house in the mailbox tomorrow morning. You will find it on the kitchen table. I went to Lowe's and made me a copy. See you tomorrow!"

Yes, my mother had a key to my house and frequently I could tell that she had been there during the day to check the refrigerator to be sure that I was eating well, or she had cleaned the house whenever she knew that I was busy or needed her help. I have countless stories like this about my mother. Her caring for me has been contagious. She has taught me to care for others, and I am able to extend this concept not only to my immediate family members, but also to my students. They in turn care for others. Care connects my private and public life; it can do the same for others and for society in general.

The well-being and happiness and growth of every child in our family were always at the forefront of my mother's mind. To explore the broad and deep dimensions of care is to explore the broad care and depth of concern and compassion of my mother.

It is not difficult then to realize how important it was for me to show this same care towards her. Deep caring structures that I learned from her are today a part of who I am. However, my mother was in pain and needed me, and now was the time for me to return that care. When she was intolerable and hurtful and downright mean, it was only natural for me to wonder why. Why was she striking out? Why did she want to hurt someone that she loved unconditionally? I naturally wanted to look at the world through her eyes. This is what I saw:

Interior Monologue:

What will happen to me? Must I live in a home away from my loved ones? Who will look after me? Who will love me? All of my children have their own families, and I am alone. Who will take care of me? I wanted to give my children something to remember me by, a little something that I have tried to save for them so that when I die I can make their lives a little easier; and when they think of me, they will think favorably. Maybe, they will go on a nice vacation or buy a new carpet or a new car or send their kids to college, and I will have paid for a semester. I don't know; it is their decision how they spend it, but I want to do something. So often I have gone to garage or estate sales, and there are so many things in those houses that suggest that someone of real worth, someone of real value had once lived there, and now their value and worth have been reduced to cheap junk to be haggled over by valueless bargain hunters—invaders! Is my life not worth more than this? more than a box of paperback books at 25 cents or hardbacks 2 for a dollar? There has to be more to a person's life than just things. At least, maybe, I have left them some memories of me, some positive, good memories, but I am scared.

I am all alone, and no one to look after me. I am old, and it is difficult for me to get around. I never dreamed that it would be like this. The doctors tell me things and ask for my consent. I am on Medicare, and I don't understand all of the terminology or the rules concerning medical expenses and benefits and prescriptions. I just pay my bills, but I am fixed income. They are all a bunch of thieves! I don't know what I would do if the bills began to

accumulate and how would I pay for things? Would they take my house from me?

I am a burden on everyone. I have prayed, but I don't think anyone is listening, and I have tried so hard for so many years to develop my faith just so I had something to help me when I grew old. Old? I do not even look in the mirror anymore. I have tried to instill a sense of faith in my children for these times, but now I am questioning my own faith. Well, here I am and now I feel so alone and lonely. The nurses do not have time; there is only one nurse here Cindy who touches me with any kindness. My doctor rarely even speaks to me. I can't even pronounce his name. He is always too busy and always in a hurry. He doesn't even know my name. I am just a patient to him—an abstraction. He calls me "Mrs. Baker, not Dorothy!" I haven't been married in years. I don't even know what he has found. I didn't even know that he came in to see me this morning. How am I suppose to get any sleep when the nurses keep coming in all hours of the night to check on me or give me pills or take my blood pressure or check the iv or take my temperature? I buzz the button to call them. I can't even get up to use the bathroom. At least let me have my dignity. I don't like wearing these nightgowns with the open back. I have some dignity left don't I.

My mom left to visit my sister in Hot Springs. It was not too long before my sister and her husband had their hands full, and my mom was sent to my brother in Houston where she is now. He takes good care of her, sorts her pills, takes her temperature, fixes all of her meals, and even buys her things

to comfort and take care of her. He leaves her a breakfast in the microwave and fixes her lunch each morning and cooks for her each night. He must feel about my mother as I do.

She fell a couple of days ago and now her face looks like a raccoon's. She must have fallen directly on her face while using the restroom, but my brother's special, yet limited, care cannot last too much longer. Social services implied that my brother had abused her. Not too long from now she will need round the clock care, and my brother will not be able to give this to her.

I love my mother. I sent a coffee table book on Pope John Paul II to her today. She has always cared for me and never asked much in return. This is what caring is all about. We have a special relationship. Now, I am the carer (care-giver), and she is the cared-for. It is I who is being given something. This caring comes natural because she has taught me to care. It is when I think of my mother that I realize that care is a steady flowing brook that sings its sweet melody even into the darkest hours of the night. It is an undercurrent that continues to flow between my mother and me and connects with all of humanity. To care for others is merely tapping into that current which is already there. Care gives us purpose; it connects us with others; it is as natural to our lives as breathing; it gives us not only a sense of purpose and connection but also a sense of place. I felt this with other members of my family and my students as well. They all gave me much more than I gave to them. They didn't expect much.

I am still just on the surface of real caring. I realize that my spiraling descent into the depths of my own experiences into the concept of care will be a very painful experience—touching upon very raw and tender emotions. I have found that the depths of my care for students often saddens me because they have either asked for more than I have been able to provide or have given more than I have returned. I am quite sure that I could have devoted my entire waking moments to my students and never have had time for myself. There were times now that I realize that I said "no" and didn't even realize it. I just didn't have the time or the strength to devote to them--to give them all that they required. I would like to have answered every question, to have dried every tear, to have made them laugh, to have soothed her troubles, to have comforted them, to have told them that things would have been better, that their love troubles would eventually work themselves out, or that their days would look brighter. I just didn't feel that I could fulfill all of those promises, but I would have liked to.

The best that I could do was to encounter each student concretely; to make each child feel that she was the most important child in the world to me; to let each student know that I cared for her as a mother does her own child (as my mother did for me); that each student was not alone in the world for a few moments, days, weeks, years I would be there; that each child's troubles were my troubles; and that when each of my students felt bad that I felt bad, too. My exploration of care made me aware of where I had learned this—

from my mother who continued to care for me—for my well-being, for my growth, and if I needed anything she had the key.

Men care for others in a different way than women do. This is not to say that men do not care. They do. I do. My father cared for his family differently than my mother. I am quite sure that others perceiving my care in the classroom would see it differently that they would the care of a female teacher. However, I was awakened to these differences as I reflected on my caring relationship with my father and his relationship with me as a child and as an adult as my personal reflections show.

Narrative #2 – Dale Gear (Jack) Baker, My Caring Father

People make jokes about Alzheimer's all of the time—whenever people cannot remember where they put their car keys, or they cannot remember a name, a place, a telephone number, something of recent memory they often say, I must be coming down with Alzheimer's or something. I never do think that this remark is funny. My father probably died of old age, but he suffered at least the last three years of his life from Alzheimer's. Anyone who has gone through this with a parent will attest that Alzheimer jokes are not funny. My dad had a heart attack in 1993; it was at this time that we learned that he was suffering from the dreaded debilitating disease, and each time that he had a mild stroke or heart attack afterwards the Alzheimer's seemed to get worse.

His first heart attack was the first sign that something was wrong with his memory, and it was at this time that my brothers and sisters and I knew we

were in for quite an ordeal. A few events in our relationship stand out in my memory:

I was sound asleep one night when my father called me at 3:00 a.m. and awakened me from a deep sleep with the words, "Ran, I think that I am having a heart attack." I can still remember that I stopped and all was quiet for a few moments until I realized what this meant. My father and mother had been divorced by this time so my father was living alone. His words meant, I realized after that momentary delay, that he needed me. My father was a self-made man. He rarely needed anyone and even when he did, he seldom asked. He really wasn't a handy man so to speak, but he would try to fix anything, and it was never really a question of saving money like my mom; it was always a question of why go elsewhere when one can fix it himself. So my father fixed any mechanical appliance when it was broken; and if he couldn't, then it shouldn't be fixed anyway, and a new item was purchased. But in this case, my father couldn't fix it himself, and he needed me. I lived some five miles from his house and I raced to take him to the hospital. He was waiting for me at the door, and I can still see his grabbing his chest on the left side and looking worried. He was hurting, and the pain was intense. Now, one needs to know my father before anyone could judge the extent of his pain. My father never complained about anything having to do with his physical well-being. I can still see him rotating his wrist when his arthritis was bothering him or flexing his hands or rubbing his temples when he had a headache but never saying a word.

I remember that when I was younger I loved to play catch. All of my brothers and sisters were athletes and loved to play sports; I loved baseball. If I could have played professional baseball, I would have given up everything to play the game. Unfortunately, I was never that good, but I would have his catcher's mitt out and my own ball and glove ready to go when he arrived home from work which was always at 5:10 p.m. All of the family would be waiting at the door of our house—awaiting the arrival of my father from work. We would all rush out to the car, yelling "daddy, daddy!" We would jump on him like a band of renegades except for me. I would just give him his catcher's mitt and beg him to play catch before dinner, and he would always try to wiggle out of playing and promise me that if I ate well that we would play after dinner in hopes that I would forget. He was probably hoping that I would become interested in something on television or that I hadn't completed my homework, but that happened rarely. I wanted to play catch and nothing would stop me.

The reason that he tried to disconcert me was that I was, as he called it, "wild as a March hare," and I could throw the ball pretty hard for a ten year old which was never for my dad a very good combination. He would squat down like a catcher and would find something to lie on the ground to resemble home plate, and I would often throw the ball high and he would have to duck as it careened off the brick wall of our house back at him. Often the pitch came in low and into the dirt, and my dad would try to get out of the way which often proved impossible. He would come up limping, and I could hear

the sound of bone and ball meeting and a crunch that at the time I considered hilarious. It was so funny to see my dad standing up limping and hopping around the back yard in pain. To think, a young boy like me could do that to a grown man like him. It was absolutely hilarious or so I thought. Dad never said anything about those evening outings. He must have been the first one to rejoice when the coaches of my little league team moved me from a pitcher to a new position, the catcher. I guess they were tired of bruised shins as much as my father.

I have never forgotten this story. This playing catch has become a metaphor of my teaching career. Sometimes I feel that I must endure the pain, "the initial curse," of my students in order to teach specific skills. At times the learning of skills is painful. It takes routine and practice. Today I ask myself why had my father been willing to accept that pain? Had he loved me that much? And my answer, of course, is an emphatic "yes!" My father taught me the skills of baseball: how to throw and pitch and catch and hit. These skills became the focus of our relationship; however, his concern for my growth as a learner and as a human being was the way in which he showed me that he cared. There were others. Philosophers have said that "Work is love made visible"; such was the case with my father.

My father also never missed a day of work in his life. He would go to work whenever anyone else would have been admitted into the hospital. He hated doctors, and he was not about to let anyone touch him, check him out, or put anything into his body. He would have his handkerchief and would blow his

nose loud and long, but he would never miss a day of work. I really admired that about my father. He was dedicated, and he knew how to work hard and long hours; and he taught me how to work, and I have taught this to my own children and to my student-children. I hear parents telling their kids that they are just lazy; well, the way I see it parents must teach their children to work; and when they do this, the children will work. My dad taught me this; he believed that I would need these skills to survive in the world of business and production. However, he taught me how to care for people—to give up oneself for others. I think that the quality time that we spent together must have been worth the pain and discomfort of a few bumps and bruises, but he never told me to slow down or ease up or deterred me from something I loved. Caring means helping one to grow towards one's own light regardless of the challenges that one must face. One of the greatest challenges that my father had to face was his heart attack and the eventual Alzheimer's disease.

I still remember rushing my father to the emergency room of Baptist Integris Medical Hospital. When I checked him into the hospital, the nurse wanted me and my father to sit down so that she could admit him, fill out the paperwork, and ask me a number of questions. I can still remember my saying: "My father is having a heart attack. Take care of him. I will answer all the questions that you like later. First, take care of my dad." When the hospital emergency staff saw him, they knew that I was not kidding. They rushed him into the emergency room, and I remained behind while trying to compose myself enough to answer their questions. Their major concern at

the time seemed to be whether he had insurance which he did and then I was brought to my father.

He had been moved to a small room which was really just a large room separated by curtains; and when I walked in, there were already a number of people working on him. I will never forget the look on his face as he grabbed for my hand. He certainly did not want to hold hands. Men of my father's generation did not embrace or hold hands or kiss. These were familiar acts of women. He wanted to shake my hand, but the look on his face was one of fear. My father, the man who knew no fear, was scared—the man who had raised four sons and two daughters, who had served in World War II, had survived a kamikaze attack to his battleship, the man who had taken many errant throws to the shin over and over again in the backyard was scared—scared to die.

He did not die, but his cardiologist was the first to detect something far more horrifying than death itself. After the angioplasty which seemed to take care of my father's heart ailments, he was diagnosed with Alzheimer's. At the time none of the siblings had any idea that our father had this dreaded disease, but he had it and our doubts would not change the fact. The greatest fear was the unpredictability of the future. We tried to deny it which at the first was quite easy to do because there were no physical signs of dementia, no signs of anything other than he was tired and still was affected from the heart attack; but when we were sent to a neurologist, he told us that it was definitely Alzheimer's and that we should start making plans now. The ancients tell us

often that at one time we are going to become the parents of our parents we have no understanding of how this can be until we are truly faced with it ourselves, and I was faced with this prospect then and there. I cared about my father like a beloved son, but we had never talked—never, really talked. I knew him only as my father, never as a fellow human being. He was an unusual role model but a role model he was. Why? Because he was anything but the conventional hero more like an antihero without the existential thought and depression.

He was a middle class working man, not a day laborer; but I am sure that he had dug a lifetime of ditches, milked many cows, mended many fences, and had performed many menial tasks that we would expect from a Chattanooga, Oklahoma, farm boy. When he grew up to be a young man and decided that the life on the farm was not his calling, he decided that he needed an education but times were tough and he didn't have any money, no family inheritance, and so he worked to make enough money to pay for a semester of college, went to school part time while trying to maintain a job and would have to stay out of school the next semester or two until he could save again to enroll in college and pay for his subsequent tuition. His work took him to colleges across the state, but he never received a college diploma.

His goal, therefore, in life was to see that his six children all received the college degree that he couldn't have—all of his children—all six. And his dream would have come true if his heart and mind had not failed him and his

youngest child—fifteen years younger than his first born—had not been detoured after a couple of semesters at OU to St. Gregory's and back again before finally quitting school to take a job right out of the "Classified Ads" from the Daily Oklahoman which led to his first million dollar income.

I realized that my dad was mortal when he looked at me on that emergency room table. He looked scared and not ready to say goodbye but maybe he had better, but we had gotten to the hospital quickly enough and no permanent damage was done. I began to spend more time with him and to get to know him—not so much as a father but as a man. I knew him as a father. He made every baseball game, every school event, every activity that I wanted him at and some that I did not want him at. He was a great father and our most loyal fan, but I really never knew that much about him and still don't. He was born in Chattanooga, Oklahoma, and was the youngest of 11 brothers and sisters. I only knew a few of them; most had died when I was too young to know them. My mother would tell me that his family was unusual and that his father had walked out on them some time ago. I guess this is why my father was so loyal to us; he wanted to give us the father that he never had. I really don't know. I was too timid to bring his family up, and he never offered the information. There were only a few things that my dad would not talk to me about--his parents and the war.

My father served in World War II on a battleship the USS. The reason I know this is because I use to rummage through his old army war chest and play with the medals, old uniforms, and pictures that he had packed away and

saved in our attic. There was also a red Japanese flag and a Purple Heart there. I don't know what happened to either one. Dad saved them but really didn't get mad when we played with them as children and I am sure they were lost or destroyed. As I remember a Japanese kamikaze pilot crashed into his plane; actually directly into his bunk and he was able to retrieve the flag. Dad was injured, only slightly it seemed in the leg. He may have been injured worse now that I think about it; but once again he didn't want to talk about the war or his injury; and, of course, he would never show any pain. He probably didn't think he deserved the Purple Heart especially compared to other veterans who gave up life or limb.

Some time ago at a Professional Language Arts Teaching Conference I had lunch with a group of teachers and for some reasons the subject of our fathers and/or husbands and the war became the topic of our luncheon conversation. One lady said that her husband still had nightmares about the war. This brought back memories of my own father who had horrible nightmares and would become violent at night when he dreamed. He would strike out and yell and sometimes even hurt himself when he had these nightmares. Where he was in the war and what frightened him so, we will never know.

Alzheimer's disease took my father from me, but it also gave me precious moments to get to know my father. I cared for him as he too cared for me. I realized that the needs of others become the gifts to us. I realized that the more I grew to know my father the more that our caring relationship

grew as well. Care knows not its own depths. As we continue to care, our capacity to care increases. With my father, I sought to find ways to help him by attending Alzheimer's meetings, investigating and informing myself about Alzheimer's, and finding ways to make his life easier. I sought to help him continue his life of dignity and to die the way that he would have wanted it.

My father showed his care for me by trying to teach me skills that he believed would be useful to me in my life. We often focused on these skills of baseball in my youth, of a strong work ethic, and even in reading as a way to experience the world; however, we both knew that the priority was on each other and our caring relationship. I knew that I was always infinitely more important than those challenging skills that my father taught me.

As a teacher, I challenge my students with skills that will allow them to compete in the world of business and commerce. The linguistic skills that I teach become the center of our attention, but my students know that they too are infinitely more important than the skills that I teach. As I reflected on the wonderful memories that I have of my father, one day I reacted to my own father's challenges by writing this poem:

Al Zimer

Who are you, Al Zimer?
I mean who, Al Zimer, are you really?
One minute I think I know you, Al Zimer, and
The next you, Al Zimer, play upon his memory.

You, Al Zimer, crashed my dear father's computer.
You caught him off guard when he was downloading.
We had no idea who you were or
From where you had come, or
How to treat you or how you, Al Zimer, would treat him.

I know now you, Al Zimer, are a sinister computer virus.
You are silent, methodical, deliberate, and deadly.
You, erase our hard drives.
My father knew what you were up to.
He kept telling me that strangers were stealing from him.
That we would experience sondowners.

He would talk to me of my youth and his, and we became one.
Then,
He would ask me who I was.
What had you done, Al Zimer?

Luckily for him sweet memories were the last ones you erased.
Then only you, Al Zimer, and the appearance of my father
With the backspace and delete keys forever in the locked position.
Who are you, Al Zimer?
Who are you, really?

Upon reading this narrative countless times, I discovered something very important that I had always overlooked. My father was not a physical or an articulate man. He did not give us a big bear hug as some fathers do to show his love nor did he express his love in words. Actually, each time that I had achieved a personal goal, he set the bar higher. He raised his expectations for me. I cannot even remember his patting me on the back after an accomplishment or telling me that he cared that I was his son. But when my father reached out to me while having that heart attack, I knew his desire to touch was speaking a silent language much stronger than words. He was reaching out to me and this act of father and son joining hands represents the caring relationship at its best: the care which flows back and forth between the carer and cared-for is well-represented as the love between father and son. The joining of hands—the human touch--is the center of that caring

relationship. Nurses in the health care profession know its importance. Classroom teachers search for opportunities to share that human touch in the course of their daily routines. It is a symbol of the concrete relationship that we have with each human being in our daily lives.

In sum, from this narrative I learned that the caring relationships that we shared with our parents provide the patterns and practices that we need to build caring relationships with our own family members and with our own students. I also learned that my own caring was nurtured and continues to be sustained through the memories I have of my own parents. I realize that my needs become the caring opportunities for others. As I continued my study, my sense of awareness into the concept of caring becomes even clearer as I reflected on the many **Caring Relationships** that I had with students, teachers, principals and other intimate friends.

Narrative #3: Teddy Howard (a pseudonym), A Student

Today is the time that I try to think back on a student that I had in my class by the name of Teddy Howard. I start to get emotional when I think about Teddy. I can remember still where I was sitting when I heard that announcement from our principal on the first day of teachers' meetings before the start of a new school year:

"There is a student in our school this year who is a senior who wishes to be mainstreamed into regular classes. He will have an aide with him in your classes. The aid will be with him all day, feed him in the lunch room, take him to the restroom, help him take notes, and she will help you with this child. At

the end of this meeting we will have a special meeting with all of those involved and special services."

I prayed to God like I had never prayed before to please not assign this student to me. I would have absolutely no idea how to deal with this student.

"Baker"

…Oh my god, no. I was one of the five or six teachers selected and from that day forward I was never the same …same teacher or same person. Special services told me that Tommy had cerebral palsy with severe spasticity…often his body was uncontrollable. He would not be able to do anything for himself, but his mind was sharp, and he was smart, very smart. He just lived in a body that was like a shell that he could not control.

That first day of school with Teddy Howard I can still remember like it were yesterday. I remember his long oblong face, his wide grin, and his guttural sounds that could be singled out from the din of noise in my classroom. I remember his head wand that was placed on his head so that he could use his voice box; actually, this was a voice system called SAM a synthetic speech machine purchased for Teddy by Bell Telephone workers. It sounded much like my own home answering machine, and Teddy would key it in for an entire conversation unless he had a quick question that he could ask by using his head wand in a few moments; otherwise, it would take a long time for him to speak as did his painstaking effort at completing homework assignments. He typed, one letter at a time, one word at a time, one sentence at a time, each taking hours.

I can still remember receiving a phone call late into the early morning from his aide who asked that I talk to Teddy about completing an assignment. I can still remember that I had assigned homework in class that wouldn't have taken my students but 30 or 45 minutes at the most to complete. Teddy Howard had been working for 3 hours on the assignment and he would not go to bed and asleep until he completed that assignment.

"Please tell him that is all that he has to do so that we can go to sleep. He won't stop, Mr. Baker until you tell him to. "

"Teddy, do you understand the lesson? Then that is all you have to do Teddy. We will go over the lesson tomorrow."

On a number of occasions, I would say something dry and what I considered to be very funny and quite witty. Probably, not a belly laugh kind of laugh but a witty dry humor kind of remark…and no one would chuckle except for the guttural laugh at the back of the room that Teddy had understood but no one else had. At first, his laugh was an annoyance, I had to get use to it, but now I miss it. That laugh gave me joy. I would see Teddy being fed in the school cafeteria; I can remember seeing this archaic wooden contraption sitting around in the gym that would be used to strap Teddy in during the day to exercise him so that he would not get chair sores. I guess this is like bed sores to a wheel chair person. I can remember taking Teddy to football games and carrying him from his wheel chair to load him inside my car and that dead weight would break my back and I would talk to Teddy and

he would reply with his noise and the bright eyes and a large smile on his face.

We would be right there on the field, and he would love football games. I would push him on the track surrounding the field so that he could see all of the action of the game, but it was not just on the field that he would look. He watched the excitement of life unfold all around him—the players on the sidelines and their emotional states of exuberance, sadness, anticipation, hope, and disappointment all in a matter of moments as the game progressed; the varsity and junior varsity cheerleaders and pompon girls in their skimpy gold and cardinal outfits trying desperately to excite and motivate the crowd (hopefully, as much as they were Teddy) to help their team score a touchdown or "block that kick" or prevent the winning touchdown and bring their team on to victory; the many spectators and fans all involved in the lived experiences of life—talking and conversing, shouting and clapping, eating chili, cheese hotdogs and drinking cold sodas, mothers and fathers hugging their young children and asking their youngsters if they too were going to be football players or a cheerleaders some day; and young lovers hugging and holding with every golden opportunity that the game offered; Teddy Howard was a part of all of that—the flickering stadium lights, the crisp and chilly fall weather, the glorious Oklahoma evening skies, and even the newspaper photographers trying to freeze the drama and activity to share with others the next morning.

I saw the beauty of life unfold through a very special lens--through Teddy's eyes—why because he had reduced life to the simplest of experiences. His priorities were perfectly in tact. He cherished each moment; he taught me how to care—how to experience life to the fullest and how to cherish that life. It was something that I needed desperately at that time of my life; I had become the student; Teddy was the wise and knowledgeable teacher, and I would be worn out at the end of the day from taking so many mental notes.

Today I understand that Teddy Howard is a computer programmer for a small, private company. He is a division head for a computer firm, has his own apartment with 24 hour care, attends Christian rock concerts, still loves sports, and especially the girls.

I have to tell a story that occurred a few years ago. It seems that telemarketers always call at dinner time. Now, my schedule is erratic so I never eat dinner at the same time each night but somehow telemarketers know when that is going to be whether it is 5:30 p.m., 7:00 p.m., or 10:30 p.m., they always seem to know. This night was no different. Now, unlike some people who just rudely hang up on telemarketers, I try to be polite. I will talk and listen and cordially tell the person that I really don't need another credit card, or I don't need to consolidate my loans; but I do refuse to carry on a conversation with a computer. I am sorry, but I don't care how virtually intelligent our computers have become: I will not talk to a computer. If you give me a human being, I will be polite and conversational but not a computer

so one night during dinner I received a phone call which began in a very monotone voice: "Hello, Mr. Baker."

I immediately decided that this was another intuitive telemarketer who had guessed right again and had decided that the best way to disrupt my peace and quiet and my only sit down meal in a month was to call at exactly 7:08 p.m. I immediately hung up, but as I slammed the phone on the receiver I realized my mistake, but it was too late. I heard nothing but the ominous dial tone. I knew who it was and that I had hung up my student from the past, Teddy Howard. I had no way of contacting Teddy. I had no idea where he was living then or what he was doing. I could only hope that he called me again. His call did not come for at least a good thirty minutes, but about thirty minutes later the phone rang and the conversation began this way:

"Hello, Mr. Baker. Do not hang up. Do not hang up. It is Teddy Howard, Mr. Baker, your student. Do not hang up."

We talked a good thirty minutes. Now, you probably are wondering how it was that I could carry on a conversation over the phone with Teddy since it took him so long with his head wand to spell out each word. Wouldn't I be spending all of my time waiting for his next question or reply? Well, to tell the truth, I never had to wait on Teddy because, you see, he had already determined our conversation. He was so bright that he had already predicted my replies and questions and these were already programmed into his voice box: Here is an example:

Teddy: *Hello, Mr. Baker. Do not hang up! Do not hang up! This is your student.*

Me: *Hey, Teddy. It is great to hear from you.*

Teddy*: (Loud, uncontrollable laughter). I am fine, Mr. Baker. How are you?*

Me*: I am fine, Teddy. It is great to hear from you. What have you been up to?*

Teddy*: I have been good…talking to my friends on the telephone, and I wanted to see how you were doing, Mr. Baker.*

Me: *Just teaching and keeping busy…too busy, really. I need to relax a little but there is never enough time, is there? Been to any concerts lately, Teddy?*

Teddy*: Yes, Mr. Baker, I went to hear the band "So Called Tragedy," a Christian rock group that is very uplifting and positive. I like them.*

Me: *I don't know that much about Christian rock music. You will have to tell me about it the next chance we get.*

Teddy*: I have to go Mr. Baker, but I will call you again and we can talk some more.*

Me*: Thanks, Teddy.*

Not long after writing this journal entry, I had a dream about Teddy Howard. I think that he will always be in my thoughts. I do not believe that I have ever cared for a student as much as I cared for him. This was not love (agape). This was a different kind of experience. I realized that we had much to offer one another and at the time as now he was in my thoughts and even in my dreams.

Dream Sequence

I am floating in heaven, up in the clouds and a shirtless Adonis, a modern day Michelangelo's David approaches me. He is a beautiful male figure but his beauty is not skin deep. He radiates goodness. He knows me and calls me Mr. Baker. I know the voice even though I have never heard the voice before. He speaks just as I would expect him to speak. He says,

"Hello, Mr. Baker."

"Hello. Who are you?"

"It's Teddy, Mr. Baker, Teddy Howard."

"You look different, Teddy."

"Yes, God said that my new body should reflect the energy and beauty within. I thought that the old body did reflect the beauty within. It just was heavy and everything should be light and beautiful in heaven. It is good to see you Mr. Baker."

"It is good to see you too, Teddy."

"Well, I am off to see my friends. You always liked people, Teddy, and always had a lot of friends."

"You did too, Mr. Baker."

"That was the good thing about being a teacher. You made a lot of friends."

"Seems like kids gravitated toward you. It was never like that for me. Kids were scared of me. I could tell by their looks, but it is ok now. Now, I am more approachable."

"We will have to sit down and talk sometime Teddy."

"We will have to Mr. Baker."

"I will look forward to it."

'Me, too."

I did not realize it at the time; well, maybe I did that I was seeing the world through the eyes of Teddy. This was not as some theorists have speculated mere empathy. It was much more than this. I have tried to define this relationship: there was a sense of duality. I respected his honest and clear vision of the world. I did not want to intrude upon it. I could never see the world as he saw it; his life experiences, his perceptions of the world were far different from mine. I tried to see the world as he did and the only way that I could do this was in poetic form.

My Window

I look out the narrow window of my existence
Staring at a world that I love
Eyeless people walk by
And with my head tilted to the side I cry out to ease their pity
But I know my attempts only quicken their pace.

The girls are the ones who most interest me
They are a wonderful mystery
One that I would like to explore
But never will

As my face suffers from the hard board in which it rests
My arms and legs are moved for me
Aided by my friend
This is the best and worst part of my day

My friends are only school friends
They do not call or come by to visit
I just wait and wait and watch and smile as life
passes me by
and I will always only look out my window.

My eyes well up in tears every time I read this poem. I feel that many aspects of care were made evident to me through this caring relationship with my student. His needs as a student were a gift to me. Teddy was very familiar with this caring relationship. He had "caretakers" throughout his life, and he knew what the carer needed from him—a response, what caring theorists call reciprocity. This reciprocity can take many forms in Teddy's care, his facial and whole bodily reactions provided a strong sense of completion in me. I felt great joy in seeing him grow as a student; he found great joy in developing a caring relationship with me.

It was only through my journaling that I realized just how much I had grown, also. Teddy had become the teacher, the carer, and I had become the cared for. There was great joy in seeing this caring relationship develop. I began to change as a human being. The one thing that I learned is that the more one becomes involved in caring in a relationship between two people, the more sensitive and receptive one becomes to care both as a carer and cared-for, and the more one cares for all things, living and non-living. Care is at the core of who we are and care can change not only the perceptions of our world but also the person that we are becoming. Life gives unto life. I believe that there is an existential desire to be good and this desire develops our own ethical self. In an attempt to improve upon this ethical self we find that we are engaging in the other and his or her ethical self as well. Such was the case with Teddy Howard.

As I gained this sense of understanding about my relationship with Teddy Howard, I needed to express the gratitude I had for him and this poem emerged.

He Lives in a Poor Old Farmhouse

There is a poor old farmhouse.
Its structure is weak, but its foundation is strong.
Passers-by stare and shut their eyes.
Sadly, they do not stop to visit.
Silent Visitors walk by in a prayer of thanks
That they do not live in such a place.

Not believing there is anyone inside,
They cast stones at the farmhouse
And are interrupted by tremors and strange noises.

Too bad for them.
They should have stopped and entered.
There is a special boy who lives there.
Whose needs are a gift to others.
His spirit is unwavering and
He's grown accustomed to his dwelling.

Inside there is great inspiration and wisdom
And beauty and simplicity
And courage and patience
And perseverance and value
And inner light.
It is a divine place.

That noise becomes a warm and soothing sound.
It is a sound of freedom and the joy of existence.
It is the sound of a loving heartbeat
That connects the welcomed traveler to the heart of God.

One journal entry touched on the final days of our school year. Teddy Howard was excited more than most students about graduating from high school. Graduation is a great achievement in the lives of many; the graduation of Teddy Howard was remarkable. Teddy bought his cap and

gown; he had his senior graduation pictures made, and he coveted his senior yearbook. I never had an opportunity to sign Teddy's yearbook; someone stole it from the bag behind his wheelchair. I have reflected on this often and had I signed it I am sure that I would have written something like this:

Teddy,

Thanks for being my student in English IV this year. You taught me more than you will ever know. You taught me to live each day to the fullest, to see the true wonders of creation, never to take a day or a breath for granted, to get to know all people especially the distant ones—the ones that are timid, shy, and fragile. They have much to offer me. It may be many years before I realize all that you have taught me, but our relationship continues on long after the physical distance separates us.

Your friend, teacher, and student,

Mr. Baker

To care truly for someone, I must know who that someone is. I must establish a concrete relationship with that other. I must know her strengths and limitations, her hopes and dreams, and her public and private life. I must know what her needs are which are conducive to growth. As a teacher, I must have knowledge that will help her grow as a learner because she does want to learn and to grow and to be needed and to meet the needs of others. One teacher with whom I talked emphasized that the one thing that often humbled her as a special education teacher "was each one's [special needs student's] desire to learn all they could." "A small cystic fibrosis student,

weighing 35 pounds at age 17 was carried to the family's car, and on the last day of her life" said to this teacher, "'I will have my homework ready tomorrow.'" Another Little Anna Lookabaugh (a pseudonym), who graduated from our high school and weighing a whopping 20 pounds at the time of her death, "was enrolled in college at the time of her death because it was her desire to excel and learn." These children teach us patience and faith and courage and instill in us an awareness that we as classroom teachers must provide the care as our students pursue their own interests and find meaning in their own lives. They too give us joy in their desire and love for learning.

The problems that I face have as a classroom teacher have to do with time, and intensity of involvement, and other aspects of caring. In Teddy's case I was prepared for his arrival in my classroom. I challenged myself to overcome my indisposability. I was going to get to know this student and learn from him so that I could try to meet the needs of other students like Teddy Howard. Unfortunately, I am not always as receptive; I am not always as courageous. I am not always as sensitive and I always do not make the time. I do not always create a concrete one-on-one relationship with all of my students. Why is this? How is it that I chose Teddy? Or did Teddy choose me? Other relationships will help me find some answers to these problems and one of those others was Philip Edwards.

Teddy had a joy for life that could be heard throughout the school. Thanks for giving me another day of life and I will make the best of it. In this fast-paced world of fast foods, fast cars, and fast upward mobility, I can teach the

world to slow down and appreciate the moment. Since others have taken me in their care, I too will take others in my care and provide a loving and caring environment for them.

Narrative #4 - Philip Edwards (a pseudonym), A Student

Philip Edwards was a student of mine in the 2003-2004 school year. He was a strong B student and wanted desperately to make an A. He was a very hard worker, and I am not sure if I had a discussion with a case worker or someone else, but I knew that he had special needs. I believe that maybe his parents contacted me early in the school year and let me know that they were very involved in Philip's life and would be very supportive of me as a teacher; and if there was anything I needed or if I had any concerns, please contact them. I really had no idea what to expect or what was Philip's challenge or if he even had one.

Philip was always very attentive in class and worked harder than any other student I had ever had. It seems that I had a number of students that term who were not performing, not working to their potential, and had already mentally checked out of my class. I was very depressed most of the semester because Philip worked so hard and so many in my class that semester were falling so far behind. <u>This changed</u>. <u>Philip changed this</u>. His perseverance was contagious. Others in the class began to work harder because of Philip. One story will let you know the impact that Philip had on me as he did on our class.

Philip was very capable of doing the work. He could do anything that the rest of the students did. He just could not do it as quickly. At the time I never really knew the scientific term for Philip's challenge. He just worked slowly and his hands appeared to be arthritic, but this was the only evidence of a learning of physical challenge, so to speak. He always had a smile on his face and had the look of someone who was ready for whatever task was given to him. He had this look like "All right, I am ready. Give it to me." Every idea and every assignment were met with a sense of amazement —a sense of wonder, just like in grade school. I have never understood why our middle and high school students lose that sense of wonder? Why do we adults and teachers lose that sense of awe about the world around us?

Philip had a great look, but Philip had trouble with grammar; and it was not that he couldn't understand grammar. It just took him longer to complete assignments and to internalize the concepts. In class we only worked on grammar studies for a third of the class period, and then we would move on to something else. This was not the best situation for Philip so I remember quite clearly that he often wanted to come in after school to complete the assignments and to let the assignments sink in.

I can remember that we had a twenty sentence worksheet that we were working on and I believe we were just identifying the subject and verb. Philip would read the sentence and read it again and just sit there glued to the sentence, completely absorbed, concentrating like no student I had ever seen before. We spent quite a few minutes on the first sentence before he said

one thing and finally after at least ten minutes of intense concentration, he identified the simple subject and then spent as long or longer trying to find that slippery simple verb.

Finally, after exhausting my patience, he provided the correct answer. I just sat there looking at Patrick. I looked into his face-a face of total concentration and was reminded of so many students whom I had had in the classroom, who really never gave as much effort all year long as Philip was giving in those few minutes. I had been fortunate to have students who found complex linguistic skills easy for them to grasp and had easily, carelessly, nonchalantly, and regularly responded to the same worksheet or similar assignments without any regard, who could have cared less about grammar and English and school and much of anything else.

The one thing that I knew for sure was that Philip was planning on spending the rest of the evening on these twenty sentences; and if I had plans on leaving school in the next fifteen minutes, I had better reconsider. I sat there and realized that Philip was giving me a gift: he was teaching me one of the most important virtues of good teaching: he was teaching me patience. I needed to slow down; Philip didn't need to speed up. Philip touched something at the core of my being, and I began to cry and I couldn't stop. I knew that I didn't want to embarrass Philip so I ran to the front of the room and grabbed a Kleenex. Actually, I brought the entire box to the student's desk where I was sitting. I told him through the Kleenex that my allergies were killing me and that my eyes were watering.

I don't know to this day if he believed me or not. He really didn't even care because he was still totally absorbed by sentence #3. I spent the rest of the evening with Philip. I thought about calling out for pizza delivery, but he was too involved in sentence #6 to eat. Finally about three hours later, he decided that he had better go home for his dinner, and he thanked me for working with him and left.

I will never forget that evening. I didn't do much; to tell the truth, I don't think that I did anything at all except cry and smile and thank God for the moment. Because I cared for Philip, he cared for me. He not only helped me to understand the art of patience but he also gave me a sense of place in my classroom. Good teachers provide opportunities for students to teach themselves and to teach others as Philip had done with me. Philip didn't really need any help; he may have needed some support and some confirmation which are essential in a caring relationship and he may have sensed that I needed his support and confirmation as a learner and as a human being. I have sense learned that true caring has to do with meeting the needs of another as an end in themselves. I never asked Philip to care for me nor did he ask me to care. We just did. Honestly, I believe that a part of me knew that Philip had something to offer me and that I was the student in need of help—help to better understand myself, better to understand others, and better to understand what is really important in this world. Sometimes it takes one to slow down to understand what that something is.

One of my colleagues wrote that students "are my teachers. I have learned how to die, how to live, and how to overcome life's adversities through their courage!" This same teacher gave Philip his ACT Extended Time test. He was the only student in her long career who took all 12 hours allowed for testing in One Day! He made a 27 on the ACT; and if he could have had more time, she believes, Philip could have scored much better. She quipped

> I was so exhausted by administering his [Philip's] test-taking experience that I could not even imagine how exhausted he must have felt! But in typical Philip style, he simply said, "Thank you, Mrs. Crowder, for staying so long. I think I did well, but I could have done better if only I had more time…." After giving ACT's where students take one hour to complete the entire test, I simply admired him even more.

After my encounter with Philip, I reflected for some time on the many students who had taught me so much and I had never taken the time or knew how to thank them. For these students who became my teachers, and for all of those students who needed a caring adult, I responded with this poem:

I Never Told Them I Loved Them

I never told them I loved them
I wonder if they knew
Could they tell it in my voice?
My eyes, my smile, or my "how do you do?"

I never told them I loved them
I wonder if they knew
Did they know that I had to keep order?

So many high school classes are just a zoo.

I never told them I loved them
I wonder if they knew
Yes we were always preparing for tests
What was I to do?

I never told them I loved them
I wonder if they knew
I know that I never asked them what they thought
But they wanted to get into Harvard, Yale, and go to OU.

I never told them I loved them
I wonder if they knew
I saw their sad and bored faces
Of course, I knew what they were going through.
I was going through it too.

I never told them I loved them
I wonder if they knew
Now it is too late to tell them
So this semester I must tell you.

A final comment about a group of students that are often forgotten in our schools: the middle group—what I call the "prodigal sons" of education. This middle group consists of those children who attend class everyday, who say little, are rarely recognized. They are not those who make the highest grades; they are not the academic leaders in the school. They do not take the most rigorous classes. They turn in most assignments. They always have their books. They do not misbehave. They are the ones that we quickly forget. These are the ones that deserve our attention. These are the student whose success we must celebrate. For these students, I have written this poem:

For Them You Slaughtered the Fatted Calf

For them you slaughtered the fatted calf.
Yet I have always been good and faithful.
Others you call outside your classroom
and ask them to stay awake, be quiet, and do their work.
I am quiet and do my work.
He you called by his first name.
She is quick to know your smiling answers.
But You do not call my name.
.
I am to inherit the earth and
I ask for nothing in return

For them you slaughtered the fatted calf.
They swallow up your time, your patience, and your energies.
And you have none for me.

Yes, there have been many of us.
More and more each year.
We are voiceless and faceless in many shapes and sizes.
We are not your high or low achievers.
We don't get scholarships or detention.
We are not your prodigal sons.

We will not write your books on how to incarcerate the others.
But we will build your libraries to house those books.
You should be building monuments to our strength of character.

But you don't even know our names.
And for them you slaughtered the fatted calf.

Narrative #5 – ***Elizabeth Baxter (a pseudonym), A Student***

"We do not believe in ourselves until someone reveals that what is deep inside us is valuable, worth listening to, worthy of our trust, sacred to our touch. Once we believe in ourselves we can risk curiosity, wonder, spontaneous delight, or any experience that reveals the human spirit." ee cummings

Of course, I still remember Elizabeth Baxter. How could I forget? This is one thing about being a teacher you spend so much time wondering how those special students are doing now. If only Paul Harvey would tell <u>The Rest of the Story</u> about all of those wonderful students who had crossed your path—the ones that had changed you in some way, and there are many of them—now, that would match Orson Welles' famous broadcast. For years, I could remember the names and their faces. Then, I could remember only the names but the faces had disappeared. Recently, the names of students were also a mystery, but there were still a few. The few were not always the best students or the worst, but something had happened which had united you two, and their names could just not be forgotten. Although the relationship between teacher and student is always something special—my relationship with Elizabeth Baxter was almost a miracle, inexpressible, the feeling that is only signified by a warm smile and a special look. Only if you have had that kind of relationship, will you know what I mean.

I have no idea in what year most of my former students graduated, but after 32 years of teaching, I still wonder how they are doing—if they are married or if they have a children or if they are happy or if they wrote that great American novel or became that bank president, CEO, doctor or lawyer. It is ironic that just the other day I was thinking about Elizabeth Baxter (a name that coincidentally I could remember; she was one of the few) and last night at our school's Parent-Teacher Open House her mother caught me in the parking lot as I was leaving school.

I had seen Elizabeth 's mother earlier but since I was talking to parents she had not interrupted. She told me that she was Elizabeth Baxter's mother and that I probably would not remember her. Elizabeth was a very shy and timid girl.

"Oh, yes, I do remember Elizabeth, quite well. She was a special student of mine."

Rest assured, the story of Elizabeth Baxter amazed me even more than it will you. Elizabeth Baxter was s student in my AP English Literature and Composition class in the fall 2004. She was a beautiful young girl rather frail with light blond hair and very pale skin. She was slight of build, played the violin which fit her moods perfectly, and never spoke out in class. She was always attentive, but she was so quiet and reserved that when she did speak I had to listen very intently. Elizabeth was a good student and very bright, always had a warm smile on her face, but missed school quite a bit and had to work hard to catch up after her extended absences. Frankly, there was nothing extraordinary about Elizabeth or my relationship with her—until one day.

My AP English class went to the library to research existentialism in the library, and my students were intently and routinely reading about Camus, Sartre, Kierkegaard, Kafka and others when all of my students began to collectively stand up and move to one of the computers at the center of the library. My first reaction was that someone was researching a topic far from the approved ones in an English literature class. Nietzsche had never

brought about this kind of reaction. I decided that I needed to find out what had piqued their interest, but when I asked students to step away from the computer there was Elizabeth Baxter with eyes closed, a grimace on her face, and leaning back against the computer monitor with her delicate little hands over her chest. "It's my heart, Mr. Baker," she said in the same low whisper, "It's my heart. I have a weak heart!"

"Elizabeth, can we get you to the nurse?" she nodded affirmatively.

My thoughts were everywhere. I thought of my father and his heart attacks. I thought of my own heart problems that had required consultation from a host of cardiologists and medical practitioners, but most of all I thought of Elizabeth. How could a young 16 or 17 young girl have heart disease? My dad was in his 80s; I am in my 50s. It wasn't fair. On our way down to the clinic from the library, Elizabeth told me that she had been taking a new medication and that she was having trouble with it and her heart was racing, and it scared her when her heart beat so fast and she was out of breath. Our school nurse Britt Sutton had Elizabeth lie down as Britt called her mother and assured us both that Elizabeth would be all right. I stayed with her for over an hour and just held her hand. Although the nurse told me that Elizabeth would be all right and that I could go back to my class then, I couldn't leave her side. From that day on, Elizabeth continued to be soft-spoken in class; she couldn't change that, but she tried to open up to me by coming up from her back seat in the room to say "hello," or to thank me once again for taking care of her, or just to talk in order to maintain our friendship.

She just wanted me to know that we would always be friends. On graduation we wished each other well, and she thanked me again for the special relationship that we had had.

Some two years later, I saw Elizabeth's mother last night at Open House. Don't be alarmed. Elizabeth is all right. As a matter of fact, her new cardiologist in Boston has given her a full bill of health. Why, Boston? Well, her mother wanted to know if I had time to hear Elizabeth's story. Time? Of course, I have time. Just the other day, I was wondering how Elizabeth was doing. It is a rare gift when a teacher gets to find out how one of his students is getting along, or how she is doing, and where she is living or what she is studying.

"Well, Elizabeth went to Oklahoma State University (OSU) and made straight A's and decided she must demand more of herself. Mr. Baker, she says you taught her that, and she decided that she was going up-East to school."

Her mother looked even more amazed than I was.

"My husband and I don't have much money, Mr. Baker; and we told her that we couldn't afford out of state tuition, so she decided that she would try to make it on her own."

Mrs. Baxter told me that her sister lives in Boston and Elizabeth decided that she would live with her aunt, an aunt that she barely knew.

"But Mr. Baker, she rides the subway and is completely off on her own. We can't believe it. She is working at the Harvard Museum of Natural History

as a research assistant and even took two classes last semester in archaeology at Harvard and made an A in both. She had plans to work until she has saved up enough money to return to school full-time at either Harvard or the University of Massachusetts or Amherst College. Mr. Baker, we just can't believe it. "

And after some further discussion her mother said, "Mr. Baker, we are so proud of her and we really believe that you had a lot to do with it. We can't thank you enough. She told us to tell you that because you believed in her that she started believing in herself too and that has made all the difference in the world."

Somehow I made it home that night from the Open House. I don't know how. I don't remember getting into my car or driving or changing clothes or curling up next to my word processor to write down this story. Frankly, all I could think about was Elizabeth and her mother and how she had searched me out of the crowd of parents to tell me that in some very real way I had made a strong difference in a child's life. I know that most of the credit should be given to Elizabeth and her mother but sharing her courage of heart with me and the look of pride on that mother's face. I don't know it is kind of like the way that I imagine heaven. Heaven will be a place where all those people whose lives we have touched in some very small way will be waiting there to let us know, to thank us and to just hold our hand and never leave us—in some way I think that I had a glimpse of heaven tonight and thank you

Elizabeth wherever you are right now in wanting to let me know your story and for wanting to touch and strengthen my heart.

I believe in caring for our students we give them hope—hope for the future, hope to create a better life for themselves, hope that they can overcome physical or emotional limitations. I have since learned that one of the greatest ways that a teacher can show his care for his students is through setting high expectations for them and then helping them, challenging them, prodding them, and supporting them in attaining those goals and aspirations. Such was the case with Elizabeth Baxter—who proved to herself that she was definitely not "weak of heart."

Narrative #6 - Ebony White (A pseudonym), A Child in a Large School

Another student Ebony White could have easily been lost in the shuffle of a large suburban high school had it not been for an increased sense of attentiveness or more accurately luck.

Today, I want to talk about Ebony White which was not actually a student of mine. I must have met Ebony some four years ago on the first day of school 2002. She was a freshman, and I was walking the halls trying to look cool and professional the first day of school. I always dress up that first day because this is something that we all do at my high school. For some teachers, this is the only day that they dress up. I try to wear a smart-looking coat and a tie everyday. Now when I fail to do so, I feel a little out of place or inappropriate. I have always liked to dress up. This dates back all the way

into grade school; we couldn't wear jeans at the little parochial school that I attended so I grew up wearing dress pants and a special uniform to school. For me school has always been a special place.

I remember watching my grandfather dressing up for church and working the knot of his tie. Even then I wanted to wear a tie when I went somewhere special, and school has always been that special place for me. This was quite unlike my father who never wore a tie. This really isn't the truth; my dad wore a tie on occasions such as weddings, baptizings, and funerals; but he never wore one to work.

Well, I walked around the halls that morning greeting students and offering to help lost freshman find their way to their first block classes when I noticed a young lady taller and bigger than most—actually, I should say a lot bigger and taller than the average 9th grader. I introduced myself and asked her if I could help her. I could tell that the first day of school was a mystery to her and that the juggernaut of students all around her was not helping her solve that mystery. I took her not only to her first hour class but walked her through the halls to all of her classes and introduced her to any teachers and students that I knew along the way. I don't know why I did this. I guess it was because I could tell intuitively that she needed me then and as it turned out the rest of the year. This is what all of our students need from the first day of school and throughout the rest of their high school careers—an adult who takes a genuine interest in them and someone who cares.

I made an immediate friend with Ebony. Ebony would pick me out of a crowd during the school day and stop by my room just to say "hello," not expecting anything from me except a good word, my friendship and caring attitude; and I always had it for her. It was easy to find. I would occasionally see Ebony in the hall that first year of her freshman year, and we would talk. I sometimes saw her before school or in the halls, and we both hoped that I had her in my class her senior year. It was her senior year, this last year, when I talked to Ebony White the most. Although I never had her as a student in class, I would often see her; and we would talk about her future plans: she wanted to work at a child care center. She had attended our local vocational-technical school and had received a certificate designating her as a master day care worker. She was very proud of this accomplishment, planned to attend the local university, and continue her education.

I think that my point here with Ebony White is that we can affect students as teachers in the school not just by being their teachers but just being caring adults. I believe that when a person opens himself up to care, when he develops a caring awareness, and when he is receptive to those in need, he has the opportunity of changing two lives rather drastically—the carer and the cared-for. In our public schools, the teacher has the opportunity to become a hero on a daily basis.

Too many of our students do not have a circle of caring friends to nurture their ethical self. They do not have a circle of caring adults that they can talk to or someone that they can trust. They do not have the time or the practice

in developing concrete caring relationships with others, and this is something that caring teachers can teach their students. My mother and father taught me so that I could teach others. This is the completion of caring where a need exists and reciprocity takes place, and the caring relationship is completed. Ebony will always be a student whom I have a special relationship with because I took the time and made myself receptive to the needs of all students.

Narrative #7 - Richard Benjamin (a pseudonym), A Classroom Teacher

"A Teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops."
(Henry Adams)

I want to write about something that happened to me today that is relevant to my understanding of caring especially as it applies to the health care field. One of our teachers is in the hospital from an open-heart quadruple by-pass surgery; actually, I think that there were 5 arterial blockages. This 56 year old man has been a teacher at our high school for the past 20 some odd years. He is our physics' teacher and a rock solid member of our school community. I have known him for a long time. We have never been great friends, but we have been colleagues with similar views about education and a desire to educate students the best that we know how. On a personal note, we used to talk a lot about his dream retirement home that he would work on every summer vacation in Corpus Christi, Texas, or maybe South Padre, Texas. He would look forward to each summer when he would travel with his wife to

the beach and work on the house for their retirement. Now, I don't know that his retirement will ever come. I do know that his dream has been shattered.

He had suffered for some time from diabetes. I don't know how long he has dealt with his diabetes, but a couple of years ago he suffered a bout where he has not been the same sense. I don't know exactly what his trouble was, but he came to school last year in a wheel chair because he was unable to put too much weight on his feet. I assumed that he had poor circulation due to the diabetes, but I never gave it much regard. I was always too busy. I just knew that he was trying to teach school in a wheel chair, complete the final years of his retirement, and do the very best that he could for his students.

One day I rather naively asked him about his dream house since this was the normal subject of our conversations. He told me that he had to sell his retirement house to pay for medical expenses and his medical bills were staggering. I was embarrassed by my question and felt sorry that I had reminded him of such a sad chain of events. Later that day I asked my students about Mr. Benjamin. How were his classes? And how did they think he was doing? They all responded with great alacrity—that Mr. Benjamin was really teaching and that they were all working together and that this year physics was their favorite subject. That same year, I might add, our AP Physics students scored a perfect 12 out of 12 on the AP Physics test. All 12 students taking the exam passed with a 3 or higher out of a score of a possible 5.

"Mr. Benjamin doesn't get caught up in all of the politics of school. He just teaches and goes home," my students quipped. As I looked back on the career of Mr. Benjamin, I don't think that he had ever been a sponsor of a club or organization. He had always been kind of private. Well it was not long after this that an announcement one morning at our school began like this:

> *"As many of you know, Mr. Benjamin, our physics' teacher, had a heart attack last night, had open-heart surgery, is in ICU, and is resting well. His family has restricted visitors to immediate family, but asks you to keep him and his family in your prayers."*

Our faculty, which is always quite responsive to the needs of our own teachers and support personnel, collected some money and purchased a gas card to pay for the rising fuel costs of his wife's driving back and forth from the hospital each day. I volunteered to take the gift and a get-well card and to visit Richard Benjamin at St. Anthony's Hospital. This was kind of ironical since I had been thinking about volunteering at a hospital to get a sense of the caring that takes place there so that I could compare my reactions to that of teaching.

I decided that I would wait some time before writing about my visitation with Richard Benjamin for a number of reasons. I was too emotional after I left the hospital and needed some time to collect my thoughts. When I entered the hospital on a Saturday, I got lost. Apparently, I had entered through the back entrance of NW 10th; and on a Saturday, there were not

many staff members there especially candy stripers who usually are the ones to provide directions and help with patient's room numbers.

Finally, I found Richard's room and walked inside. I was immediately confronted with a man who had gone through an ordeal: he had a deep scar down the middle of his chest which was connected to a multiple of different colored wires hooked to machines which outlined his hospital bed. I could see the tears in his eyes; and even though he was holding up pretty well, I could tell that he was scared, and his illness and surgery had taken its toll. As I was later to find out, Richard had been fighting the ravages of diabetes for some time. I mean it seems that it was taking one thing after another. One day he had circulatory problems and his feet were not getting circulation, and the next day his kidneys were giving out and he was on hydrolysis. He was having a hard time teaching out of a wheel chair. He had never complained, but I had not helped him like I should have. He was even having difficulty entering our school building each day.

Our custodial staff was supposed to open the school's doors at 7:00 a.m. and Richard would be waiting there to get in. However, often the custodians were late, and other times he would have a difficult time opening the front doors or he would have difficulty working his wheelchair over a couple of thresholds to enter the building. Life was simply not easy for him.

Richard was sad and frustrated with his physical condition and I am sure that he was depressed as well. However, this was the first time that I had really taken the time to talk to him, and I began to realize what a special

person Richard Benjamin was. I never knew that he grew up on the same side of town that I had. He went to a neighboring high school and graduated in 1966 a year before I did. He lived at 59th and South Shields, and I lived on 61st and South Pennsylvania. His wife still teaches at US Grant High school, the high school that I too attended. He told me that things had really changed there.

As we spoke, I could see the scar right down the middle of his chest and the tubes that connected to him. He wanted to leave the hospital and hoped to go home on Monday. Even though Richard Benjamin grew up in my neighborhood and his wife teaches at the school in which I graduated and even though he had had open-heart surgery and had tubes connected to machines and all part of his body, what was foremost in his mind was not just to go home to rest and recuperate. Richard Benjamin wanted to return to school; his students needed him. His students were preparing for the AP exams which were the first week of May. Now, let me go back over this situation again so that I too can make sense of it.

Richard Benjamin had renal failure and fluid in the lungs which were scaring him and his wife so that they headed to the emergency room of the hospital, and while he was there he had a heart attack. The doctors said he had multiple concerns, one of which was a 90% blockage to his heart which would necessitate and all kinds of by pass surgeries, but Richard Benjamin had one thing in mind to get back to school to work with his students. He kept

telling me how bright his students were this year. He felt that we might have some of the brightest students that ever had had.

I gave him a card and a gift certificate for gas. It touched him, and he said that the faculty was the kindest that he had ever been associated with. Richard Benjamin is not an exception, not an extraordinarily unique individual; he is just one of those teachers like many others who has dedicated his life to young people and wants to give those kids every opportunity to do well and succeed.

A similar story was shared to me from one of the teachers that I interviewed. She relates a story about a very special student and athlete that inspired her. Lacy Gaines entered the 9th grade when she was 13 years old. She was an avid volleyball player—loved the game. Volleyball consumed her. She ate, drank, and slept volleyball. However, "she had a horrible time trying to play" because she suffered from intense migraines. Often she would have to leave school in the middle of the day only to return for volleyball practice. As a senior she was the captain of our school's volleyball team and was an avid competitor. The migraines still persisted. Doctors had no clue what might be causing these excruciating headaches, but Lacy met all responsibilities and obligations both in school and on the volleyball team. Lacy graduated from our high school, but died rather suddenly from a massive brain tumor. Her love of volleyball in light of her physical adversity still inspires her volleyball coach today.

There are many similar stories where a teacher's and student's love for learning overshadows all physical challenges. My students tell similar stories about their own love for learning and identify those teachers who care the most are those who have a similar love for students' learning. There is great joy in learning; there is also great joy in sharing that learning with others. The sharing of that joy is a form of care. This caring about learning and the growth of the individual is not limited to teachers, but extends to other caring professionals.

Narrative #8 – May Louise Kamp (a pseudonym), Librarian's Assistant

A Retirement Speech Given in Honor of May Louise Kamp

When I first started teaching, all of my fellow teachers use to tell me that I was easily replaced; whenever I would retire, the administration would be able to hire someone before I even left the school. This has always discouraged me. No matter how much English I learn or how I improve as a teacher that someone just as knowledgeable or just as good a teacher will come along and take my place. I have thought about this often and in thinking about saying a few words about May Louise Kamp today, I want everyone to know that this just isn't true. May Louise Kamp can never be replaced.

There are many teachers in our school. Many of these teachers are not in the classroom. May Louise is one of those teachers. She is an educator. She teaches students and teachers. I have to confess I have kept a little secret for some time. Whenever I am having a bad day, (and we teachers

have those quite often), whenever I have said something to a student that I shouldn't have, whenever I lose my temper and have run out of patience, I go to the library and watch May Louise. Sometimes I will pretend that I am stapling papers or looking for books on a shelf and just watch her. She will have a million things going on at once and her desk will be cluttered with all kinds of things and everyone needs her. (It has become a joke in the library that she loses her keys and glasses numerous times each day in all of the clutter on her desk.) Teachers will need a laptop right now. Someone else will need to check out a book right then or will be late for class.. But when a student asks her a question, that question becomes the most important question in the world and that student is the most important person in the world. Kids love her and kids know a kind heart when they see one. You show me someone who knows how to treat children, and I will show you a very special person. I have students in my class, one in particular. I will call him Thomas who always wants to go to the library. I will make an assignment and expect my students just to sit there in their desks and work, but Thomas always wants to do his assignment in the library. I couldn't for a long time understand why. It is because he wants to go and talk and be near May Louise. You see kids gravitate to good people, and Thomas feels better about himself when he is near her.

All of the teachers and administration in our school have been reading the Fish book. The essence of this book is that we need to find joy and humor in our work. This is so true. And if you want to see someone who has found

that joy, you need only to look to May Louise Kamp. I don't know if any of you know this, but May Louise used to be in charge of every machine in this school. She also had to request all of the paper for our school. Both of these tasks are impossible for ten people. I can't imagine just one person having to do it, but May Louise did. Well, in order to make this job enjoyable she named the machines. One machine was Batman; another was Captain Marvel and when a machine broke down, it was May Louise Kamp to rescue Batman or Captain Marvel. I still chuckle when I think about this.

Martin Luther King once said, "It doesn't matter what you do as your chosen profession. Even if you mop a floor for a living, just do it so well that the angels in heaven can look down and see their faces in that floor." I am quite sure that those same angels have often looked down at May Louise Kamp in the Putnam City North High School Library and have seen how she has treated our children and how she has managed the impossible tasks that she has been given and have smiled at the wonderful job she has done. I know that she plans to take care and spend much time with her grandbaby in the many years to come. Her grandbaby is a very lucky child. Thanks May Louise for taking such good care of so many teachers and students for the past 40 years of your career as an educator.

The more that I re-read these narratives the more that I realized some common threads within them. I realized that caring has to do with reducing the many responsibilities and distractions to a one-on-one relationship between two people. The carer must show a genuine interest in the cared-

for. This interest cannot be a means but an end in itself. Of all people, our young people cannot be fooled; they only too quickly can see through our motivations. If we are motivated because we have a general interest in our students in the cared-for, they respond with sincerely gratitude. This gratitude is shown through a warm smile, a word or card of thanks, or it may be that our students just want to be near us. People gravitate towards caring people and caring relationships. This caring is contagious and can change our workplace, our schools, and our lives. Even administrators can create caring relationships with those around them.

Narrative #9 - Chuck Knox (a pseudonym), Principal

A Eulogy and a Tribute to Chuck Knox

We teachers and staff were saddened by the loss of a personal friend to our high school first principal Chuck Knox. For those who knew him, he was just Chuck or Charlie or Mr. Knox or Coach and for those who didn't know him, he left all of us with a legacy that will be carried on at our school and community for many years to come.

Chuck Knox was my tenth grade basketball coach at US Grant High School in south Oklahoma City, a young teacher back from trying his hand at professional baseball; he met with the same challenges and frustrations that most of our young teachers face at our school each and every day. As a matter of fact, one of his first coaching duties, the 9th grade football team, is a case in point. Coach Knox and the young Grant Generals had had a rough

season. As the season was winding down, Chuck and his assistant coach and the school's Activities Director Jim Ricks were receiving unsigned hate letters in the mail and one in particular caught the young coach's eye. "You are wasting my son. He was a star in Little League and has not been given him a chance to show what he can do all season long," the letter read. So at the end of the game and yet another disappointing loss, Coach Knox turned to Coach Ricks and asked where was the kid in the letter, that unsigned letter? They located the boy and put him in. What did they have to lose? And to their surprise, the Little League star immediately turned the game around, played great, and caught the attention of the coaches, the players and the excited fans. Chuck Knox turned to Jim Ricks and in his usual self-effacing wit remarked, "Do we have any other unsigned letters?"

Basketball season was not much better. Winning was not to be for our sophomore boys' basketball team. Most of us had not even been successful in Little League. During one of our basketball practices, Coach Knox couldn't hold inside his frustration any longer. None of us could blame him. He got so mad that he wandered throughout the gymnasium looking for something to kick. He was a young teacher and his judgment like our team still needed a lot of work; unfortunately, he chose the bleachers, readily accessible, but particularly immobile. Coach Knox's wanderings were over. In fact, he stood rather statuesque the remainder of practice and showed up to school the next day sporting a new white plaster cast on his left foot.

Oh, he loved sports and once he sat with other distinguished guests on stage during a high school assembly. The speaker, the school's librarian, gave a very moving inspirational speech about what had inspired her to become an educator. Quite out of the blue she turned to Chuck Knox seated behind her and said, "Chuck, what inspired you to enter education?" Chuck thought but without hesitation replied, "I couldn't hit the curve ball." To communicate with our high school's first principal, you had to know how to talk sports and especially baseball.

One teacher Brenda Nowell tells the story about Chuck Knox and her talking baseball. It was the winter of 1985 or 86. Our high school had a debate tournament at a local private school, and the weather was not cooperating. Brenda went in to Chuck's office to ask him if the debate team could leave about 30 minutes earlier than originally planned. There was chaos in the office—everyone wanted to know if school was going to be cancelled. Brenda thought she had explained herself quite well, but Chuck Knox finally focused on her and said, "You are trying to tell this to me in Debate Language, and you know I only speak Sports' language." At that point both Brenda and Chuck laughed, and she said, "Okay, here it is in baseball: It's the top of the 9th and we're sliding around third…" He just waved her off saying, "Get on out of here!" One of Chuck's best traits was he loved to make a joke on himself. Another sports' story about Chuck Knox took place in the high school gym during a basketball game. Two irate fans were coming to blows during the game when Principal Chuck Knox leaped into the

stands to break up the fight but not before he scolded both adults threatening to escort them both out of the gym.

About this time, a small, pesky man stood up from the bleachers below and yelled, "I am a Board Member for the Deer Creek schools and I don't like the way you are talking to those men." Chuck quickly replied, "I don't care whom you are a board member for. You better sit down before I escort you out of the gym, too."

Chuck Knox liked a good fight. He was willing to deal with tough problems, to face daily challenges, and to take an unpopular stand when it meant what was best for his students. His steadfast effort to face the problems of teenage drug abuse in our community and his support of visionary teachers led to the legendary "Chance to Change" program in our school which was later firmly established throughout our community not only meeting the needs of countless students, but literally saving the lives of many troubled young men and women.

And, yet, when Chuck Knox was interviewed by a news reporter for <u>The Daily Oklahoman</u> and asked "Mr. Knox, what is the highlight of your day?" He replied, "I look forward to lunch every day when I get to be with the kids." He ate lunch with them, talked to them, got to know them. He had to be with the kids. He wanted to know all of his students and his teachers on a personal basis. Most of his teachers reached a point that they half expected him to be at every game or play or fashion show or speech tournament or concert

regardless of time or location. Of course, he always wanted to be there to support his students and his teachers.

You see his teachers (and especially the first staff) at our high school were all handpicked. Men and women like Rudy Hiatt, Helen Low, James Gaunt, and Sally Standridge. Chuck Knox was charged with the task in October of 1977 to prepare for the opening of our then new high school which was to open in August-September of 1978 and to hire the new school's staff. Not even a fire bomb which destroyed most of his records could stop him. Regardless of other principal's recommendations, grades on the transcript, and letters of recommendations, he hired based on two requirements (two requirements which are as important today as they were back then): #1 the applicant had to love kids; and #2 the prospective teacher had to be enthusiastic about teaching. This is what being a teacher at our high school was all about. This is what it continues to be all about.

He treated teachers like professionals and he always listened. When TC Hardesty, the activities director at the time, had an idea about a Leadership Development Retreat (LDI) retreat, Chuck Knox listened. When teachers, counselors, or assistant principals had ideas to improve the school, or improve the education of our students, Chuck Knox listened. As teacher Karen Krieder remembers, Chuck Knox was like her own father at school, "her school daddy." He was a man of integrity. He always made everyone feel that he or she was the most important person in the world. When Karen spent the afternoon with him during the Class of 1985 reunion, he talked and

spent most of his time visiting with former students. He still remembered them and had stories to share about them.

Whether he was a teacher at a south side high school or a teacher at a local community college or an administrator at a newly opened north side high school, he loved those kids. And when he accepted an administrative position and became an assistant superintendent for our school district, he continued to make improvements but he missed the children.

That is why, in retirement, he loved greeting elementary students each morning at their car door at a Bethany elementary school. For the past years, he served those children by visiting classrooms and like always supporting teachers' needs. One Bethany elementary teacher Sarah Leah Baker, my daughter-in-law, tells the story of how her students were in anxious anticipation each week as they awaited Mr. Knox to don his Dr. Seuss's hat and to read to her class. When Chuck was told that the class had met its goal of reading 1000 books and had set a new goal of 3000 books, Chuck was ecstatic. He promised if they met this goal that he would show them how he could separate his thumb. They thought he was amazing and magical. The life of Chuck Knox was amazing and magical!

And like so many teachers here this morning the legacy of our teaching is carried on in the hearts and minds of our students. Where there is confrontation met with calm and firm resolve, where there is joy and love for student learning, where there are leaders who believe in others and what they have to offer, where there are principals who allow teachers and students to

take risks and explore possibilities, where there is the belief that the best is yet to be, and where a sharp breaking curve ball catches another batter looking, the legacy of Principal, educator, and leader Chuck Knox, my coach and friend, continues to live on.

This eulogy when analyzed more closely tells a great deal about the many aspects and depth of care. Caring in education has to do with the loving of the students (in strictly caring terms: the caring relationship between carer and cared-for), and the passion to share (what Chuck Knox knew as the enthusiasm for teaching). His care for students and faculty was not a distant and remote and abstract principle. Caring took place in a very concrete and one-on-one relationship. He looked forward to this relationship each day during lunch with the students as principal. When he moved on to become the Director of Operations, a district administrative position, he missed that caring relationship with students. He retired and in due course, found a way to regain that loss relationship by spending each day at local elementary schools and getting to know both students and teachers. He spent most of his mornings greeting students and parents when dropped off to school. His capacity to care was voluminous.

This same care could be seen in his attending frequent sports competitions, band and orchestra concerts, fund raisers, schools plays, and special activities and functions. He wanted to show his support and care through his attendance throughout of school. I realized that the care that I saw in the professional life of this man had been extended from his own

private life. He was a loving and caring father and husband and community leader who had dedicated his life to the service of others.

One might be misled if one were to think that Chuck Knox's attitude was only one of acquiescence and good-natured, loyal support. Although a positive role-model, he was a fighter and out-spoken advocate for students' rights and defender of the weak, silent and marginalized. He was a man of conviction and was very willing to attack strong power structures when they represented only the privileged few and not all students. His strong convictions and leadership inspired. Thus, he had much to offer me in understanding the breath and depth of caring in one's public and private life.

The caring relationship cannot only enhance the lives of others, but it can literally change both the carer and the cared-for as was the case with Coach K. E. Sanders.

Narrative #10 - K.E. Sanders (a pseudonym), Coach

Some time ago I had an opportunity to do something that I had always wanted to do—coach softball. To tell the truth, I probably had always wanted to coach baseball but softball was the next best thing and the softball coaching position at our school came open. Most of the time the baseball coach does double duty by coaching baseball in the spring and softball in the spring, but most baseball coaches don't want to have to work with girls. You see girls are a different athlete to coach. You can shout at guys; you can get mad and yell and scream and throw a tantrum and guys take it in stride and respond positively. They usually go out and play harder and try to make up

for the coaches' insanity but girls don't like to be treated that way. The worst thing that a girl can do is cry. Throw a chair or stomp your foot or get disgusted and pout and a girl will well up and cry right in the middle of practice or even worse in a game, or they will fret and fume and carry it into the game or the next day or not talk to you for some time. Coaches especially male coaches do not like to coach girls. They just respond differently, and the coach has to treat girls differently, but to be perfectly honest probably the purest form of sports goes on in women's athletics.

John Wooden, the famous UCLA men's coach, said that pure basketball is played more in women's college basketball today than in any level of men's basketball, and he is right. Well, our softball team was not very good. Actually, they had pretty skilled players, but the baseball coaches kept quitting on them. Now, another thing about girls they don't like to be quit on. Show a girl that you care, treat her with respect, keep your priorities, work them hard and treat them fairly and they will go to war for you. Well, this had not been happening in girls' softball; as a matter of fact in the two previous seasons before I took over the program, the girls had probably won a total of 6 or 7 games out of 40 or 50. Yes, girls' softball is big in our area, and the girls play many games in a short amount of time. The season lasts about 6 weeks so the team is playing every night beginning with a sophomore game, followed by a junior varsity game, and ending with the varsity game. Sometimes, one of the younger girls' games is omitted, and the varsity might play a double hitter and that doesn't count weekends when the girls play in a

tournament where they might play 6 to 10 games in two days. The season is short but very intense and fall weather in Oklahoma is unpredictable and brutal—windy, cold, hot, rainy. It changes daily. A softball player has to be prepared for anything.

This story really isn't about one of the softball players but about the coach and it is a short narrative. It just struck me that these girls really changed this one man's life. The man was K.E. Sanders, Coach Sanders, and he had been coaching at our school for a long time--since our school's inception in 1978. He coached everything but especially football and baseball—football in Oklahoma is "everything in sports" from the college level on down. However, K.E. was unhappy with football. It just demanded too much from him and took him away from his family every weekend from the last of August to the first of December. Football coaches have to love the sport because high school football just like college football has become a 24/7, 365 day activity. Football has a preseason, season, off-season, summer pride (weight lifting), summer camps and preseason…and the cycle continues. When the coach is in-season, he works late and even on Sundays. Well, K.E. loved coaching; but he needed a change, and the only thing available was assistant girls' softball. Well, K.E. was a tobacco chewing, stereotypical, old time coach who rarely smiled, had a deadpan voice, and a look that could stare a kid down into submission. When I took the job and was made aware that my assistant might be K.E., my first response was that oil and water don't mix and a better analogy should have been gasoline and fire; and I wasn't quite sure if K.E. or

the girls would explode first. However, I was willing to give it a try if he was, and I knew for sure that his coaching experience would be helpful if I could help him learn how to work with girls.

Actually, things went uneventfully until about two weeks into the season, and then it happened the conditions were ready for the chemical reaction: Coach K.E. loved to hit infield, and we had a pretty good team. Our infield was pretty strong, but on this particular day the girls were tired and not working very hard. To Coach K.E. being tired was no excuse, but no matter how hard he worked them, they weren't going to get much better so in my opinion it was about time to call it a day when it happened. Coach K.E. hit a hard ground ball to our short stop who made a good effort but all for naught because the ball went innocently right between her legs and another encountered the same effort with the same results…another, then another…after about ten muffed, kicked, bobbled, and dropped ground balls the eleventh was met with the same results. The young lady took off her glove threw it down along with her hat and her batting glove, and just sat there right in the middle of the diamond despondent and frustrated. I was afraid of what might be coming next especially from Coach K.E.

If a young man had missed the same number of opportunities, the offending player would have hustled off the field in a panic and started running around the fenced area until his legs fell off amidst the yells and screaming from Coach K.E. but the reaction of the girl and her frustrated tirade was just too unlike anything that a veteran coach especially of boys had

ever seen in his life and Coach K.E. rather than bursting into an angry tirade, he burst into uncontrollable laughter.

You see, I don't think anyone had ever seen Coach K.E. laugh. No one knew that he could laugh or that it was possible or that he was capable. As we all know, laughter is contagious, and everyone started laughing. Finally, with the tension relieved things changed—not just the tension but attitudes. Our short stop picked up her glove and prepared for another grounder. Coach K.E. changed from that moment on, forever. How you ask? Why? I don't know, but the tension of the season and his stoic demeanor were gone. He stopped and gently walked out into the infield. He called the young girl "Honey" in a fatherly way, showed her how to hold her glove and put her free hand next to it. He told her to bend her legs, get her head and forehead up, and hit another 50 ground balls without a miss. I will never forget that day. The world changed when two hearts that needed each other met—the frustrated and self-conscious young teenager and the crusty and withdrawn old coach.

I have looked at this narrative many times. In it, likes the mystery of caring. You see, those girls knew that beneath that façade of a grouchy, sullen old drill sergeant was a kind heart who cared for them. I knew it too. K.E. Sanders is still demanding on those girls. He has continued to coach female athletes long after I had retired. I am quite sure they still feel the same way about him. I have talked to him about the season, and his expectations are still high; his standards are still difficult for his athletes to reach; his love of

the game is still strong; but it has become acceptable for him to show his compassion, concern, and care to his players. It is difficult for men to show this especially in the world in which we live and especially towards female athletes and students. Students tell me that they know a teacher cares not by showing an interest into their personal lives. They find this inappropriate. They feel that the teacher crosses a line that is very fragile in today's world. The teacher shows care through their interest in their learning and growth. Those teachers who only show care towards a student's personal life wants to become a friend. Most students have those friends; even when a teacher wishes to become an adult friend that the student can rely on and turn to when needed this is still just a friend. But when a teacher shows interest in a student's learning, that student grows as both a person and as a learner. In education this is the ultimate form of caring.

Narrative #11 - Dixie, Our Head Night Custodian

Our head custodian is a special human being. In the evening after school hours, she gets on the intercom and takes charge of our school; she demands the attention of her late night workers. I wish that I could exert such discipline in my own classroom. Her voice is powerful; her demeanor is stern. She is gruff and must have been a sailor in her previous life. She chastises her clean up crews with vim and vigor. She scolds them to work harder: that they are getting lazy and that there is little room for laziness on the night shift. Her constant chiding and repeated reprimands cause the casual listeners or

late working teachers to shudder in their shoes; but the night crew loves Dixie.

Dixie loves those hard working minimum working laborers mostly people of color or poor white middle-aged women, but she has a unique way of showing it. Rumor has it that Dixie sits in the security room in the main office monitoring the school's security cameras to make sure that the custodians are hard at work cleaning chalkboards, vacuuming the carpets, picking up trash, sweeping and waxing the floors—and not taking a much needed break until break time. When she sees someone loafing, she gets on the school inter-com system and berates the late night crews. I would venture to say that most cannot understand her English, but most react by her tone of voice. When it comes to doing a good job, Dixie is demanding. When it comes to socializing and getting to know her employees at break time, Dixie is the first to greet her workers at the door of the break room. They communicate in other ways by sharing sandwiches, by laughing, by body language, by smiles and gestures, and by pats on the back. She lives passionately: she works hard and demands that others do the same, but she plays hard, too. Dixie is a marvel. Although she has a loud bark and can scare the wax off the floors, she is well-loved by everyone but the faint of heart because, I think, she maintains high standards. She cajoles her custodial crews and herself to meet those standards each and every night.

Not long ago, one of our day workers Bonnie Jump brought Dixie's financial situation to the attention of our faculty. Dixie was having automobile

trouble. This isn't exactly true; Dixie has to drive a considerable distance to work each day and with the price of gasoline this has put a heavy burden on her meager finances. For those who think that teachers are underpaid and under-appreciated, just take a look at the salary of the maintenance workers and building crews. It is hard to believe that they can manage their own households when they spend such time and energy on taking care of others on minimum wage.

Dixie was not only having difficulty paying for her gas to drive to work each evening, but her tires were completely on the old Ford pick-up truck she drove to work. She couldn't afford her regular oil change and this had become a joke with her maintenance crews. The stickler for school and equipment maintenance could not even take care of her own beat-up truck. Whenever the faculty at our school learned of Dixie's predicament, it took less than one day for an outpouring of donations and concerns. Within a week or two, we had raised enough money to buy a gasoline card, to pay for a complete tune-up, and to put four new tires on her means of transportation. The presentation to Dixie was a special moment in my memory of our school. A few of the teachers met after school to present her with a little present. I dressed up like Santa Claus. Why? Dixie would not have taken charity; she was too proud, but who can refuse Saint Nick.

One would never have expected Dixie's reaction. The tough, scowling face burst into uncontrollable tears of joy and tenderness, only to be outdone by Bonnie's crocodile tears as well (remember Bonnie whose own financial

situation and care-giver responsibilities at home were equally moving). Beneath the bull dog demeanor was the loving heart of a puppy dog.

About those workers, one elderly Hispanic lady who cleans my room each night speaks very little English. We often exchange smiles or nods as I leave the school each day. Sometimes if I am brave, I will try to say "hello" or something else very clever in my limited Spanish with a strong Oklahoma accent. Not too long ago, this dedicated woman came to work without wearing any shoes. I never could understood the reason fully, but I still joined with other teachers to donate some second hand clothes to give to her. There is a special bond between these night time custodial workers with Dixie at the center. The dedicated lady who maintains my room is a caring professional trying to make a living by meeting the needs of a teacher and his students, but if anyone asked a single student in our class or even most of the teachers, no one would know any of these caring support personnel's names, except for the drill sergeant that we all just call with awe, deep respect, and concealed affection—Dixie.

Narrative #12 - on Summer School students, An Entire Class

In my experiences summer school is not the place that you want to send your son or daughter even if he or she is having trouble in school during the regular school year. Don't get me wrong. These are not really bad kids who attend but merely —misguided kids-- often they just have trouble adjusting to the standardized way in which we educate our children. This isn't exactly the

way to describe it but you get the right idea. Anyway, this was a typical day in a summer session. The kids were quiet and were participating reasonably well. They turned in enough assignments to pass and didn't cause any disturbances. I never assigned homework. They wouldn't do it anyway. So for 4 or 4 1/2 hours each day, we tolerated each other. Then one day I can remember it quite well. I got mad about something right before the end of the school day. I was really upset and responded with hostility and anger. To be frank, I lost control. I began to rant and rave, and the whole room began to change. There was a curtain that went up that separated those students from me—a curtain as thick and as real as the textbooks on their desks.

They must have been treated this way many times before in their own worlds where those around them had gotten angry, had lost control, and had struck out at them. They were in familiar surroundings; I was not. I was hot, and the room was chilly cold. I crossed the line when I assigned homework, and we both knew it. I cannot even remember what the assignment was now. I didn't expect them to do it although I told them they had better. This was really just a threat to make me feel better not for them at all. This is the case many times in education. Kids run laps because the coach is frustrated; teachers give lengthy homework assignments because the teacher is disillusioned, and it has nothing to do with the children. What this does is create mixed message for the child who sees answering 200 math problems for homework as punishment. When the teacher gives students a reading assignment or they are asked to write an lengthy essay, the students are

reminded of similar assignments in the past where students were being punished so instead of reading to learn and to develop reading skills and writing to learn and developing writing skills, students see the assignment as punishment and are reluctant to respond. This may happen so often over the course of the child's education that the student sees reading and writing as nothing more than punishment.

Anyway this was on a Friday so I had the entire weekend to think about what I had done. I thought how these kids had been mistreated at home and had a difficult life, and now I was adding to their difficulties. Rather than making my classroom a special community of support and communication where students could better understand the harsh realities of the world and take steps to positively deal with those "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune," I had just sent the message that my classroom was no different from the world that they faced outside of school—a world of hostility, anger, and gross injustices. This was not my idea of the world of school that I wished to create.

As a matter of fact, I was ashamed of myself. It reminded me of the time that I gave my one and only swat (back in the days of my early teaching career, we called this a "lick"). When I first began teaching at Hefner Middle School, the policy was that teachers could give swats. The social studies teacher next door to me was a large good natured man who drove a chartered bus during the summer and gave swats for most of the female teachers especially the elderly ones. He had his own specially crafted paddle

that had holes in it to make it less air resistant. I could hear those swats take place from my classroom; and although I taught honors students, I probably had reason to give a swat or two, but I never did. For one reason, I did not know how and for another reason I didn't think it did any good.

Well, one day the social studies teacher was absent, and one of the veteran female teachers asked me to give that swat for her. I didn't want to look like a coward and wanted to fit in on my first year of teaching at this new school so I said that I would. I can still see the young boy-- boney, thin, wiry, and willful-- as he grabbed his ankles. I don't even know now where I got that paddle. I didn't know how hard to hit him so I probably didn't hit hard enough because I didn't want to really hurt the child, but I do remember looking him right in the eyes when I was done and he said "You don't even know me," and he was right. I didn't know him. I remember seeing that look on his face and thinking to myself that this was the usual treatment for many of those kids, hit them when they misbehaved or better yet strike out against them when they are handy and available and innocent. These children become callous to our violence; they grow accustomed to our maltreatment; they grow hateful and hurtful themselves. I promised myself that I would never act that way again, and I hadn't until now when I was faced with treating an entire class with anger.

I decided that I would ask the class for their forgiveness, tell them that I was sorry that I had lost my temper, that I was ashamed of my actions and I hoped that they would forgive me. This is exactly what I did, and I am quite

sure right now that I must have choked up and maybe even sobbed as I spoke those words. I cry a lot in front of my classes. I tell my students that I have a lot of love inside and that every so often it wants to get out in the form of tears. Actually, I feel very strongly and passionately about some things, and this usually results in crying. One little African American boy once told me that where he came from that men didn't cry. I am glad that I don't live in his world because I cry a lot. Ever since, I started my study of care, I have been crying ever since. I have conjured up special memories that I am very sensitive about and these memories usually bring tears to my eyes. Sorry, well, to continue, I could tell that never, and I mean never, had these students ever been treated that way-- that a teacher had actually admitted that he had made a mistake and that he was asking them for forgiveness. I would venture to say that I am understating the situation. I would venture to say that an adult had ever asked them for forgiveness.

Parker Palmer deals with this sense of vulnerability, and this is exactly what it was: I was admitting my own vulnerability. They had already admitted theirs. <u>They were in summer school.</u> Well, that class and I were never the same again. One day I walked into my classroom during that same summer school session and every child in that class was wearing a t-shirt with my picture on it. I had dressed up one day in my Elizabethan costume and had presented an historical re-enactment. I think that this must have moved them that I would go to all of that trouble during a summer school session. One of those students had taken a picture of me. At the time I thought that they

wanted a picture to blackmail me at some point in the future since I was wearing tights; but, in reality, I think that they were impressed with my dedication to teaching and to them. Anyway, they had taken that picture and had silk-screened it and made t-shirts and everyone in the class was wearing a t-shirt that day; and, of course, an extra had been placed on my desk. I cannot tell you how astounding this was. For a child who was never interested in much of anything that we teachers present in the classroom to take part in that class project was remarkable.

I shouldn't take all of the credit. Much of that credit should be given to Shakespeare and Hamlet. Shakespeare and Hamlet really spoke to those students. I have always been blessed that I have had the freedom in my Advanced Placement classes to select works to teach which speak to my students and to develop a curriculum which speaks to the notion of caring. From Oedipus' search for self-identity, to Beowulf's service to others, to the Canterbury pilgrims who exhibit human frailties, to Hamlet's idealism in a world of corruption, to the passionate poetry of the Elizabethan sonneteers, to the intellectual poetry of the metaphysical poets, and to the socially constructed world of the Victorians to name only a few, I have the wonderful support of great writers and philosophers to draw from. And when I still fail as a classroom teacher, I have had the wisdom of others to set me straight—I have had my students, in this case, those misguided and often maltreated summer school students.

I believe that this narrative tells me much about caring. To care for someone, I am willing to show my own vulnerability. If I am vulnerable, I am at risk. I can be hurt and hurt deeply. Many are not willing to take this chance. Many teachers too become so hardened that they never let their students into their lives or never let their students see them as fellow human beings.

One veteran teacher told me that she expressed her caring to her students by "setting the bar high, by treating each student fairly, and by sticking to her word." However, she went on to say that in all her years of teaching (over 35 years), she found that "teasing students and sharing her sense of humor with them and showing students her human side had made all the difference in the world." She said that when she first began teaching she thought that showing her vulnerability was unprofessional. She since has discovered in all her years of teaching that students respond positively when they realize that "teachers make mistakes," that "teachers are human too," and "that teachers care about the same things that they [the students] care about. I think that what this very dedicated and exceptional teacher was sharing with me was that (just like K.E. Sanders), she had learned that caring has to do with vulnerability. Cultural anthropologists suggest that to care is not universal, but to be cared for is universal. I disagree with this. I believe that we all care and possess a need to be cared for. To show one's vulnerability connects us with others who are also willing to show their vulnerability, also. Human beings (and especially our students) are aware of the risk involved when they

are willing to put their guard down and to be confronted by another. In terms of education, the teacher must be willing to show the student why the subject matter is relevant to their lives and must be willing to allow students to lead class discussion in unexpected directions that interest them and in directions that the teacher had not expected or for which he had been prepared. Each of my classes in one day may discuss separate and varying issues raised by a literary work and directly touching their lives. On those days, I feel like my students have taken me on a wonderful journey and I have purchased a ticket for an unknown destination.

Narrative #13 – Susan Case (a pseudonym), a Girls' Basketball player

I began my coaching career as the Varsity Girls' Basketball coach at a small parochial school in south Oklahoma City. I had never coached girls before in my life; honestly, I had never coached anything but little league boys before this high school assignment. I had seen my two sisters play 6-on-6 girls basketball, but watching the game was as close as I got. When I applied for a teaching position, the Athletic Director (AD) asked if I could coach. The school needed an English teacher but they needed coaches more importantly. If I could coach, I would have a job. I wanted to teach and so I told the AD then and there that not only could I coach, but I was a great coach. He offered me either the sophomore boys' basketball position or the varsity girls. However, there was one stipulation: they had never had a girls' team. This would be the first season. The girls were dying to compete so I

would be starting from scratch: this would be the inaugural season. There was no gym for them to practice. I would have to travel to the Downtown Salvation Army to practice. There was an allocation for new uniforms, basketballs, travel expenses but that was about all. Which job did I want? I took the girls' job which was one of the best decisions that I have made in my teaching career.

At the time Title IX was just gaining momentum. Athletic departments were told to provide equal opportunities to girls as well as boys. Such was the case at this parochial school. If there was a desire on the part of the girls in the school to compete in volleyball, basketball, track, softball, the school would find some way to provide those girls the opportunity to compete.

We had good athletes that first year. We just didn't have skilled basketball players. At the time, most of the girls played against their brothers or boy friends in neighborhood gymnasiums or out in the front driveway. Rarely, did they attend summer basketball camps or team camps or compete in AAU summer leagues and programs. Of course, I was just learning the game myself; I certainly didn't know how to coach a competitive team and had no experience in working with girls. Girls, I know this sounds obvious, are quite different from boys. They play for different reasons. They carry their problems and emotions onto the courts with them. Girls are also about relationships. Yet they are competitors and have an intense desire to compete and win just like the boys. Back when I began coaching in the mid-1970s, the coach's word was gospel. At the time, most of the fathers were

encouraging their daughters; but the girls looked to their coach, not their fathers, for advice and strategy and pointers. The girls would listen and try to do whatever I asked of them and that first year I asked a great deal. About 2 o'clock each day, we would run 1or 2 miles before practice and would end every practice with grueling wind sprints. I may not have known how to coach, but I knew that everyone would be impressed in how hard we were working from the exhaustion of their daughters when they came home each night.

Most of my knowledge of basketball strategy came from watching the boys practice and their coach, but this is another story. The one thing that I tried to instill in the girls that first year was that to be accepted as athletes they would have to look like athletes and get tough! Our team motto was one that was popular at the time "No pain! No gain!" Their toughness was a major concern. This was something that would not require much from someone who knew little about the intricacies of basketball, coaching, or coaching girls. Getting tough and inflicting pain was something that I could do. Of course, I tended to their blisters and soreness, but for the most part I told the girls that they would never be accepted as athletes and that no one would come and see them play if they didn't show everyone that they were athletes which meant that they could handle a few cuts and bruises and could inflict a few bruises on our competition. They, of course, had longed for a team and wanted with all of their being to compete, to participate, to prove to themselves and their parents and friends that they were equal in athleticism

and competitive spirit to their male counterparts. If showing that they could get physical was the way to do this, then they would. Ultimately, my first girls' basketball team bought into my philosophy "hook, line, and sinker." With this understanding, the narrative about Susan Case will make even better sense.

My relationship with Susan Case was not exceptional. As a matter of fact, I really cannot remember how I got along with most of the girls. I still remember some of their names, Stephanie Hightower, Lisa Petersik, and Susan Case. These were girls whose competitive high school basketball careers would last one season: they began as seniors. That same year I also coached volleyball of which Susan Case was also a good player—a very good player. She was a beautiful young girl about 5'2", a guard, smart, could move around, played hard all the time, and was quick, very quick. She loved the game and reminded me of myself at least the way that she loved to play. She was fun to watch—always hustling, always playing like it mattered, and always giving each practice and game her all.

Well, one game, I think that it was senior homecoming, I remember quite well. This is a special game for the seniors. All seniors are supposed to win their homecoming game. This first year of our girls' program was no exception. Well, Susan went down with a twisted ankle and stayed down for some time at the end of the second quarter. As I remember some of the fathers hoisted her and helped her into the locker room at half time. My assistant coach had gone down the bench to tend to her when it happened

and said that her ankle sprain was already pretty swollen, and there was no way that she would play for the rest of the game.

Actually, I think that she had hurt her ankle in a practice a day or two prior to the game and that it was still very weak, but it was homecoming and Susan was determined to play. Determined may be an understatement. At half time, we were in the locker room, and I was talking to the team. I can still remember our locker room was really the boys' locker room and they had been nice enough to let us use their locker room for the homecoming game. We didn't have a locker room. We had to suit up before our home games and talk at half time in an elementary classroom which was some distance from the basketball court. However, "we weren't for real yet" so no one really cared. Girls weren't considered athletes, and Susan planned on convincing the 2000 fans watching the game that night that they and the rest of the male chauvinist world were wrong—emphatically wrong!

Well, at the back of the room were showers; but, of course, the girls never used them. The girls weren't allowed to shower. They went home in their hot and smelly uniforms and warm-ups. Anyway there was a mob of players all huddled around the taping table, and I couldn't figure out what was the reason for the commotion. It wasn't until I broke through the crowd of girls who were reluctant to let me pass that I realized what was happening: a couple of girls were taping Susan's ankle as tight as they could get it. They had literally taken a metal bar and were using it like a tourniquet to tighten the tape. Her ankle was the size of her hip by that time, but Susan wanted to play on her

first and last Lady Rockets Girls' Basketball Homecoming game and a seriously sprained ankle wasn't going to stop her. She was reciting the mantra: "No Pain! No Gain!" to my dismay.

Susan Case played the rest of the game with a slight limp, but the seniors won their homecoming game. With 4 seconds left in the game and behind by 3 points, Case hit a 3-point shot and was fouled, made the free throw and our first year team won in overtime. Was it the coaching? Positively, not! Was It that our team was better than theirs? This is a positively, "no!" also. No, it had to do with the courage of a small 5'2" guard who was playing with emotion and intensity and belief in her coach and her team and in a nobler cause: she was playing for equality and that the pain of her basketball-size ankle was not as severe as the pain felt by those who are told that they can't, they shouldn't, and they won't!

Caring has to do with allowing the cared-for to grow on her own. Caring can become very dangerous when the carer imposes his views and thoughts and perceptions on the cared-for. We often hear "let me have my own space!" There is something to be learned from this. There is something to be learned from the courage of Susan Case. Susan is another example of the cared-for giving back much more than that of the carer. Caring takes courage. One must realize that in the caring relationship the carer often becomes the student and it is the cared-for who does the real teaching. Frank Smith emphasizes that our students are always learning—often they learn things that we wish they hadn't. The same hold true for the teacher. If

the teacher will just be receptive to the teachers in his own classroom, he will end the day having learned much more than he had expected.

Narrative #14 – Judy Green, (a pseudonym), A Team Player

Another player that I will never forget was Judy Geary. Judy was an average player, but she too loved to play. She had long scraggly hair; and although she went to St. Mary High School, her older sister played for and went to the other Catholic high school in Oklahoma City, Bishop McGuinness High School. I don't know why the sisters went to different schools, but Judy always asked if we could schedule McGuinness so that she could play against her sister –a sibling rivalry, I guess. McGuinness was a perennial power in girls' basketball and we were a fledgling program just starting to learn and play the game the way it was meant to be played. But this year we were looking for one game, and McGuinness would do us a favor and play us if we were willing to play that one game at McGuinness.

Judy was a second team forward, but a game or two prior to the McGuinness game the girl who started in her position was injured; and Judy had been playing and playing quite well. Unfortunately, by this game the starting forward, who played in front of Judy, was ready to return; and we really needed her if we were to compete with McGuinness. I sat down with Judy and told her that she would be replaced even though we were playing her sister. At the time, I was a young coach and probably did not communicate that well with my players. I wanted to keep a teacher-student,

coach-player distance, and this is always difficult. It is difficult for young male teachers coaching and working with girls, and it is especially difficult for young teachers until the ages separate the two. I was never very good in communicating to my players. I did not want to see them hurt and every player wants to play. I am sure that this had something to do with a male coach working with girls, but I always wished that they felt more comfortable with me. Ever since my early teaching career students have found me intimidating. Maybe it is my over-bearing personality; I would hope that it is my passion for coaching and teaching.

Judy never got in the game against her sister. She was disappointed after the game but not as sad as I was; I don't think. Players often think that parents and teachers and coaches are insensitive and hard hearted and cruel. They rarely realize that when our children are dejected over life's misfortunes that their teachers, especially if they really care about them, are going through tough times themselves. I guess this is empathy. I guess that there is a symbiotic relationship that connects the two. I don't know why Judy's story stands out so much in my mind. I guess it has to do with what I always stressed to my players: team, team, team. Jane had put herself second and the team first and I could tell after the game that she had understood. Her parents were supportive, and I believe that they had supported my decisions and had comforted Judy when she came home that night.

I do not believe parents today would have had the same reaction. Most would have told their daughters that "This coach doesn't know what he is doing!" and they would have probably called this emotional abuse. I had denied Judy the opportunity of playing her sister and had intentionally hurt her. This has less to do with me and a great deal to do with the change of perceptions and attitudes about coaches and teachers. There is a tremendous change in trust that has occurred. I do not know why those perceptions have changed so much—whether it is just indicative of our society's perceptions of teachers as presented by the media. I do think that Judy's acceptance of the situation, her support of my decision, and her acceptance of the team concept rather than the "me concept" took great courage; and, I believe, that courage will be there when she needs it again. Care is this way. We develop a capacity to care. That capacity can become a reservoir to draw from in future necessity.

I used Judy Geary as an example of a team player to future teams. She represented to me the consummate team player. And, now, that I think about it: Judy reflects a central issue of care: the ultimate goal in any team sport is to sacrifice oneself for the good of the team. Caring has to do with that sacrifice of oneself for the well-being and concern of another. It is through that concern for Others that we begin to understand ourselves. Milton Mayeroff says it best when he says that "In caring as helping the other grow, I experience what I care for (a person, an ideal, an idea) as an extension of

myself and at the same time as something separate from me that I respect in its own right" (*On Caring*, 1971, p.7).

This first section of the data was organized as those which expressed caring relationships. I had also creatively synthesized this same section as seen through the perspective of the carer. I believe that when the caring relationship exists that both carer and the cared-for form a sense of duality from which such energy that both parties are enhanced and even those around them. This positive relationship can change human beings, as it can change an entire classroom (summer school classroom), and can transform a society. While the next section is organized as one in which this caring relationship does not exhibit caring transactions of motivational energy, I will begin with two more positive caring relationships as seen through the eyes of the cared-for.

Narrative #15 - Jewell Grigsby, Dance Teacher Extraordinaire

Good teachers do not have to be employed by the state in public education nor do they have to be in parochial or private school classrooms. There are great teachers everywhere. Two of the best teachers that I have encountered were not what we would call professional educators but they were great teachers and very caring individuals.

I met Jewell Grigsby when I was a undergraduate, and I wanted to learn how to dance. I was tired of standing on the sidelines of the dance floor and watching my friends laughing and swaying to the music on the dance floor

while I tried to look busy by staring at the flowers in the wallpaper. One night after a particularly lonely experience, I promised myself that I would learn how to dance. This was not as easy at it seems. Many of the dance studios in the city are mere money makers and I was a poor college student. I couldn't just take a few lessons to learn how to dance. I would have to sign up for a program which consisted of 3 individual lessons, 3 group lessons, and 3 parties in the evening where I could meet other lonely hearts. In reality, many of the dance studios were places where lonely adults can meet others as lonely as they are in 9 easy, but not cheap, lessons. This was not the case with me. I wanted to learn how to dance because everyone else was having the fun that I should be having.

So I began to survey the yellow pages of the phone book and made a list with notes of the various places that gave dance instructions. Many of these were very commercialized and each had a program which in their words would fit perfectly my individual needs. In each case, money became the central issue and the focus of our telephone conversations. This was not the case with Jewell Grigsby and Jewell's School of Dance.

When I first met Jewell Grigsby, it must have been in the late 1970s when the movie <u>Saturday Night Fever</u> was the craze. I don't remember what the dances during this time were called, but I do remember that there was a lot of line dancing and swing dancing so these dances were what I wanted to learn. I can remember my first meetings like it were yesterday. My dance lesson was scheduled to begin at 5:00 p.m. but I was not sure of the exact location of

her studio so I arrived early. The studio was modest with pictures of former students everywhere. There were mirrors on three walls with stretching bars on two of these. The fourth wall was covered with pictures and card table chairs lined the wall. I sat down and watched Jewell with the students prior to my lesson. Jewell Grigsby was certainly not what I had expected. As a matter of fact, I was quite certain that I was in the wrong place and had immediate thoughts of leaving.

Jewell Grigsby must have been in her early 70s and her students were young African American female high school students. They were tap dancing, and I was quite sure that there was nothing that this old woman could teach me and I was quite sure that the dancing that she could teach me was nothing that I would ever use. Daniel Boorstin calls this the "illusion of knowledge." The chief obstacle in learning new things is the illusion that there is nothing that can be learned so we close our ears and our minds to new ideas. This was different. I would never tap dance, would I? Of course, not! Would I ever waltz? Oh, boy, I needed to get out of here. However, there was no easy way to politely slip out of the studio without drawing attention to myself and my mother had not raised me that way, but I had definitely come to the wrong place and needed to run as fast as I could. But since I was use to staring at the wall to occupy my time as others danced, I felt right at home so I waited patiently and watched nonchalantly and glanced occasionally at the wall of pictures and the dancers..

The pictures were young girls in tights holding huge trophies draped in gold and silver medals and red, white, and blue ribbons. One particular picture caught my immediate attention: this was a picture of a familiar face holding a young baby. Later I was to find out that this was Irene Ryan (Granny of the Beverly Hillbillies) when she was a young girl. She had carried Jewell Grigsby out on the vaudeville stage—Jewell Grigsby had appeared in Vaudeville as a baby—make no mistake about it she was a celebrity.

Finally, when the lesson before mine was coming to an end the high school girls asked Jewell if she would teach them a popular dance that was in fashion at the time. Although I had been watching the girls at a distance up to then, it was at this point that I became very interested. Now, Jewell had not danced any to that point. She was a small woman with tight clothes and a dancer's physique: shapely, solid, without an inch of fat.. I mean she was lean and had those beautiful dancers' legs that are shapely and rock solid. Jewell told the girls that she didn't know the dance, but if they could give her an idea of what they were dancing she could pick it up. The girls immediately showed her a few awkward steps hoping that Jewell could learn the dance quickly and teach them—which, of course, is exactly what she did. What I saw to this day may have been the most surprising demonstration of my life. Jewell began dancing like a teenager. She would ask them if the next step was this or this and they would respond. In a matter of minutes, she had the entire dance put together teaching the girls a dance that she had just learned.

I sat there in amazement. This little old lady was a fireplug and one that taught me about teaching skills and discipline and caring for students.

Jewell Grigsby was friendly, caring, but all business. She had dance skills to teach, and she took this responsibility very seriously. She needed to teach me skills that required my concentration and best efforts and she would not accept anything less. Most importantly, she needed me to relax so that I could feel the joy of learning because with the joy of learning comes something very important in skill development—confidence. I didn't believe in myself. However, Jewell Grigsby believed in herself, and she believed in me; and she gave me that confidence. I can still remember her caring touch and stern rebukes. "Do not look at your feet; by the time your brain realizes what your feet are doing it is too late and your feet are already on the next step." "Or keep your eyes up and look at me. That's it. Now, you're getting it!"

Now, don't get me wrong: it took me a while to get it-- the dancing did not come naturally, but I was determined and so was Jewell. She made me feel like she had been waiting all week for our lesson. Whereas, most dance studios charge over $100.00 a month, Jewell charged $10 a lesson. I always paid on time, but I don't think that Jewell would have said anything if I had failed to pay. Money was never an issue with Jewell Grigsby; dancing was. My dancing.

I couldn't get enough. We learned every dance that she could think of. I learned the cha-cha, the tango, the hustle, the bunny hop, the hustle, fox trots, waltzes, East Coast and West Coast swing dance, the rumba, the

mashed potato. And, yes, even tap dancing. I could go on an on. Fortunately, the Saturday Night Fever craze did not last long; it was too bad because I was just about ready to put John Travolta to shame when the Country and Western fad quickly dominated the dance floor. Of course, Jewell knew all of the latest two-step combinations. She spent many hours teaching the owners of studios throughout the city, for these owners were her former students. We spent many evenings with the "Cotton-eyed Joe," the "San Antonio stroll," the "Orange Blossom Special," and an arsenal of line dances. Jewell could always tell if I had gone out and had practiced my steps, but frankly I looked forward to dancing with her more than going to local dance clubs. I cannot emphasize enough that she was a taskmaster. She was hard on me and would not accept anything but my best. This required total concentration. When she had told me something she expected me to try it even if I made mistakes. Oh, yes, there were plenty of those mistakes. I am quite sure that Jewell needed a foot massage and plenty of ointment at the conclusion of the evenings with me.

By the time that I had taken over two or three years of lessons from Jewell Grigsby, I wanted others to meet this wonderful lady. By that time, I had gotten to know her very well. At the conclusion of our dance lessons, we would take time to talk and she would show me her photo albums. Jewell had been the lead dancer of one of the most famous dancing clubs in Oklahoma City during World War II. She was a charter member of Dance International and Jewell had been the instructor of many of the young dancers who had

gone out on their own and had established themselves and their studios in Oklahoma City. She had choreographed for Community Theatres and Theatre Departments in local universities. As a matter of fact, the Governor of Oklahoma and the State Legislature of Oklahoma had declared a Jewell Grigsby Day honoring this lovely and famous lady. This lady was a teacher and to her the learning and her students' learning were always her focus. Jewell Grigsby was famous, but you would never know it.

I decided that my students needed to meet Jewell so I set up a series of lessons for my students. I have always believed that one becomes the kind of person with whom one associates. We tell this to our students, but we adults seldom take our own advice. This also has to do with caring. If we associate with caring people, our capacity to care increases. If we associate with caring people, we become more sensitive and receptive to caring and so do those around us. Jewell came to my school for two straight days where she taught all of my classes ballroom dancing. Actually, she taught them more than mere dance steps.

On the first day, she brought many of her souvenir dance cards that she had accumulated from years gone by. She showed my students how these were signed, and the dances that were played. Jewell was very business-like with my students just like she had been with me years before. We paid her; but, of course, as it was with me when I took lessons, it was never about the money. She insisted that each one pay attention. She demanded that each child work hard and she would not tolerate nonsense or inattentiveness. My

students were amazed at her enthusiasm, her zest for life, her energy, and her discipline. She had a job to do and she was going to do it. The last time that I talked to Jewell her years were catching up with her. She was no longer teaching group lessons. She had only a few students and most of these were male doctors and their wives who wanted to learn to dance together. Jewell's husband had died some time ago and so I believe that in some very romantic and mysterious way as Jewell taught these couples she was reliving memories of her own—teaching can do this; caring can do this.

In sum, Jewell Grigsby was a natural teacher. The skills that she taught were important. This was her business, and even though she was a teacher with content knowledge to teach she never made her students feel that the skills were more important than her students. At least those students who kept their eyes on her and didn't look at their feet.

Narrative #16 – Donna Curry (a pseudonym), Another Famous Teacher

Don't ask me how this came about it is a long story. However, one summer I drove to Santa Fe, New Mexico, to receive lute lessons from the famous Donna Curry. This must have been in the 90s but it was still long before the internet became so popular which reduced the world to a few megabytes. At this time one still had to research information at the library, through correspondence in the mail, or by long-distance telephone calls. These telephone calls would add up especially when one needed to make a number of calls just to continue in the right direction. In this case, I made a

number of calls trying to find out where I could buy a Renaissance lute and how to play it.

For a number of years, I had been renting a costume at Hazel's Costume Shop in Oklahoma City to wear on the day that I introduced a unit on Shakespeare and The Tragedy of Julius Caesar. Costume rental was not cheap, but students responded and engaged in my discussion of the Elizabethan period. What disappointed me, however, were their questions? They were very interested in my costume. Why are you wearing women's hose? Where did you get those funky shoes? Did you call that peasecod? What is a peasecod? What is a cutpurse? You are wearing a purse? A man? The more I told them the more they wanted to know and the more that I had to research. But the costume was not historical and much of what I showed them was not accurate. I needed an authentic Elizabethan costume with chemise, trunk hose, doublet, Spanish cape, and hat if I was to continue my presentations.

Consequently, I applied for a grant with the foundation at our school district and received money to have an authentic Renaissance costume made, but I needed a pattern. This is where the research by phone became very expensive. I corresponded by mail but when mail was slow I followed much of the correspondence by telephone to Washington D.C. and the Folger's Shakespeare Library. There I found a text of authentic Renaissance costume patterns and gave these to a historic costume seamstress at the

Lyric Theatre and Oklahoma City University. When the costume was made, I was ready for my presentation except for a few items.

All young 16th century English courtiers knew how to fence in the Renaissance style, so I contacted further local fencing schools and fencing masters who might be knowledgeable about Renaissance fencing styles and once again I was in luck. After many lessons and intense study, I was ready to present historical reenactments at my school and other schools, elementary, middle school and high schools, in my school district. It did not take long to realize that students would really be engaged if I could add music and dance to my repertoire. The musical instrument of choice during the Renaissance was the lute, lute music by John Dowland, but where does one find a Renaissance lute? The answer to this mystery was Donna Curry in Santa Fe, New Mexico. It was Donna Curry who put me in touch with a lute craftsman who built me a (6 course and 12 string lute), but I still needed to learn how to play. The lute is no easy instrument to learn. One must play it like the classical guitar and to gain any proficiency one must spend countless hours in practice. I would need lessons to begin and wanted them from the best—I found the best in Donna Curry.

Donna Curry was to lute music what Shakespeare must have been to Elizabethan drama—everything. If someone needed lute strings, he or she contacted Donna. If someone wanted help in tuning a Renaissance lute, he or she contacted Donna Curry. If someone wanted lute lessons from an experienced concert lutenist, he or she went to Donna. If one wanted to have

a master craftsman build a beautiful lute for him or her, then Donna would be contacted and she would see to it that the lute would be built to the specifications needed, the strings be placed on the lute, the lute be tuned, and then shipped to the desired destination. Donna had just received my lute the day before I arrived in Santa Fe.

I didn't know what to expect when I arrived at 9:00 a.m. I had called the night before to receive directions to Donna's house and arrived right on time. She was cordial and welcoming. There were lutes everywhere, and she told me that my lute was exceptional that she had already worked with it and it had a beautiful sweet sound.

We sat down and Donna began to tell me the rich history of this Renaissance musical instrument. In the time of Shakespeare, everyone sang and danced and most could play the lute. Elizabeth I loved lute music and would pay handsomely to those courtiers who would play for her and teach her how to play. Donna took the new lute out of its large black case and touched it like it was a valuable work of art. She placed my fingers in the appropriate places and showed me how to finger and strum the strings. I played a few notes and the sound was anything but crisp and clear. After further instruction, the tone of each note began to improve and I was already happy with my accomplishments.

After some time, Donna took out her own lute and began to play and sing. This was the loveliest music that I had ever heard. Her voice was somewhere between soprano and angelic. Her clear crystal voice was as mellifluous as

the notes that she played. The Orpheus, of course, and played the lyre, but the Renaissance artists had switched instruments to the lute, and I am sure that it was Orpheus' lute that she was playing for me that day.

One might envision that this day proceeded without interruption. This is true and not so true. Not long after I arrived the phone began to ring. Donna received phone calls from all over the world asking her questions, needing to buy lute music, and cittern strings or asking for advice or wanting to book her for a tour or a concert engagement. The reason that I knew this was because Donna never stopped for a second to answer the phone. Each caller would leave a lengthy message on her answering machine and I could hear those messages as we continued our lessons. What I remember most of all was her hands and her touch. Often she would place her hands on mine to help me find the notes and showed me how to press the strings against the frets to create the rich and passionate sound that she wanted. Her hands were soft and supple, and they seemed to be a part of her musical instrument; and when she touched me and placed my hands on my new lute, it was like we were one—the lute, Donna, and me. She was patient and encouraging. At the end of this introductory lesson, I felt that I could go out read Renaissance tablature and play a Dowland galliard that very minute.

Probably, the greatest surprise that day occurred when we were finished. We began at 9:00 a.m. and talked for a few minutes to get acquainted but that was the only time that our attention was drawn away from the music lesson; and although I could hear those telephone messages at a distance, even then

my focus was on her instruction. She demanded it. We never stopped for lunch nor did we pause for even a bathroom break. Neither one of us even considered it. Frankly, it never occurred to me; the lesson and my master instructor drew and demanded my total attention and total absorption. It was near 5:00 p.m. when we finished that day. Even then it was not that we had run out of time or that Donna Curry led me to believe that she had something else to do. No, she had covered everything that she needed to cover that first lesson. Good teachers care about their students as learners; they care about skill development; as my own students have told me quite clearly good teachers care about their students as learners and find engaging ways to make the learning experience as pleasurable and meaningful as possible. The focus is on both the skill and the learner. Both are important, but developing competence and confidence are so important that the student after only one lesson knows exactly how to get to Carnegie Hall—practice, practice, practice!

Caring Gone Awry: Caring to Incompletion

Narrative #17 - David Shorne (a pseudonym), A Student

"However much we stumble, it is a teacher's burden always to hope, that with learning, a boy's character might be changed. And, so, the destiny of a man." *The Emperor's Club*

A couple of years ago I had David Shorne as a student. David hated school and was not a very nice young man. He almost defied you to try to

keep him awake or on task or to turn anything in. He said mean things to the people around him and missed school regularly.

My mission with David was to get him to complete assignments, turn them in, pass my class, and to graduate. It always amazes me that kids who dislike school will not show up, will miss class, and will fail and have to repeat the class again which only prolongs their agony. I wanted David to graduate and he would give me this look like just try and make me work. I finally decided that I needed more help so I went to the counselor's office to see if I could find out more about him. They told me that his parents didn't want him anymore. His parents had divorced, and his biological father had left town and his mother had remarried. The mother and step-father didn't want David living with them so they asked him to leave. Nobody wanted him. Well, I did, but he really didn't want me. One day after many days of absences and many missing assignments I was going to help him. We had a pep assembly; and although I kind of liked watching at my students' participating in many of the assembly activities, David was more important to me. The conversation with like this:

Me: *David, I want you to stay with me during the assembly.*

David: *What?*

Me: *I said that I want you to stay with me during the assembly.*

David: *Forget it. I'm going.*

He said this out loud and in front of the whole class. Well, I was embarrassed.

Me: *"No, you're not." (And I looked at him defiantly.)*

About that time I turned to talk with another student; and when I looked back up, he was gone--gone to the assembly. I looked for him everywhere in that gym. I walked up and down each row. I am sure that the kids were hiding him, but I never found him. Relentless, I waited outside his second hour class. No, let me put it another way: if I had waited outside the door of his second hour class, he would have seen me and would have run down the hall, so I waited inside the door of his second hour class; and when he walked in, I nabbed him.

Me: *David, come with me. Where did you go?*

David: *I went to the assembly.*

Me: *I told you not to go.*

David: *You had no reason to keep me from going to the assembly. I hadn't done anything wrong.*

Me: *Yes, but I wanted to help you get caught up.*

David: *I wanted to go to the assembly.*

Me: *You are about to fail, and I am trying to get you to pass.*

Well, he was provoking me. I was getting angry, and he was enjoying it. I was in unknown territory and he had been there many times before. I had not so I changed my strategies immediately and recovered my control through language. Your failure will result in your being….Well, he began to lose it. When it came to language, I was going to be the winner, so he turned to profanity. He needed to get the upper hand again. And I began to laugh.

This really made him mad because he realized that I was in control and he could not win.

By the way, this was only a couple of years ago and it has been years, quite a few years since a student had tried to be combative and confront me. Finally, I said

Me: David, I care for you.

David: I don't want you to care!

I realized that it is our language as teachers that give us the power and authority. Our language puts us in control and when we lose that upper hand with the language we are most vulnerable. As long as we are in control of our language and maintained through language our authority the kids will always be submissive and we will always be in control. The problem with this way of teaching and thinking is that the students will never be able to break through that linguistic fortress that we build will never be able to go inside, will never know us, and we will never know them because they too will do some code switching and create a similar fortress made out of language and impenetrable fortress one that many of our students live in most of their academic lives.

Narrative #18 - Scott Benedict (a pseudonym), Student

The story of Scott Benedict is one that ended sadly—sadly for me anyway. Scott appeared in my regular English class in the middle of the semester. He was a large doughy kind of white Caucasian kid, and he always wore over-

sized baggy jeans and a large black coat. My first impression of Scott was that he wore these clothes to hide his rather chubby body and that he wore black to fit in with others like him. In our school, I am not sure how it is elsewhere, in our school kids that wear black clothes are called "Gothics" and have a fashion all of their own.

Gothic girls wear black clothes, often dye their hair dark black or maybe a bloody color of red, wear dark red lipstick, and have numerous piercings and body art. The Gothic boys also wear black; their clothes are very baggy; their pants are worn very low; and if they can hide it, they wear chains around their necks and other forms of metal through piercings, rings, dog collars, and large belts. Now, we do have a dress code but it is still a constant battle to keep the pants up, the jewelry off, the writing on their shirts clean, and their piercings to a minimum. As far as I could see, Scott really was not that deeply committed.. Although his pants were baggy, they didn't droop. From his body language, Scott Benedict just didn't enjoy school and was being forced to adjust to a new school, a new class, and a new teacher and as I learned later—a new way of life.

For some reason (of which I cannot remember now), there was an empty chair in the second row the first seat and this is where I assigned Scott. I cannot remember what we did exactly that first day, but I do remember that we were preparing for our senior research paper—a district requirement. All students must complete a senior paper based on the 12th grade PASS skills (Oklahoma Priority Academic Student Skills), and I was preparing the seniors

to go to the library the very next day to begin their extensive research. This first day ended uneventfully. However, the next day things changed. I talked to my class rather briefly. (I didn't want to waste valuable minutes that needed to be spent in the library.) I took roll, talked to them about using the limited time that they had in the library to their advantage, and noticed that Scott had put his head down on his desk and was trying to get a good night's sleep. I tapped him and whispered that he needed to wake up. He looked up at me and immediately closed his eyes and went back to sleep. Rather than make a scene, I sent my class to the library and stayed back to talk to Scott. The conversation went this way:

Me: *(in a gentle voice) Scott, you need to wake up.*

Scott: *(No reply.)*

Me: *(in a normal tone) Scott, you need to wake up.*

Scott: *(No reply.)*

Me: ***(****loudly) Scott, wake up.*

Scott: *(His eyes opened and in a strong and defiant voice) I hate you.*

Me: *You hate me? At least give me a week, then I can understand it if you hate me. In some ways I wouldn't blame you. Sometimes I don't like myself, but one day that just isn't fair. You cannot really know me in one day. Can you?*

Scott was so surprised by my reaction that he didn't really know what to say. I sensed that he was ready for a hostile reaction from me; and when I kind of agreed with him, he was defenseless and humored. The next couple

of days he participated in class not vocally, but he at least listened and was attentive.

After our initial confrontation I decided to go to Scott's academic counselor to find out a little more about my new student. This is something that I always try to do, but frankly sometimes it takes me a week or two to talk to the counselors or the registrar to find out about new enrollees, but in this case I was afraid that I didn't have that much time so I dropped by the academic counselor's office immediately. Scott needed help, maybe more help than I could give him. My conversation with the school counselor went like this:

Me: *What can you tell me about Scott Benedict?*

Counselor: *Who?*

Me: *I have a new student in my second hour English IV class and I need to know a little bit about him. I sense that there may be a problem and I want* ***to take care*** *of it before serious problem develop. (Notice the terminology here).*

Counselor: *Well, let me see. Scott Benedict? 12th grader? Oh, yes. (She began to chuckle.) His mothers came in to talk to me about Scott and help him enroll a couple of days ago.*

Me: (*Not being very quick to understand the "two mothers" reference, I proceeded to tell the counselor about our confrontation) Scott says that he hates me and the fact that he was willing to share this with me on the second day of class alarmed me. To tell you the truth, I felt sorry for him and wanted to help him. He seems very troubled and I don't know where to begin with*

him. That's the real reason that I am here. Can you give me some suggestions?

Counselor: *I am told that Scott does have a problem with male figures, but I couldn't put him into the female teacher's classes during second block. I had no choice but to put him into your class.*

Me: *OK, maybe, I am missing something here. What do you mean he has problems with male figures? I am not sure if I understand the two mothers' situation either.*

Counselor: *Two mothers. He doesn't have a father; he has two mothers—two women who are married to one another are both his mothers or so that is what they told me when I enrolled Scott a couple of days ago. They told me that it would be best to put him in classes with female teachers—that he dealt better with females and did not get along with men, but you were the only English class that I could get him into that hour. Is he having problems?*

Me: *Yes, he is and I am really concerned. He sleeps all hour and I don't think that his sleeping is just because he is tired. I think it is a form of defiance. And he is very despondent and belligerent when I talk to him. He scares me.*

Counselor: *Defiance? I don't know what you mean.*

The next day I received an email in the morning before class from the same counselor that warned me that Scott should be watched closely. Even though I alerted the counselor to Scott's problem, Scott didn't seem to be any different: he had dropped out of my class long before that day. As a matter of

fact, it was not too long before an adult also came to my class and just sat there all hour watching him. I have since learned that Scott was on a suicide watch, and authorities, as well as family, were fearful that he might take his own life. A few days later and I never saw Scott again. He formally withdrew from my class and our school. Although I tried to find out what happened to him and his whereabouts, no one knew. I never felt like I was given the whole picture about Scott. There was more there than I ever would know. Maybe, if I had known more, things may have turned out differently. I don't know. Today I hope that Scott is all right, and I hope that he still doesn't hate me.

What I do know is no matter how much one cares, that person can only care so much and that at some point the caring must be returned. Incidentally, I also believe that waking a student and asking, if not demanding, that he participate in class activities is an act of caring. Caring requires that the carer perceive the world through the cared-for's perspective and to read the world through those eyes. Unfortunately, there is no guarantee that the caring will be accepted, that the caring will be returned, or that the caring relationship will be developed. The sense of incompletion when that caring energy does not flow and that the caring is not returned leaves a sense of loss in the carer. This loss is not easily forgotten.

Narrative #19 - Nick Anderson (a pseudonym), A Student

I must talk about Nick Anderson. Nick was a student in my class this past Spring 2006. He was probably a pretty bright student or so his parents kept

telling me. I use the term parents loosely because the family was pretty extended. I met with his family when all concerned with Nick decided to intervene and discuss what was best for him and his present schedule and classes. He didn't belong in my AP class; it was not that he couldn't do the work; but he certainly would not put forth the effort, and he was absent all of the time. He was just not a very dedicated student. He did take a special interest in debate—that was his love. I didn't know that much about Nick's background; a number of teachers told me that he was just the opposite of his older brother. Apparently, his brother was a model student. He made good grades and was a school leader. Most teachers could not say enough about him, but Nick was different. He lied, and he shirked responsibility. He tried to avoid work and rarely turned in assignments. At the meeting his mother, his father and his mother's boyfriend (apparently, all three lived together in the same house) met with the academic counselor, a vice-principal, and all of his present teachers.

The boyfriend did most of the talking. At the time, I couldn't tell exactly who he was. He asked questions, wanted to know what Nick's status and grade average was in each class, and also wanted to know what was the best course to take in Nick's best interest. At the time I assumed that this was Nick's father, but if he was the father, who was the other gentleman sitting next to Nick. The whole arrangement was confusing. In Nick's science class, he had an exceptionally high class average, higher than 100%. He was passing in his Contemporary History class but had already had an altercation

with the teacher. Nick loved those confrontations because he felt these were nothing more than academic debates against worthy adversaries (his teachers), and he considered himself a strong adversary, as well. Unfortunately for Nick, these were debates that he could never win. I could tell at the time that those two (Nick and the history teacher) would butt heads. Our intervention committee decided to drop Nick from my Advanced Placement English Literature class and to put him in my regular English IV class. There he might be successful, but he would have to catch up on the work that he had missed and would still have to work hard even though the expectations were somewhat lower in the regular class.

In actuality, it was determined through the counselor's information that Nick would have to pass all of his classes to graduate so that he could enter the Marine Corps in the summer upon his graduation. He had already joined, and his group of parents was confident that the Marine Corps would give him the discipline that he lacked. At the time this sounded more like their decision than Nick's. This was not asking too much, but Nick would still have to work hard, would have to pass all of his classes to graduate, and would have to avoid any confrontations with teachers or classmates.

I am not sure if Nick felt that regular English IV class was beneath his capabilities (I didn't know what he was capable of); he never said so, but he certainly did not enter the class ready to catch up and to tackle the course work. It was not long that Nick fell behind in his studies. Riding a 40 average in my class for some time, his mother, her boyfriend, and father took over. I

made a list of missing assignments and Nick set out to make up all 10-12 missing assignments. However, Nick's problems in my class were eclipsed by problems in other classes as well. He had a volatile confrontation with both his history and science teachers, and he was not attending his debate class and instead spending most of the day in the school library. He had a difficult time conforming, had frequent confrontation with teachers who were obsessed with "banking knowledge," and Nick's unwillingness to play the game. In an attempt to maintain sanity, and avoid continued hostility, he went to the library to research topics that really interested him. What about debate? Well, I am quite sure that even debate with its rules and protocols demanded too much of Nick, also. It would be interesting to see if the Marines would change him because at this point our high school wouldn't <u>until his family took over.</u>

The fact that Nick would not go to class but would spend most of his day in the library made me believe that Nick was one of those kids that our public education just does not meet his needs. He was a bright young man, but needed special attention. He was interested in discussing pertinent issues from readings in class, but abhorred busy work. Although he knew the material, his class averages were low because he did not complete assignments. In other words, he would not play the game. Well, one of the requirements in our school district is for the seniors to write the traditional senior research paper. I always tell my students that this is the culmination of their high school education; it culminates in the senior research paper. The

paper is only 5 to 7 pages in length, but one would think that it is a 50 page paper the way the kids are terrified by the length of the paper. It must be a documented paper so the project actually requires some research, parenthetical documentation (limited knowledge of MLA stylistic formatting), and writing a short "Works Cited" page. I try to take my students through the entire process and break it down into manageable sections. I also tell my students that the only thing that can keep them from passing is their absences.

My warning did not change Nick's habit of missing classes. He would stop in to check on what assignments he had due and what we would be doing in the next couple of days. Since Nick failed to turn in assignments and to meet intermediary deadlines, his grade average continued to plummet until his parents decided to take the situation in their own hands and Nick's father began to attend class with him.

Nick was in my first block class which was the one that begins the day. Classes in our school begin at 8:30 a.m. so every day Nick's dad would appear around 8:20 a.m. accompanying Nick to class. His father would sit in the back of the room and would read a book or just listen to the class discussion. On one occasion I had to change my entire lesson to something more scholarly so that his father would be impressed with the intellectual climate and academic demands of my class rather than be offended by my lecture on the gory torturing techniques in the Middle Ages. My students would have loved it; father may have considered it somewhat inappropriate.

At the end of class Nick's father would wait for him and escort Nick to his next class. His mother called me regularly on my cell phone (Yes, I gave her my cell phone number in a moment of weakness, and she called me daily to check on Nick's progress). We still have not come to the episode that I want to talk about. Nick, when he was in class, would often sleep. He worked at a part-time job; and when he had to close the business, he would attend class with little or no sleep, and he would be tired and irritable in class the next day. He said that he had to work to pay bills such as his cell phone bill, his car payments, and car insurance. Often, I would talk about areas of the research paper that I knew my students, and especially Nick, would have difficulty with. Of course, Nick slept right through these moments, and as I expected, his senior research paper showed it.

Nick Anderson was upset with his low C- grade on his senior paper and he wanted to discuss his grade one-on-one or as he put it "man-to-man." His history teacher caught me in the hall to prepare me for our meeting. Nick was telling everyone that I had cheated him on his paper, and that he was boasting that I had better be ready for a confrontation. This was the confrontation that I had anticipated. I just didn't think that I was going to be the teacher that Nick would confront. So when he caught me in the hall and asked that we go to my classroom then and talk I was ready to defend my position on his paper, to defend my grading, and to make him regret that he had tangled with me, a seasoned professional and veteran teacher. Most

students are scared of me. I never can understand why, but in this case Nick should have had some fear because he would soon regret his audacity.

We sat down at my desk; we were the only ones in my classroom. The topic of his paper was Christian humanism in Milton's Paradise Lost. We began by looking at the required form of the paper. His heading was not the one assigned; there was no page numbering. I was immediately aggressive—angry and he knew it. I told him that these were the kinds of things that I had pointed out in class and that they needed to be exact; and if he would have just paid attention in class rather than sleep, he would never have committed these stylistic errors. I never waited for his reply nor allowed him to ask questions. The tone of our conversation was definitely not of an understanding and caring teacher helping a needy student trying to learn. Anyone listening to our dialogue would have considered this one way communication. Although I was addressing his paper, I was really addressing Nick's laziness or alienation from the public school system. We just cannot have students who will not conform especially in high school. We high school teachers must search these students out and make examples of them.

Actually, I was really relieving my own stress and frustration that so many bright, intelligent, and potentially gifted students like Nick were mentally dropping out from my classroom and out of our school. Graduation rates do not reflect the number of students who have mentally dropped out. If the general public knew these statistics, they would be devastated.

I was releasing my frustrations directed at his paper; and in midstream right as I was beginning to address the lack of a clear thesis in his introductory paragraph, I realized that my attitude in many ways shaped the students that I teach. I realized that I was not working with an abstraction here. I was not working with the abstractions that we use to categorize, to group troubled students--mental drop-outs, reluctant learners, low-achievers, the disengaged learner, students' needing intervention. No, I was working with Nick Anderson, not a statistic, but a real life, flesh and blood, concrete, human being that I cared about and whom I knew cared about me. He was not the abstract child who represented everything that was wrong with public education. He was just a child that I could affect because I cared for him. Nick's problem was not his alone.

His problem was my problem and the nature of public education. Nick, I have since discovered, was an inquisitive student in elementary school who asked questions repeatedly. He wanted to know everything about this wonderful world. He not only wanted to know, but he expected those elementary teachers to give him answers and to defend their positions. When elementary teachers began using the standard answer—"you just have to" or "don't ask so many questions," he became recalcitrant. I am quite sure that middle school was even more deadening for Nick.

I decided that I would blame myself rather than blame Nick. I would care rather than identify, attack, and destroy. I decided to care and be a good teacher--one that loves his students, one that cares about their futures, and

one teacher that feels like he can give meaning to his own life through his students and at that point I stopped. Nick was no longer an object but a subject. I changed my attitude immediately. Nick felt that change. It was a watershed moment. Both of us let down our defenses; he assumed the position of a student in need of information, in need of guidance, in need of something that I had to offer. He would allow me to care and would return that care to me. Nick became a student who welcomed what I had to share. We went through the rest of the paper laughing and pondering and wondering and sharing. It is this situation this conversation which makes me aware that all things are possible with teachers and students in teaching and learning. I am not even sure if the key is KOS (knowledge of students) but finding ways to connect with students. What does this concept of connect mean? I don't know: does it mean trying to find some common ground? Does it mean trying to find mutual interests? Does it mean just getting to know our students both as learners and individuals? I think that there is a lot more to it than that. I believe the common ground lies in the subjects that we teach. This is the common ground. This is something that I continued to explore in the months to come.

One might wander why the story of Nick Anderson lies in this section of my data. Unfortunately, those few moments of a caring relationship were short-lived. It did not take long for connection for the old Nick to return or should I say not to return to my class. I have tried to look at the world through Nick's eyes, but this is impossible. I do not think that we can actually do this; we

teachers can try but even my looking at the world through Nick's eyes would still be my perceptions of the world and not Nick's. I do believe that Nick and I could have shared much if we had more time or if Nick had not had so much to deal with outside of my class. I do believe that caring relationships can lead to friendships, can transform public education and that dealing with abstractions can be harmful and dangerous—very dangerous as in the case of Janet Madison.

Narrative #20 - Janet Madison (a pseudonym), A Basketball player

Janet Madison was arguably the best athlete that I ever coached-- the most memorable--and at times the most horrifying. How is this possible? You might ask. Well, to understand the story of her career and my relationship with Janet Madison, we would probably have to go back to summer basketball camps and preseason when Janet was an 8th grader, the summer before she was to attend my high school in the 9th grade.

Every summer throughout my last 20 years of coaching, I held a summer basketball camp for grade school and junior high players. I loved the summer camps because we could just have fun with the game get to know the younger girls who would be playing for me some day, and make a little extra money during the summer for vacations or for spending money. We would teach fundamentals and have basketball contests and generally promote our program as well as teach fundamentals. My assistant coaches would help out as well as my varsity players. This was a chance to get the high school

girls in the gym during the summer months, with a ball in their hands-- playing and shooting-- and enjoying the relationships with the younger girls. It was also a chance to meet some of the younger girls and a time for Janet Madison to shine.

We had contests divided into grade school and junior high divisions in 1-on-1, free throw shooting, 3 point shooting, hot shot where the girls shoot from determined spots on the floor in one minute intervals, h-o-r-s-e, and ball handling. Janet would win every contest when in grade school. She had no competition and would compete against the junior high girls and would even challenge the older varsity girls and would sometimes win. She would come to the gym each day with matching shorts, shirts, sweat bands, numerous basketball shoes (the best money could buy) with pretty ribbons or sweat bands in her hair. She looked like a Michael Jordan commercial. She was cute and could play the game.

As a matter of fact, she ate and drank and studied basketball. She was the talk of the community. She played on school teams, AAU teams, church league teams, and even boys' teams (for tougher competition). If there was a gym or a girls' basketball league, she would be playing. I was asked numerous times if I was anxious for Janet to attend our high school, and play for me, and that she would lead us to the State Championship someday. Now Janet was not going to be a big girl. She would be a guard; and although she was not tremendously quick, she could shoot "the lights out!" and had great shooting range. Truly, she had the strength to shoot the 3

point shot even in early elementary school. She would be a 2 guard, a shooting guard, and she had a nice cast in her grade level in junior high to complement her. However, when she was an 8th grader, the rumor spread that she might transfer to a private school in Edmond, Oklahoma, so that she could start on the varsity team as a 9th grader. The rumor also had it that I never allowed 9th graders to play on the varsity, and Janet was too good to sit on the bench. Her father expected her not only to get playing time as a freshman but to start. To tell the truth, the reason that this rumor had some credence and that I had not started or played a 9th grader was because I never had a 9th grader capable of playing or starting for the varsity. If one thinks about it, we are talking about a 13 or 14 year old competing against a 17 or 18 year old. There was a vast difference in size and maturity. So Janet might move to a private school where the competition was not as great and the school was much smaller, and she could play for four years.

Now at the end of the school year, we usually bring the 8th graders up from their junior high schools to practice with the high school. We let the 8th graders play summer league with our B team during the summer, and Janet came up for summer league practice. We would just run some drills, work out a little and put the girls in a couple of different offenses and defenses enough so that they were organized for summer league play. In a warm-up passing drills, one of the girls threw a pass to Janet that she caught at the end of her fingers and the ball bent her fingers back. She started yelling and screaming. I think that it scared her more than anything, and her 4th finger was jammed

and started swelling. We put her hand in ice and told her that we thought that she would be all right; but if it made her feel better, she might want to go the next day to the doctor and get x-rays to see if it were broken. She started sobbing and crying: "He's going to kill me; he's going to kill me." "Who is going to kill you?" I said. "My dad. He's going to kill me. I did this last summer too and broke the finger and couldn't finish the season with my AAU team. My dad was so mad. I just know that he is going to kill me." I was shocked that I was hearing this from an 8th grader, and I just thought that she was upset that she might have re-injured her finger and would miss some summer games, but I later realized that she had reason to be upset.

Janet's finger was not broken, but she did go to that private school her freshman year. Neither her parents nor Janet ever called to let me know that she was transferring. I was certainly disappointed, and to tell the truth, the only ingredient that we missed in our team that year was a pure shooter. More importantly, I liked Janet. She loved the game as much as I did. She loved to play and anyone watching her could tell, and coaches just love those kinds of players. The love for the game and the love of competition are contagious, and it is a disease that spreads easily and quickly and becomes quite visible in conference and regional championships. We had to fight tooth and nail for every basket that season. If we had had a shooter, the outcome of the season could have been even more memorable.

I kept in touch with Janet that basketball season mainly through the newspaper. She scored in double figures often and her team was above .500

and probably won more games than they lost. The experience that she gained by playing older girls and competing in varsity games as a freshman was invaluable. Now, at the end of the season there was talk that Janet was planning on moving back to our school to play. Of course, no one had talked to me until I received a phone call from her father who wanted to sit down, talk, and see if I held any hard feelings since she had moved away her 9th grade year. Of course, I didn't. As a matter of fact, I had wanted to coach Janet for a long time. She was not only a good player, but a nice girl, and so the prospect of her returning to our school was inviting. Actually, her absence had been good for her class. They had to rely on themselves rather than the scoring and leadership of Janet. However, there were some legal issues involved. Since she had moved to the private school and had played an entire season there, she would have to sit out a year, but her dad had worked this out with the OSSAA (Oklahoma Secondary Schools Activities Association), the governing body of our state's high school athletics and activities. Now, I am not implying that he had done anything illegal. Quite the contrary, he was a lawyer and knew the rules and regulations as well as the director of the association. Janet Madison just applied for a hardship ruling, received approval, and was back on our team again as a sophomore.

Janet was a hard worker. She loved the game and often after a hard two hour practice, her practice was just beginning. She had her own individual workout: shot so many shots, ran so many miles, jumped so much rope after practice each day. Her parents attended every game—her dad, yelling and

screaming at her and at me. He coached her every move from the stands and all of my conferencing and phone calls and suggestions never changed a thing. He wanted what was best for his daughter which sometimes was not what was best for our team. One day Janet had a conflict. She was extremely sick and could not come to the game. I am sure that she was indeed sick because there is no way that she would have missed if she could have played at all. We played and I believe that we won without Janet and this was one of the most pleasant games of the season—no shouting or coaching from the stands. Mom and dad were not attendance to support the team. Since Janet wasn't playing, there was no reason for her parents to attend.

After one game that we lost, (we didn't lose very many), Janet wanted a conference after practice. My assistant coaches and I sat down with Janet explained to her why we did what we did—in other words we discussed with her our strategies of the previous night's game, and she questioned everything that we did or should I say, her dad questioned everything that we did. Janet made suggestions, questioned strategies; and, frankly, the voice, the vocabulary, the perspectives were not Janet's. They were her dad's. It is the strangest thing. It was like her dad had taken over her personality. I know how odd this seems. It really wasn't Janet speaking to me but her father. He had completely taken over--her thoughts and her personality. It was scary.

I tried to get to know Janet better that year, her senior year. I learned that when Janet got home each night, she was required to sit down and go through everything that had taken place at practice. She would be punished if she missed a single detail. I am not only talking about the drills that we ran but who played, who didn't, how many shots she had made, how many she missed, what I had said to the players during practice, before and after. Janet would be punished by not receiving dinner and doing her homework and going straight to bed without supper if she had not had a successful practice or had missed anything in her after-practice summary.

One game I can still remember Janet had not played well. It didn't take a mastermind to realize that the way to stop our team that year was to stop Janet from scoring. Teams tried everything against us. We had to be prepared for all kinds of gadget defenses—box and 1, triangle and 2, diamond and 1, pressure man to man where Janet would be denied and each member of the opposing team would try to be aware of Janet's presence on the court. One team even tried to have Janet's defender hold onto her jersey #23 everywhere she went on the court. Some coaches were very creative, but after a while our team was ready for anything.

Well, Janet had a game where her timing was off, and she started to press and missed the first couple of shots, and things went downhill from there. She had tremendous pressure on her when she played and this only added to her difficulties. She was only about 5'4" (5'6" in the program due to her father's insistence) and probably weighted 124 lbs so she was not very big

and most of the time teams would try to rough her up. Well, this game was one that she should have missed because she had not scored her average and we had not won.

The next day the other girls on the team told me that Janet had spent the night in her car, was afraid to go home, and had parked her car in a hospital parking lot because she felt that this was the safest place that she could think of to spend the night. There are many more examples of her father's domination of Janet. She went on to play basketball at Oklahoma Baptist University (OBU) and from what I understand the bigger and quicker girls were too much for her. Having to shoot with less time, her scoring average suffered and this created a place for her on the bench. It wasn't long that she was living at home and commuting to school everyday even though she also had a room in the dormitory. She transferred her sophomore year to a nearby college where she could continue to live at home and commute to school and play basketball. The small frame was prone to injuries in college, and she broke her ankle numerous times but continued to play (according to reports and her father's bidding) throughout her senior year of college.

I really can't speak for the relationship between Janet and her father. This sounds like a strange and isolated case of a father's dominating his child to the point of obsession, but I have many, many stories just like this one where parents would do unbelievable things in the name of love and care. I received hate letters and phone calls at all hours of the night. One season I held conferences with the parents of every child on the team because the

parents all wanted more playing time for their daughters. A parent can care for a child obsessively—care can take ugly forms as we have seen numerous times in news reports. Janet now lives in Dallas, is married, and recently had her first child. I wonder what kind of parent she will be and at the same time I don't think I really want to know.

Narrative #21 - Larry McSherry (a pseudonym), a Transfer Student

It was only a couple of years ago that I had Larry McSherry as a student in my regular English IV class. I cannot see his face clearly in my mind's eyes. I can see a silhouette and I can see the exact desk where he sat, but the story of Larry McSherry is worth remembering. Larry was excited to be in my English IV class; he was new to our school and he was an enthusiastic student. He wanted to talk to me about everything after class: Beowulf and his adventures with the monster Grendel, or Chaucer's pilgrims venturing to the cathedral in Canterbury, and especially Hamlet and his relationship with his father and step-father. He said that the things we were reading were like "a great light that was illuminating his life." He wanted to get to know me better, too. Now, I always require that my students email me the first week of school and tell me about themselves as human beings and learners, and I can still remember that Larry told me how much he enjoyed my class, the literature was really exciting, and he was excited about having his own father back in his life.

Apparently, his mother and father had gone through a very difficult divorce and his father had left the family. Larry had not seen his father in some time, but that was all changing. His father was moving to Oklahoma City, and Larry was ecstatic. Everything was going well for him. This was his senior year; and although he had just moved into our school and really didn't have many friends, he had a good attitude and that would all change.

Larry was in my third block class and we had a split lunch. What this means in high school lingo is that we have class for about 40 minutes then we go to lunch which usually lasts about 40 minutes then we reconvene class for the remaining 40 minutes. This seems like a difficult situation, but I have grown accustomed to it, and it is nice to take a break and split the class in half. The kids like it too. Unfortunately, Larry didn't have anyone to eat lunch with, so he would buy his lunch and bring it back to my classroom, and we would eat together. A couple of times he was without money and so I bought our lunches and ate and talked and life was good. Lunch time is a time for me to relax, but most of the time I tutor or talk to kids or run errands. Since Larry started coming in, I tried to spend time with him since he didn't have anyone else to talk to. I got to know him and he was a nice kid and really was getting into the British literature that we were studying.

In my third hour that year, I had a number of student council representatives and officers. One day in particular I asked the Student Council chaplain Linda Givens (a pseudonym) to stay after class and told her that she and the other officers needed to meet this new student in our class,

take him to lunch and introduce him to others to help him make friends. This would be a nice challenge for this student council officer and a duty of all of our school leaders—to make everyone feel welcomed, to introduce new students to others, and to take him to lunch and get to know him. She assured me that she would, and I think that she was impressed that I trusted her enough to give her that assignment. As is often the case with high school students, their lives can change quickly as it did with Larry McSherry. He failed to turn in assignments, was repeatedly late for class, and had a drastic change in attitude. He also stopped coming in to talk during lunch. I assumed at first that Larry had been introduced to a new circle of friends and now had them and didn't need me. I was wrong.

Finally, at the end of class one day, I asked him how things were going; and he told me that his father had arrived, but he was in the hospital. I told him that I was sorry to hear it and hoped that he was feeling better. I left it at that.

Larry McSherry's grades did not improve; he began to miss class more frequently and began mentally to drop out of my class. Finally, I decided that I had better intervene so I asked Larry to have lunch with me just like old times. I brought some burgers back to my classroom, and we began talking. To break the ice, I asked Larry if he had made some new friends with whom he was now eating lunch with and embarrassed he said "no." As a matter of fact, he said, "I go outside and sit on a park bench all of lunch." Larry wanted to be alone and "to have his space," and I was to find out why. His father, it

seems, had entered his life to tell Larry that he was dying of cancer. He had been in remission for some time, but now the cancer had returned and the prognosis did not look good. Larry was taking it pretty hard, and he had left his mother's house and was living with his twenty-five year old brother.

The counselor's told me that the brother was an extremely bad influence on Larry; and if there were anything that I could do, it would be appreciated. I had Larry come in before school a couple of times for us to talk but there really wasn't much that I could say. His father was dying. His "life sucked," and he wanted to leave school. Then I was notified that Larry McSherry's father had died and that he had been expelled from school. The story had it that he had driven his older brother's car to school and inside of the trunk was a Bowie hunting knife. Our school adheres to a strict "no excuses" weapon's policy, and we make no allowances for accidentally bringing a weapon on campus. Larry was expelled for the semester. I was feeling badly for Larry; and so was Linda, my student council representative. I called Linda to my desk and told her that I really appreciated her efforts that at least we had done the best we could. She began to cry and ran out of class.

The next day Linda wanted to talk to me after class. She began our conversation this way:

Linda: *Mr. Baker, I know that you know and I didn't think it was very nice of you to make me feel so bad yesterday. I feel terrible.*

Me: *Linda, what are you talking about?"*

Linda: *Mr. Baker, I know you know I never said anything to Larry. I never introduced him to anyone. Lunch is a time to be with* ***my friends****. Well…I am so sorry.*

Me: *Linda, I really didn't know that you had not talked to Larry. It's ok. I understand.*

What I didn't tell Linda was that I felt very sad myself and much to blame. I had not attended Larry's father's funeral. I cannot explain why. I should have been there for him. It was like when he withdrew from my life, I withdrew from his, also. Someone should have been there for him, and it should have been me, and I felt guilty. Larry returned to school the second semester. I had tried to contact him, but he had disappeared. I am not sure I would have known what to say anyway. He had received special permission to make up the work that he had missed the first semester and we worked together so that he could graduate. And although it was a tremendous effort on his part to make up the missed work and to keep up his grades in order to pass all of his classes the second semester, he barely passed. Larry McSherry who loved Beowulf, Chaucer, and Shakespeare's Hamlet barely passed Senior English IV. The "great light that had illuminated his life" had been reduced to a mere flicker.

There are many things that are revealed in this narrative. One is that the works of art do indeed have much to offer our children. Like other classes and student, the life of Hamlet spoke to Larry. I still cannot explain why I had not attended Larry's father's funeral. This is something that I am scared to

explore—scared to find out more about myself. Can one become over-burdened by caring? The answer is yes. Sometimes caring can become a burden that can overwhelm and disconnect us from the other cared-for. The cared-for too can rely too heavily upon the carer and this too can sever the relationship. These are both concerns of educators. Can the burden of teaching and the demands placed upon the caring teacher overwhelm that teacher to the point that the teacher becomes indisposable?

Narrative #22 - Mark Jaspars (a pseudonym), An Artist

Mark Jaspars was the kind of student that appears more regularly than we would like to admit in our classrooms each year. Mark began the fall term in my senior English IV class with very high grades. On the first couple of tests, he set the class average, and then he coasted the rest of the semester. Coasting is a term that may be difficult to find in our professional education textbooks in college methods' courses, but our today's students know it quite well, and coasting is becoming more and more prevalent.

This means that the student begins the semester establishing a very high grade point average and then at some point the student begins mentally to withdraw while that course average takes a nosedive the rest of the semester. It is like riding a skateboard gathering great steam on a downhill slope and then at some point just riding the inertia until the skateboards comes to a stop. Students know the point that they can begin their downward decent with uncanny ability. Now the point changes according to the child, but each

*child knows with the **mathematical precision of a master artist** exactly when that point is. It is kind of one-point perspective--the point in which everything on the canvas is focused. Rarely, will a coasting child drop below a passing grade—students not only know how to paint the picture but they have all become Rembrandts. This might be over-stating the case with Mark. He knew how to play the game with little or no cunning; he just had more important things to do. In Mark's case, he needed to draw. From what I could see as I passed his desk each day, I would not consider his sketches works of art. I never even considered that he might have any real artistic talent. Until I read it in yesterday morning's newspaper, I would never have thought that he had even really painted anything seriously—certainly never on a piece of canvas.*

Mostly in class, he just doodled; he would sketch something in pencil in his notebook small in size—often four or five little sketches per page. Now, let me explain. I am an English teacher and we write—with the intent to write everyday. To many students to write in a notebook everyday is a scary proposition. To others, it is just another game. I might call it our writer's notebook, but the only difference from it and their journals, diaries, the writer's canvas, spirals, or notepads is the name. To Mark, it was his sketch pad. He rarely took notes. Truthfully, he never took notes. Mark listened to my lectures or our class discussions the best that he could, but his focus was on his drawings, and this class and the occasional distractions were of secondary importance.

Mark was too nice of a young man and too forthright to try to hide his sketches when I passed by talking about Beowulf's boastful heroism or Hamlet's chronic depression or Austen's subtle humor. It just was no secret that Mark planned on drawing and maybe listening whenever he felt something was relevant (which apparently it rarely was); and, frankly, his art was very relaxing and important to him. English was not. I cannot remember what he actually drew; I never paid that much attention. At times, he and his art unnerved me; it frustrated me to think that a student would have the gall in my class to draw and not even try to hide it when I was giving him gems that would change his life and open up his future. No, what really bothered me the most I must confess was that he was not taking notes and that he was not going to pass the unit test. He would have nothing to study. The fact that he would forget most of what I was discussing weeks after the examination was beyond the point. He needed to learn how to pass standardized tests and learn to take notes and become accustomed to test anxiety if he planned on passing this class and going on to college. College? He would never go to college, would he? College? I had doubts about now this very minute—finishing high school. How would he ever write his senior paper? After class on numerous occasions, I called his attention to his lack of commitment to the class and his lack of engagement. His warm smile lit up the room, and he promised to try harder which he did until he began his new artistic project which as far as I could tell would be about fifteen minutes from then.

I never remember Mark's being too involved with anything that occurred in my class other than maybe a money-raising project that he and another student must have originated. I heard this same story related again the last time that I saw Mark. There were quite a few other football players in this class; yes, Mark was a football player. I did not think at the time that he received much or any playing time. I don't know why. I guess it was because I never heard his name announced during any of the football games that I attended.

One of the players on the football team was a Division I recruit and had offers to sign with many well-known major college football programs. The way that Mark saw it was the only thing that this prospective recruit lacked was transportation. Mark's teammate was from a single-parent family; and although a college scholarship was a blessing, His Heavenly Father had not provided a car and Mark had talked to many of his football teammates and was trying to raise enough money to buy this promising college recruit a "set of wheels" for college. Mark had a good heart. He had a warm smile that could brighten a classroom, and he was thoughtful. Maybe, too thoughtful.

One night I can still remember the night--Mark called me on my cell phone. Now, I have not avoided discussing our personal relationship; we really didn't have a personal relationship. I liked Mark, and I am sure that he was somewhat fond of me, too, probably because I had not lost my temper with him, insulted his doodling and lack of attentiveness, or had not embarrassed him in front of the entire class. We had talked; I had tried to channel his

energies to more academic pursuits like regaining his early class average but that was just about the extent of our relationship. But Mark called, and I could tell that he was pretty shook up. He needed my advice; he may have needed an adult to talk to—a reassuring or familiar voice and he had chosen me; he may have just needed to go over things out loud or to let me know that there really was someone behind that smile and those pencil sketches.

I knew that his parents were divorced, and that both sets of parents had remarried and that he lived with his father and his step-mother, but that is about all. Our conversation went like this:

Mark: *Mr. Baker, it's Mark Jaspars. I need to talk to you.*

Me: *Hi, Mark, what's up?*

Mark: *My dad is getting a divorce. I can't help but blame myself. Everyone I live with ends up divorcing.*

Me: *Mark, you can't blame yourself.*

Mark: *I know that is what my friends have been telling me, but I can't help it*

Me: *Mark, actually I am quite sure that you in many ways have held your parents together. (I didn't really know this, but it sounded sensible and at this point I was reaching for straws.)*

Mark: *I just came home this evening and they told me. It really caught me off guard. I had no idea. I just can't help but think that I have something to do with it.*

Me: *Mark, you just don't know how difficult adult problems are. Sometimes they are so difficult and complex. You might not understand what I am saying*

now, but it won't take very long; and you'll begin to understand how difficult this world can be at times. I am sure that your parents are doing the best they can for themselves and for you. Maybe, you should talk to the counselors tomorrow at school. And I am always here for you to talk to and maybe you need to talk more to your parents. Maybe they can explain things that will help you better understand.

Mark: *I know what you are saying, but it is just hard.*

Me: *I know, Mark.*

I only had Mark Jaspars as a student in my class for one semester his senior year. Occasionally, we passed in the halls, but I didn't see him very much the second semester until the day of Graduation. Mark had cut his hair into a Mohawk and had spiked and dyed it the most wonderful shade of blue. I saw him as the seniors were lining up to walk into the auditorium. When I saw Mark and asked him what had happened to his hair, he just shrugged, laughed, and replied, "Why not? I'm graduating!" That was the last time I talked to Mark.

Actually, I saw his face on television as I watched the morning news in early June during my summer vacation, and the newscaster's report went something like this:

> *"Over 500 hundred students met at a candlelight vigil last night at a carwash near a local high school to pray for their classmate and recent graduate Mark Jaspars. Mark died in a single car fatality; details are still sketchy."*

A picture of Mark in his graduation gown accompanied the news report. Early one morning a few days later I attended the funeral services in a local church near the school to hear Mark's three closest friends tell others what a wonderful friend he had been to them. The first friend said that he had written Matt's senior research paper for him and now was at a lost for words. Others told of his wonderful smile that had warmed their hearts, too. Mark's minister told a rather humorous story about Mark's drawing a cross which later became Mark's tattoo while listening indirectly to one of the preacher's sermons, but mostly the minister talked about Mark's love, his involvement in church, and his effect on everyone who knew him. Before the head football coach addressed the overflowing crowd, I noticed seven or eight extraordinary paintings surrounding the podium. One was a perfect depiction of an abandoned broken down pick-up truck standing alone on an old country road. The one-point perspective of the truck—a lonely inanimate object—and the winding country road were aligned with the mathematical precision of a master artist. One of the adult speakers said that Mark had been offered a sizable amount of money for his most treasured art piece, but he had not painted much as he grew older. I couldn't help but wonder who or what had stymied his artistic talents.

When our varsity head football coach did speak, he spoke of Mark's silent not boastful heroism on and off the field. Mark was the deep snapper for the football team who only appeared on the field in critical situations when his talents were needed. Rarely was his name ever announced during a game

and yet he was one of the most important players on the field. He talked about Mark's love for his teammates, his good-heartedness, his glowing smile, his sense of humor, and the selfless contributions he had made to "create a sense of family on the team." Others made mention of his love of art and the large network of friends and family members that would miss him. None more than me. Our football coach also talked about the team being a family and that as a team they spoke of family quite often. But what does a child do when the word family only brings him sadness and heartache? Mark had tried to create that sense of family elsewhere, and from the crowd of friends I believe that he had accomplished that goal.

Later, I went to school and although it was the summer, the secretaries in the main office were fielding phone calls about Mark and his death. Our principal's secretary told me that Mark had a drinking problem and suffered from depression that he had tried to hide, and his parents had met often over the last few months with one of our guidance counselor's to search for some answers to his drinking problems.

We continue to lose so many of our students when the curriculum of our schools does not meet their needs or interests, when the wealth of information that we have to offer is not relevant, and when our students have talents that our standardized approach to education controls, reduces, and finally snuffs out.

Mark needed more than kind words and referrals that one night from me on the telephone; he needed a caring adult who was more receptive; he

needed curriculum that met his needs and interests; he needed a caring teacher who was willing and able to treat him uniquely and concretely as the special child that he was; and he needed something that our schools could not give him personalized not standardized instruction. I was too busy for Mark. I just had too many students at the time that needed me so I let him do his own thing and I did mine. As long as he wasn't being left behind, I was ok with it. So was Mark. We educators must stop treating our very own children like mere objects like an abandoned, broken down pick-up truck on an old country road—not like objects but with care and concern and the precision of a master artist.

Narrative #23 – My Tree (a pseudonym), Caring for Things, Ideas, Subjects that We Love

How far does my care extend? This is an important question. I know that I care about my family and friends, but how about things? How about other life forms? How about new ideas that I have been introduced to? Do I care about these things, too? Do I care about these the same way that I care about my circle of intimate students and friends?

Yes, I do care about other life forms. Yes, I do care about things; but when I care about things—other life forms, pets, an interesting idea—the relationship is different because the sense of completion: there is not the return of caring that I might receive from another human being. I do believe

that other life forms do respond to my care and return that care in their own way. A perfect example of this was my tree.

One time we had a large oak tree growing outside our front lawn. I planted the tree as a young sapling and it must have just loved the location. I would say that it loved the pampering and care that I gave it, but I really didn't really give it that must care. It was watered when it rained, and it received the normal amount of sunlight. I guess that I may have watered it when the long summer months in Oklahoma got unbearable, but I never really made a point of it. In truth, I probably thought more about my lawn than I ever did that tree, but it grew. It must have reached some fifty feet in the sky before my wife thought it best to cut down a limb or two. I really didn't want to cut the tree. I think that all life is sacred. I know that this sounds odd, but I don't know why there aren't more activists speaking up for plants and trees than there are. I guess one might call me a tree hugger but never really saw myself that way. I mean I don't think that I ever really put my arms around a tree and hugged it although I would have hugged this tree if I knew that the tree or I would feel better.. The lower limbs were getting a little broad and I had heard that if I cut the lower limbs then the tree will continue to grow high and the tree actually likes the fact that it can reach higher towards the sun so I set off to cut the tree. Now, I have heard that there are seasons of the years when one should trim trees, but I never paid very close attention to these people. I mean I don't ever watch those shows that talk about gardening and planting. Although I love to have a nice yard and plenty of plants and flowers, I have

always felt like planting and gardening and growing were just a very natural thing like breathing, so I set out to cut those limbs in the middle of the summer when I had time to work on my lawn and trim the plants and trees.

Well, the two or three lowest limbs must have been about two or three inches in diameter not too big but large enough that a good sharp saw was necessary. When I began sawing, I felt this deep compassion welling inside of me like I was harming a good friend, like I was performing some kind of surgery on a human that only doctors should address, like I was betraying a silent trust between me and that tree---a trust if articulated would sound like this: I will grow and give you shade and beauty and protect you from the hard Oklahoma winds and sun and all I expect in return is a little extra water in the summer and some respect. I had provided that water, but I was without that respect and the tree was suffering. How? One might ask. The tree began to bleed. If one doesn't know that trees can bleed make no mistake they do. Each of these limbs that I sawed off began to bleed, and the inner dark blood of the tree began to drip down its trunk to show me what I had done and to match the tears that dripped down my own face. I was sorry but there was nothing that I could do. I did run to the local Home Depot to find some tree tar. I don't remember the name of the black, gooey tar like salve right now, but I do remember that I put it on the tree generously. I can still remember that my thoughts had returned to my boyhood and that wonderfully sad book <u>*The Giving Tree*</u>*. There a tree had given a young boy, the same young man, and finally that same old man its everything and all it too had expected in*

return was a little companionship, a little respect, and this was too much to ask. However, unlike the old man in the book <u>*The Giving Tree*</u> *this old man was truly changed by the tree, my tree, and to this day it continues to grow into the sky with untrimmed lower limbs and although I no longer live in that same house I often drive in the neighborhood just to see my tree and to see if even to this day it is given any self-respect.*

To care for something other than a human being is a different experience. Humans can return that care; a new and exciting idea cannot. Pets and other life forms can give us great pleasure, but this is still not the same. We cannot enter into the space of the other. However, a tree truly symbolizes the caring relationship at its best. The fruit of a tree naturally gives or the species dies. The root of the tree naturally takes if the tree is going to live as well. Giving and taking are natural to survival and so it goes with caring. Even as caring can define who we are and what we seek to be, caring can also define our limitations and our boundaries. As caring attention helps the tree grow high into the sky, pruning and root irrigation too can be an act of caring. And finally like the tree in *The Giving Tree,* one can give until there is nothing left. All of these are concepts that have been revealed in this chapter. Findings and conclusions will be proposed in the final chapter.

Conclusion

This data will provide rich material for me to analyze and gain perspective into the concept of care. These narratives came to the surface through

intense personal journaling. It was as if the individuals that I had once known or still know beckoned me to give them a voice through my writing. I began to direct my reflections upon former and present students—always concentrating on the concept of care. However, it did not take long for me to include other individuals who I care for and who care for me. This was no easy task. One would think that it would be easy to write about students who have had an impact on a teacher's life, but when one dedicates much of his life to the welfare, safeguard, and growth of individuals, then this invested interest becomes very meaningful and emotional. In addition, when one is constantly dealing with such emotionally charged material, the researcher is left emotionally exhausted and drained. Such was the case in this research project. This stage of incubation was welcomed before a final analysis of the data and the presentation of Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations for Further Study in the next chapter.

Chapter 5

Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations for Further Study

An Introduction

Heuristic research is a painful and lonely study. Of these findings, I am quite certain. I immersed myself eagerly yet naively in the concept of care looking for it in road signs and billboards, magazines and newspapers, advertisements and daily mailings; observing it in the practices of caring people in schools and hospitals; and finding it everywhere. However, it was only when I started looking for care deeply within myself that I learned what genuine caring is all about. Caring defines me as a person by the way that I develop caring relationships with others and the way that others develop caring relationships with me. In my classroom, the caring relationships create attitudes which lead to caring actions and practices. In my school, these caring relationships become a driving force in the lives of many of the teachers, administrators, and support personnel. Caring attitudes and practices can be highly infectious and can spread rapidly throughout the school and beyond. Once contracted, the caring individual is prone to infect others and before long, care can turn a seemingly chaotic and insensitive classroom and school into an inter-connected, concerned, and compassionate one. I believe caring can do the same to the world in which we live.

My personal journaling took me on a journey of self-discovery. I traveled wherever my writing led me; free-associative, stream of consciousness writing can do this. I visited remote and distant memories that had been lost, suppressed, or long-forgotten. Only months into my study, I began to in-dwell within this phenomenon called care—one that ancient Roman philosophers had defined as natural as the air we breathe and as far-reaching as the physical, emotional, and spiritual existence of humankind itself; and I reduced care to the singular perceptions and thoughtful reflections of one lonely researcher. Little did I realize at the beginning of my investigation, that the answer to "what is the concept of care?" would be so intertwined with my own moral convictions, values, and self-worth. I began to reflect often and asked myself important questions such as: What kind of person and teacher have I become? What kind of life do I want for myself and my students? What kind of people do I want them to become? How can I impact my life and theirs in my classroom? In transforming my classroom, can I in some real way transform my school and the profession of education, too? Little did I know that to answer these questions, I would have to return to my own childhood, that I would have to revisit some painful and some joyful memories, and that I would have to look deeply into those lived experiences. My journey would have to be one where I would have to delve beyond experience into knowing. I would go beyond just experiencing care; I would have to know care.

Moreover, some of these memories, presented in my data collection, placed me, as researcher, in a most favorable light; others cast dark shadows

on my motivations, methods, strategies, and moral decisions. However, caring enabled me to clarify my life and taught me to trust my instincts and to learn from my many mistakes. Consequently, my study in the concept of care became so emotionally demanding and exhausting that I looked forward to what Clark Moustakas (1990) calls incubation not as a part of the heuristic process but as a much needed break. Although I needed a respite from my research project and tried to think about something other than care, I kept returning to care and to thinking about my long teaching career and to a recurring daydream--one that I have had frequently on the way to school in the early morning. Finally, I wrote that daydream down in my journal and in some mysterious way the daydream shapes this final chapter of my study and my conclusions and findings.

A Recurring Daydream

I am on my way to school—the same route that I take each morning and have been taking for the past twenty some odd years. It never gets old. I am comfortable with these surroundings just like I am comfortable in my own classroom with my own students. I live some distance from school so this little trip of about 20 minutes gives me a chance to reflect about the day. I often plan my lessons or go over in my mind the class discussion or the mini-lecture that I will give that day. However, I would be lying if I said this was all that I think about. One thought recurs all the time. I would also be lying if I said that I have never shed a tear when I think about it. Just yesterday I

asked my seniors to write about their first memory as a daily writing assignment.

They usually write about their first kiss or their first boyfriend or girlfriend or their first date or the first time that they held hands or their first car. These are always heart-warming to read because they write with such a sensitive and innocent voice and have such a fresh and romantic view of life. It reminds me of my own childhood.

My own first memory is about the first day of school. I can still see myself in the living room. My parents, especially my mother, made this a very special day for me. Friends and neighbors and relatives were sitting in the living room just clapping and smiling and encouraging me. They were excited; so was I. This whole montage is very surreal. I can still see my hair combed just perfectly, cowlick pressed down with cold water, my shoes laced, my shorts joining my dark socks in celebration: ***I was going to school****.*

I can still see my light brown leather (to be honest—plastic) brief case that I was to carry to school that day, stuffed, I am quite sure, with pencils and erasers and my red Indian tablet, and books, lots of books. I am sure that my "My Friend Flicka" lunch pail was close by.

I can still see that picture, practically a tableau, as clearly as if it were yesterday. I just loved going to school and some 50 years later I still feel exactly the same way. God, I love teaching those kids. Thank you so much for selecting me to become a teacher. As I continue to drive, I start thinking about all those years of teaching, and I begin to shed a tear of joy.

Often, I think about my father and his only words of wisdom, "'Ran, first, find a job that you love. Second, find a job that will pay you a salary where you can live the quality of life you want. Now, if you can find a job that does both, you will be happy. If you can't, you won't.'" Luckily, I have never had to work a day in my life.

As I near the school, I think about all the things that my students have given me: their sharing of life's many sorrows or joys or pleasures or dreams or expectations or lost loves or future plans or pain at home or their idealism. You see I will tell you a secret whenever I am in a bad mood, whenever I find that life is getting me down, I just take the time to see the world through the eyes of a child and to share in the lives of my students and —to hear about their interests, their disappointments, their difficulties, and their personal lives; and that sense of connection always frees me of my own burdens, always puts things in perspective, always connects me with the life force, and always reinforces my own commitment to put caring, based on love and trust, at the forefront of my life as a teacher and as a human being.

As I park my car, I am rejuvenated. I feel a sense of goodness and see that goodness in my students and other staff members (administrators, classroom teachers, secretaries, custodial and food service professionals) and I care more. I rely on this sense of goodness when I engage students who are confrontational and who extend my patience to my limits. I also am aware of the person I can become in working with children, all children—a better self. My students bring out the best in me. Students bring out the best

in my colleagues. Before I finally walk through the doors of my school, I whisper a prayer of thanks—thanks that I have made such a serendipitous decision to become a teacher—a decision that I have never regretted. My students have given so much for the little that I have given them in return. It does not take long for me to return to my daily life; and renewed, I wish to return to my study of care.

I have learned many things in the course of my qualitative research study. I have learned that I am only providing one perspective of the concept of care; and although I have attempted to explore this concept as broadly and as deeply as humanly possible, I am still limited by my own perceptions and my own personal encounters. I believe that our attempt to understand and know core values is paradoxical: the deeper we explore, the sharper our focus, the more expansive becomes our subject and awareness. It is like one of our high school students' video adventure games: as adventurer progresses into more and more complex caverns of awareness, whole new vistas of understanding are illuminated and he or she finds new worlds to explore and encounter.

I cannot over-emphasize that the concept of care encompasses so much of what we do, think, and say in both our private and public lives. What is care? I believe that care is a practice and a value. Although I do not believe that care itself is a virtue, it encompasses many virtues such as sensitivity, receptivity, mutual respect, love, trust, and concern. Care not only has to do with the meeting of needs of another, but the way in which those needs are

met. The carer must know the cared-for concretely, dispelling any stereotype or vague and comfortable abstraction. The carer must know who the cared-for is: the carer must know the strengths, interest, weaknesses, limitations, and how to respond to those needs to insure that the needs of the cared-for are met. The cared-for must find a way of responding to the carer: this may take many forms for a caring relationship to exist and for a sense of completion to occur. Often, the cared-for responds generously and shares spontaneously; at other times, the cared-for responds dismally and shares reluctantly. Regardless, in caring relationships both the carer and cared-for are enhanced; the caring relationship is reflected and sustained. When care goes awry, the carer may care for the wrong reasons or may care in an uncaring manner and/or the cared-for may not receive the transaction of energies and may not respond in a caring manner; both are left incomplete. Such was the case in some of the narratives in my data.

Nevertheless, this heuristic study seeks to delve within myself for greater understanding; it seeks to explore my own tacit knowledge through re-living significant relationships not as high levels of abstractions based on mere nameless and faceless students but to deal with specific individuals who have names, faces, pasts and their own experiences and who desired a better life just like I do.

Heuristic Study of Caring: Findings

Caring in Teaching

I date my first recollection of care all the way back to my own childhood. Our parents provide the keys to caring. Truly, it is the mother's voice, "a different voice" that must be heard. However, both parents teach us to care in different ways. My mother taught me to recognize the growth and potential of every human being. She not only taught me to care for my own well-being (physical, emotional, social, and especially spiritual) but she taught me to be concerned for the well-being of others. I believe that she unconsciously was teaching me to care-for others so that I might be happy and be able to care-for her in the final years of her life as her life comes full circle. I believe that my children will do this for me, both my son and daughter. This has translated into a concern for the well-being, safety, and growth of my students. Her approach to life through her example was for me to be happy and to feel good about myself, and this can only be accomplished through a conscious awareness of the happiness of others. If I feel good about myself, I can be more attentive to others and can be more receptive to care. My mother taught me that to be self-actualized is not to be a separate, autonomous, completely independent individual but to be fully aware and integrated in the interconnectedness of the universe—both in human and non-human life forms. She taught me to look at that life with wonder and to involve myself in lived experiences with passion.

In addition, my father was a business man. Actually, he was a simple bookkeeper and public accountant. He helped me develop skills that would be useful in the world of business; however, he knew that his interests were not necessarily my interests, and he helped me develop my interests no matter how painful (or how much of a curse) initially that may have been for him. Where my mom instilled patience and acceptance, my father encouraged a strong work ethic and a unique sense of humor. Both of these have proved useful in the world of education. All of my teacher participants identified that sense of humor as essential to the "sanity of teaching." My father, unlike my mother, was not openly affectionate. This was a social construct of what Tom Brokaw called "the greatest generation"—a generation known for its service to family and country. The men of my father's generation did not show their emotions and feelings openly; but my father worked hard and long hours to express his love for me.

I began my literature review by researching the writings of many feminist writers who cried out for radical changes in society. These changes could only take place through an awareness of hierarchical structures that perpetuate fragmentation and oppression based on race, class, and certainly gender. However, often the question of a caring society was lost in the rhetoric and disputatious dialogue. When I was able to get at the heart of the matter, I realized that what many of these feminist writers were wanting for themselves and others like them is what I too desire—a freer, more humane, and caring society. My father probably would not have understood this. He

would have surmised that he had already fought for those freedoms and being victorious he was passing those freedoms on to me.

Susan Faludi (1999) in *Stiffed: The Betrayal of the American Man* disagrees and affirms that the battle continues. Faludi (1999) writes that men today are confronted "with a historic opportunity to learn to wage a battle against no enemy, to own a frontier of human liberty, to act in the service of a brotherhood that includes us all" (p. 608). The way that Faludi sees it, and I concur, is that men must show the courage to accept the social responsibility which is the "lifelong work of all citizens in a community where people are knit together by meaningful and mutual concerns" (p. 607). The question is not one of trying to be more masculine but in trying to be fully human. To become more caring, indeed, means to become more fully human.

This fact has led me to recognize that men attempt to express caring attitudes differently than women do. In the case of all of my narratives which focused on men, the man—whether a coach, principal, or classroom teacher--cared deeply for and developed strong concrete relationships with the cared-for. These men just showed that care quite differently from the female teachers and participants. I believe that this has to do with the differences in intrapersonal relationships and how those relationships are frequently perceived by others. When in conversation, women are concerned with rapport, with relationships, and with developing those relationships through conversation; men are concerned with report, with an exchange of information, not in developing relationships through conversations.

In the case of my own father, I never did really get to know my father until I learned of his Alzheimer's disease. Alzheimer's has been described as a disease of two people—the patient confined by the caregiver for his own safety and the caregiver virtually imprisoned because the patient cannot be left alone" (Nelson & Nelson, 1997, p. 95). In my case, it was when in confinement that my father showed himself to be a vulnerable human being and thus became real flesh-and-blood to me that our relationship began to grow, mostly because I demanded it. When I reflect back on his disease, I have come to realize that caring for our aged parents is often left to either society or our sisters and daughters; and I have realized that if society continues to fail to care for our aged parents, we family members, men as well as women must. If we become a more caring people, especially men, then I believe that all members of the family, men included, will become more responsible and meet the needs of our aged, our infirmed, and our dependent children.

Many of these caring structures that I learned from my own parents have provided the foundation for relationships with students and colleagues throughout my teaching career. Patience and a sense of humor are integral; creating a caring, nurturing relationship is essential. Dr. James Comer (2006), Professor of Child Psychiatry at the Yale University has said that "No significant learning occurs without a significant relationship." These words ring so true. The strong bond that unites mother and child must be recreated between teacher and child. The teacher must treat the child as a subject and

not as an object. Caring seeks to overcome the great danger of treating our children as objects, as things, and as abstractions. Whenever we consider our children as nothing more than receptors of a curriculum, as our patrons, our clients, our customers, our school population, our student body, and even "the kids in our classroom" without envisioning the clear picture and image and name of specific children we are walking a dangerous line of reducing human beings to mere objects and principles: the greatest evils and tragedies of human history are based on the collective effort to deal with these vague abstractions. Our children have every right to look at us right in the eye and cry: "You don't even know me!" as we continue to shape their futures and to affect their lives and often to inflict senseless pain without a "lick" of common sense.

In the creative interior monologue offered as data in the previous chapter, my mother was saddened to think that our lives can be looked back upon and valued by the accumulation of things, but I believe that an entire educational system which is only concerned with providing the skills to attain that same material wealth is doing just that—defining one's life by possessions. One of my students told me recently: "We must 'Love people and use things, instead of loving things and using people.'" She was so right. When we define success by the accumulation of things, then we are left with meaningless lives and thoughtless uncaring children. In addition, when we reduce the essence of one's life to test scores, we have reduced one's life to mere things. It is

interesting that in all of my data—those who have the least (for instance, Dixie's crew) were the ones that had the most—one another.

Caring is a practice and the manner in which that practice takes place. This is true of the caring professions whether it is the teacher who cares for the child like his or her own or the nurse who treats the cranky and dejected elderly grandmother like she was the nurse's own mother. Caring takes place most fully in a concrete one-on-one relationship between two people—one who has a need and the other who has the skills or resources to meet that need. True caring takes place when the motivation is solely to meet that need as an end in itself. As teachers, we must be willing to maintain and improve our competency by an understanding of current knowledge of subject matter and innovative teaching strategies to insure that the needs of each student are met. Competency also pertains to the manner in which teachers show that care. A caring manner is often just the general sympathetic, nurturing attitude that the teacher takes. It is a process of engrossment where the teacher sees the world through the eyes of the student and determines the way in which that knowledge might apply to the student's world. This is never easy and has been the center of much debate in the literature. Is this a process of empathy where the teacher sympathizes with the student? Is this engrossment where a duality of being takes place and the teacher and student become one?

I have sought to see the world through the eyes of my students. I have even written the lyrical poetry "My Window" with the intent of seeing the world

through my students' eyes. However, either the transaction is never complete or for some reason my eyes are rather weak, but I always know that my eyes are not my students' eyes—the eyes of the carer are never the eyes of the cared-for. I wish that I could experience Buber's I-Thou experience but I just could not do that. I am not sure that I wish to. I will never be able to see the world as my students see the world. My world is not their world. My reality is not their reality. Oh, we have some things in common, but our perceptions of the world are not the same. I believe that there is a reason that our students have popularized the line "I need my space." It is because they do. The child must read her world; I cannot do that for her. I agree with Freire (1987) when he points out that too much of American education seeks to do this. This does not prevent me to care for my students and to visualize the subject as they visualize it as long as I remember that truly cannot happen. The world of my summer school students was quite different from my world; but, I believe, that my desire to care for them bridged these worlds together.

I will not allow my students to tune me out in my attempt to bridge these worlds. I will not allow them to put on their MP3 players and to crank up the volume so loud that they ignore me and my world. Just because I do not understand their world fully does not mean that I will not continue to try.

What it does mean is that as caring teachers, we must be receptive to the needs of our students. This requires that we know them as human beings and as learners. This may also require that we, as Ellsworth (1992) posits, "facilitate ways of making sense of the world and acting together that affirm

our differences—and the knowledges associated with them" (p. 5). This may also mean that the caring teacher must create a classroom with "public space" where students can "think through (and live out) classroom practices" that address each student's "growing awareness of the histories, manifestations, and consequences based on oppressive formations such as racism, sexism, ageism, heterosexism, classism, anti-Semitism, and so on" (Ellsworth, 1992, p. 5). Often, the classroom teacher is more aware of those students with special needs or the student is familiar with soliciting the support of the carer. In the case of Teddy Howard, he was immediately receptive to my care giving as a teacher and friend, but never demanded it. He wished to show his independence as a learner. In the case of Philip Edwards, he sought me only as someone who was competent in linguistic skills and had the competency to meet his needs in skill development. Both, I believe, knew that they had something to offer to me. Teddy Howard naturally knew how to return that care in his loud and guttural response of gratitude. Phillip Edwards said "thanks" and was on his way. Both showed appreciation; Phillip Edwards may have known that his absorption and total concentration in the subject matter were a means of showing appreciation far beyond what words of thanks could have expressed. Both the needs of Teddy Howard and Philip Edwards became gifts to me. This is as old as the custom of hospitality itself where the host and hostess give themselves openly and freely to the tired and worn traveler and in giving, they receive rich gifts in return. The caring teacher wishes to become more open and

receptive to the gifts offered by the student and this openness and receptivity become a way of life in the classroom. When the teacher and students begin to look for caring opportunities, the entire classroom community is enriched. Both students and teacher will find opportunities everywhere around them to care for the well-being, safeguard, and growth of one another. In an attempt to change the lives of a few, many have been changed.

Is this possible? I believe that it is. I believe that I experienced this when Philip Edwards changed the personality and the work ethic of an entire class. I saw it most visibly with my summer school class, for when I asked my students to forgive me for my thoughtlessness and deeply reached out to them as one in need, they responded with a caring and loving response—one that they too had learned at an early age. Can everyone care? Some have not been taught caring practices like I was and some at an early age have not been shown patterns of care, but it is never too late. Care is all around us. The patterns and practices of care are everywhere, and it is never too late to learn.

There is one more dimension of care that I must add here. The caring teacher must respond to, what Ellsworth (1992) calls the "unique and powerful conjunctures of social positions, histories, power relations, languages, and ways of knowing" (p. 7). These moments of crises are unpredictable, but merely "retreating from these moments guarantees their return in yet another form" (p. 7). Each student in the classroom not only brings with her a history, but that student also develops a history within the

classroom. The classroom teacher must be ever aware to confront the "unique and powerful conjunctures" to identify oppressive structures which exist not only in society but also which take form as language and thought formations in the classroom.

Touch as a Symbol of Care in Teaching

Touch becomes the center of caring. My outwardly unaffectionate father in his most defining moments grabbed my hand in the emergency room of the hospital. My mother noticed that the only nurse, Cindy, who truly cared for her, the only one who knew my mother's first name, the only one that my mother knew personally was the one that truly touched my mother in a caring way. Similarly, many of my fellow teachers, indirectly or directly, pointed out to me that their favorite moment in their school day was the very beginning of class each hour. Some teachers waited outside the door to greet students by name as they entered the classroom. Others patted students on the back or gave them a "high-five." One teacher requires her students to write for a few minutes to begin the class session so that the teacher can circulate throughout the room and gently place her hand on her students' shoulders showing them how much she loves and cares for each one.

I try to pass out papers to my students individually at least once a week so that I can talk to each student by name. Often I find myself placing my hand on their shoulders and am amazed by the look in their eyes. Their soft eyes show me that they are returning that care to me.

In this regard, I am also reminded of my former principal Chuck Knox who identified lunch time as his favorite time of the day. It was during lunch that he could be "with those kids"; and when he became a district administrator, he missed those kids so much that he retired so that he could greet each elementary child individually, open his or her car door, hold the child's books as the child shuffled from his or her car, and helped each one enter the school building, or in his own caring way Chuck Knox would show them how to separate his thumb. It was this symbol of hands and touching that pervades my data collection.

I believe that there are many kinds of touching: nurses know that this is true. The physical touch is a strong means of connection between human beings. Often this touch is reaffirming, nurturing, soothing, comforting, and gentle. Much, however, depends on the two people and the situation in which they find themselves. In a classroom, where skill development is often a difficult and frustrating experience, the physical sense of touch can be a positive and therapeutic sign of caring that says to the student if you are having trouble, I am having trouble. If you are suffering, so am I suffering (like my mother would show me). However, through our caring relationship, we can overcome these difficulties together. I am sure that we all shared in Susan Case's pain throughout the second half of that homecoming basketball game, and the intimate circle of care reached out to Judy Green as she went home that night dejected that she had not played against her sister.

Spiritual touch, unlike physical touch, has to do with touching one's personal belief system. I do not believe that spiritual touching requires that one's belief system be changed for touching to take place—my mother helped me to develop and formulate my own belief system; my students and other intimate friends help me to reconstruct that belief system all of the time. As an English teacher, I believe that I have a responsibility to introduce various perspectives to my students to challenge their belief systems and perspectives as they do mine. I believe that spiritual touching can be as penetrating and as tingling to the spirit of the individual as physical touching was to the physical senses.

As a classroom teacher, I must believe that intellectual touching takes place, also. I would like to think that this touching takes place more often than it does for my students, but a teacher is limiting his or her own growth by entering the classroom each day only as carer and not as a cared-for. When a teacher understands that his or her students are also teachers then a more caring relationship exists and greater learning takes place. One must give caring a chance. The teacher must approach the classroom as a student to learn from his or her students. The teacher must share in the learning. In this way the teacher too is touched by the intellectual sharing not only the children.

Caring Teachers Find Students in Need Everywhere

The caring teacher will find needy students other than in the classroom. I found a young girl the first day of school one year that needed me and luckily

I was there for her. She stood out in the crowd; the caring teacher recognizes that the high achievers and the low achievers are easily noticeable, but there are others who do not stand out in the crowd of students. The others are the mid range students (the brother(s) of the prodigal son) who go(es) unnoticed. The needs of these students must also be met; the successes of these students must also be recognized and celebrated. Often, they are not. Unfortunately, too, these students remain quiet, reserved, silent, and abstracted in a number of different ways. They find safety in their silence. We teachers find that we are able to devote our time and energies to the needs of the high and low range by the silence of the mid range of students. We teachers as caring professionals must meet the needs of all students; it is here where no child left behind makes sense. When the teacher is receptive to the needs of each student, the teacher has the opportunity as in Natalie's and Ebony's case to become heroes in a child's life. The only way that this can be done is to know the student as human beings and as learners.

The caring teacher and caring human being are rewarded more than they will ever know when there is a willingness to receive the other. In my family's case, the care that our parents gave us has been graciously and lovingly returned full circle. In the case of our students, as Philip taught me there is no thanks necessary. Caring is what we as humans are suppose to do. It often, not always, comes naturally. Speaking of Philip, he also taught me a great lesson about caring. The center of caring as a teacher should be in the subject that we teach. In teaching as the motivational energies are shifted

from the teacher to the student and the needs are identified and recognized, another shift takes place to the subject.

Whereas Noddings (2003) stresses the caring relationship which is dyadic (between carer and cared-for), not enough emphasis has been placed on the dynamic which exists in the classroom: the triadic relationship between teacher, student, and subject. The teacher must maintain his own perspective while seeing the world through the eyes of the student as she engages in the subject. The teacher's love of the subject can be directly felt by the student: it is this motivational energy that may excite the learner and drive her on to understanding. For every student, there is a triad: this creates both a great challenge for the teacher who must cope with a multiplicity of triads in the classroom which are in constant flux and change.

I interviewed students and all seemed to share with me the same conclusions: caring teachers care about students as learners. Palmer (1998) is quite right when he writes that "Good teachers join self and subject and students in the fabric of life" (p. 11). My students told me that some teachers want to know about students as people—what students enjoy outside of school as hobbies or special interests, what they read, what television shows they watch, what music they listen to, what movies they have seen; but a caring teacher is concerned about the students' learning of skills, most of all, those skills necessary to achieve success in the subject. The students' favorite teachers without exception were those teachers in the areas of their interests. To care for a child is to care for their well-being in general; but a

deeper caring in education has to do with caring for the child as a learner and to share a deep passion of the subject with that student.

I wish that I could count the number of times, I cannot, when a student has told me: you really love English and teaching, don't you Mr. Baker. After a while, I realized that there must be quite a few teachers who really don't love teaching or the child. If, however, I had to choose between my subject or the linguistic skills necessary to show competence in my subject, I would choose the child without hesitation. Our children need to know this. They are truly more important than their test scores or their grades. One might say "Well, our children already know this. It is obvious." Our children do not know this and in the world of school, they feel that they are validated by test taking ability rather than strong character building.

It is with a caring attitude that changes can be made in our classrooms and in our schools. This notion of receptivity is another way of saying that teachers must stay connected—connected to new, exciting, and creative teaching strategies and connected to our students. When we lose this connectedness, we often lose the joy of teaching. My observations in caring reaffirm something that I have always believed: caring teachers are the most caring of professionals.

Time and time again, I have seen teachers walk out of our building late into the evening. I am quite sure that someone else in the family has had to prepare dinner because this teacher has spent hours after school counseling, grading papers, preparing the next day's lessons, or researching a topic.

Even though these professionals are poorly paid and work under very stressful and trying conditions, they are always willing to make small or overwhelming changes in their curriculum because legislators, district or building administrators, State Departments of Education or educational researchers tell them that a child will benefit or this new innovation will improve student's learning. This new strategy or method often requires much more work and effort on the teacher's part than it ever does on the part of the student.

Often the one offering this new and radical teaching method or innovation knows little or nothing about the individual child (as my mother pronounced: they don't even know my name). The dynamics of teacher's classroom or the complexity of the subject matter or the child's background or personal experiences or social and economic influences which may affect learning are never considered but as long as one child is having trouble or another may benefit almost always teachers are willing to make time-consuming and exhaustive changes and to give it a try. I have seen this over and over again. I have even seen an individual teacher after open-heart surgery with multi-colored tubes protruding from his chest only think about returning to school to help his students succeed and to learn.

The Ethic of Care and Masculine Caring

An obvious criticism about caring as an entire ethic in school is that it is too weak an ethic—an ethic connected with the emotions of sympathy and compassion is too weak upon which to base one's way of dealing with

complex and difficult issues. My response to this criticism is based upon my caring relationships with leaders such as Coach K.E. Sanders who maintained a tough and stern demeanor but those close to him knew he cared. Caring comes in all shapes and sizes. Caring is not weak. It is a tough kind of loving manner and attitude. It takes courage. I can also draw upon the relationship that Dixie, our head night custodian, who instilled fear into her co-workers but those individuals who knew by her tone of voice and her close connection and constant insistence that she cared. One of the strongest administrators that I have worked for was Chuck Knox who wanted caring professionals working in his building. He built a caring community of believers—ones who believed in children and ones who had a passion for the subject they taught.

Chuck Knox, in addition, was not a weak administrator quite the contrary. He was a decisive leader and made decisions that were often unpopular. Often these unpopular decisions based on care led to innovative programs which in some cases enriched the lives of both student and teacher. In some cases, as in the Chance To Change program, the lives of many students were literally saved from the destructive forces of drug use. Chuck Knox was a man of action and of principle; and he based his decisions on a caring concern for his students, teachers, and support personnel. Both of these are worth mentioning.

Parents know that they must act in a number of ways in the nurturing and disciplining of a child--ways that the child may dislike. This may have to do

with establishing study times, limiting the use of the internet, regulating television watching, setting curfews, working with a tutor, developing study habits, or attending family get-togethers or just curtailing inappropriate attitudes or behavior. These strong and decisive guidelines are established out of care for the child, with the child's best interest in mind. Chuck Knox established the same caring resolve in his decisions when dealing with faculty: he often made decisions based on one thing—what was best for the children. This strong caring leadership was contagious and shaped a school culture based on care.

Coach K. E. Knox was not an openly caring individual. He focused on individual skill development and the building of team concepts. However, care can be shown in a number of different ways by men as well as women. The fact that the mother is often delegated in our society with child rearing and child development does not mean that those patterns and practices are not learned by their sons. What our society must do is to encourage care throughout society by both men and women and in both the public as well as the private lives of human beings.

Noddings (2003a) after writing the seminal work *Caring* was criticized strongly because of her emphasis on the cared-for and not the carer. So often we are so concerned with the needs of the cared-for that we lose sight of the energy and both physical and emotional demands placed upon the carer. In education, in an attempt to care for the learner, we do not realize the demands placed on the teacher. Teaching can be very stressful; the

demands placed upon the teacher can be many by each student; the care itself can be exhausting, emotional, frustrating and demanding. Sometimes the teacher is left with a sense of fulfillment or exhilaration; other times the teacher may feel intense guilt or deep loss. Regardless, the carer has been changed by the experience; and today although every effort is being made to affect each and every child, we must remember that it is the carer who is being affected also. Oddly, when care is not accepted by the cared-for, the carer becomes the object of his or her own care. However, one further conclusion drawn from my study may offer that carer some gratification.

When we care as both teachers and human beings, we develop our capacity to care. When we care and begin to recognize the goodness that exists in authentic caring, we feel better about ourselves. We begin to realize that caring develops our best self. When we answer the voice inside of us that calls us and says “I must” then we feel a sense of goodness within and we begin to enhance our best self. It is this best self that we appeal to with our students. It is this best self that we rely on with in dealing with those students with whom we find difficult to teach. As we begin to develop caring relationships with all of our students and find caring ways to touch the lives of each of our students, our capacity to care increases and that caring manner and attitude extends beyond our classroom into other areas of our professional and private lives. The caring that is displayed with our own children and in our own homes likewise can be extended into our classrooms, in our schools, and in our businesses. It is no surprise, I think, that the most

caring individuals that I have met in my own life are those who I have seen teaching in our schools to strengthen their students' skills when only a short time before those same caring adults were too weak to leave their own hospital bed while tied down by tubes connected to heart monitors.

Caring Classrooms in Our Schools

Caring teachers instill within their students that each life is precious and significant. Each student in the classroom has value; the caring teacher must create an atmosphere in the classroom so that students can share the significance of their own lives with each other. They also must recognize that the lives of their classmates have significance, also. My seniors are facing the same fears that I am facing presently and that my father faced when diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease—the unpredictability of the future. Many believe that our teenagers should not have a care in the world. They are young with much of their life ahead of them. Since beginning my study, I have heard other critics cry repeatedly that "Our teenagers today don't care about anything!"

These are not the teenagers that I see each and every day. My teenagers care about the world around them; they care about the kind of person they are; they care about the person that they are becoming; they care about what they are going to do with the rest of their lives; they care about their planet; they care about how they are going to find meaning in their lives; they care about their friends and fellow classmates and their teachers, and they care

about the futures of their own children. They care about so many things, but they seldom are given the opportunity to speak their minds. They are seldom told that their lives matter or that they have something to contribute. Their voices are not respected. A caring teacher seeks to provide opportunities for each child to speak his or her voice and seeks to find an audience who listens even if that audience is just created in the classroom.

Caring in English Education Programs

I would like to address the concept of care as it pertains to English Education programs throughout the country. When English Education professors ask: How can we identify the prospective teachers who will really care about their students? What can we do to ensure that they will care? What does a caring teacher look like? What are those caring practices? The answers to these questions are not easy but my study will help. I offer five suggestions to consider:

1. Show care to them. English Education professors should show care to their students. Some cultural anthropologists believe that caring is not a universal desire but the need to be cared for is. Let us look at this more closely. If this is true, then at some point in our lives, we have all been in need of care—care in the early years of our lives, care when we are sick, care when we have lost a job, care for our car, and care for our lawns. We are constantly in need of care from others. If we want those around us to be more caring to us, then we need to be more caring to them. If we want our

students or in this case future teachers to be more caring, then we must demonstrate that practice to our students. I will discuss later a few caring units and practices that I demonstrate to my students in my own classroom. A caring relationship that is nurtured enhances both individuals—the carer and the cared-for.

I believe and my study indicates when we show care, the capacity to care is more fully and deeply enlarged. I showed care to Ebony, and she wished to return that care on a very human and personal level to me. Now she wishes to extend that care to others—to children in professional child care. This may be true, but Ebony was probably a caring individual long before our relationship. Maybe so. Nick was not a caring individual. At least he rarely showed it in my class or to me. I happened to see him at a workshop in a local university not long ago. He is majoring in nursing rather than joining the Marines. He has chosen a caring profession in order to meet the needs of others. Sometimes our students do not respond to the teacher's caring for some time. Sometimes we find out about the change that has taken place; often we do not.

I recently talked to an esteemed education professor as he was conferencing with his prospective student-teachers. He tries to meet with his student-teachers three or four times through the course of the semester before their student teaching experience. The professor seeks to develop a relationship with each of his student-teachers so that he can advise them properly and meet the needs of each one. This professor is seeking to create

a strong caring relationship with his students. In the eventuality that problems may arise during the student-teaching experience, this caring relationship will provide a foundation for strong communication, mutual understanding and trust between teacher and student.

2. Maintain a sense of balance. English education programs must emphasize that today's teacher must maintain a sense of balance in the secondary classroom. Classroom teachers are tugged on in many different directions, and it is easy to lose sight of the reason that most became teachers—**to care by touching the lives and hearts of our children.** Our communities often see effective writing skills as nothing more than correctness in grammar, spelling, and penmanship. Standardized tests indicate that critical thinking is not as important as reading and writing for speed. The competition for scholarships and admission to our prestigious universities and specialized programs focuses on students' grades not students' learning. A sense of balance is crucial to touching the lives of our students.

3. Develop concrete one-on-one relationships. Young prospective teachers must also be guided to understand that caring has to do with developing a personal and concrete one-on-one relationship with students. Teachers must be responsible for the well-being, safety, and growth of each student.

To insure the growth of linguistic skills, as an English teacher, I must engage students in reading and writing. The difficulty most often I face is in

the engagement. Thus, I must know the interests, experiences, and backgrounds as people; and their strengths and weaknesses, as learners. John Dewey (1938) always emphasized that teachers must know their students as individuals to determine what is important to them. He emphasized that teachers must take the time to get to know their students, to find out their interests, and to listen to their stories and personal experiences in order to create educational experiences which captured their imagination and motivated them to learn. It is only when I am in touch with my students' lives that I am able to recommend something that they might enjoy reading or that they might find worth exploring through their own writing.

Once again, English Education students must realize the importance of developing strong caring relationships based on student learning and a passion for the subject in which they teach. Caring relationships too are based on a mutual sense of trust that the teacher will do everything in his or her power to meet the needs of the student, but the final choice in learning is left to the student.

4. Caring comes in many forms. Students tell me that caring comes in many forms. One student told me in an interview that a teacher shows care by the way that he or she manages the classroom. Another student said that a teacher did not even care enough to correct those students who misbehaved. I surmised that to students classroom management is a form of caring. One teacher in our school, the cheerleader sponsor, who is not yet tenured, faced a recent challenge. She was forced to take action against one

of the senior girls on the cheerleading squad who had violated this organization's rules and policies. Her action was an unpopular one. It would have been much easier for her to ignore the child's indiscretion. I have met similar challenges throughout my teaching career as a classroom teacher. It would have been much easier to ignore the sleeping student or ignore the child's not working and talking to a friend or ignore a child who is misbehaving and distracting others, but to face and deal with the problem like the cheerleader sponsor and to anticipate future problems is a form of caring.

5. Caring teachers care about their students as learners. Without exception, students interviewed believed that teachers showed care through their passion and love of the subject they taught. Those teachers who truly cared were concerned about their students' love and passion for the subject. It was not enough, however, that the teacher loved the subject, but the caring teacher wished to communicate that love to the student and was concerned when the student had not learned the information. What I have learned through my study is that a caring human being is concerned about that care. Caring teachers are constantly evaluating their caring manner and the caring techniques that they employ. They keep care at the forefront of their minds. Caring teachers too are concerned about their teaching: caring teachers, experienced or inexperienced, wish to explore methods and strategies that enhance student learning. Caring teachers are never satisfied. They are willing to show their own vulnerability when they are perplexed or frustrated.

This was probably the hardest lesson that I had to learn as a teacher: I did not have all of the answers and it is all right to let my students know this.

Caring Relationships with Students

Upon analyzing my personal reflections, I realized the impact that one student can have on an entire classroom. One often hears how a disruptive student has defined the entire class and when that same student is absent, how the class has completely changed. This holds true in a positive way as well. Our students have much to offer us. We must be aware of each child's significance and the power of the contribution that each child can make. Philip Edwards was such a child. He taught me a great deal about many things. The one that I have mentioned is patience. There are others.

Philip Edwards was not going to be manipulated by time. Time rules many of our lives. In today's world, we must meet deadlines; we must not be late for meetings, appointments, luncheon engagements, and professional development conferences. We never seem to have enough time. As classroom teachers, we need precious time for planning, for collaboration, for individual work and tutoring, we just do not have the time to get to know our students any more. But Philip was not going to let time rule his life. He just wasn't. He would find the time; he would make the time; he would make decisions based on priorities so that those priorities in his life which were most important would be given the time. Such is the case with our students. Our students will really care about our subjects when and only when we let

them know that we care about them first. Then all kinds of things are possible. We can share with them our joy for learning and they will often respond by discovering that joy for themselves and sharing their joy with us and others. The greatest loss we can suffer as teachers is to be blessed with the needs of our students and never to be aware of those needs nor our students.

Philip's steadfastness and his deliberate and painstaking hard work became contagious. Just like misbehaviors can become contagious so can genuine joy for learning and steadfast effort. Sometimes that modeling can be performed by the teacher, but it can be best demonstrated when it comes from one of our own students. Such was the case with Philip Edwards.

The concern of most caring teachers is not with those students, with whom they are able to connect, but with these students who are lost, unapproachable, or antagonistic—a child that is just not easy to like. I call these students the ones where "caring has gone awry." In my teaching career, these are the ones that often return to tell me how happy and successful they are and wish to thank me for my efforts. I am often left with the feeling that the student has confused me with someone else. Upon deeper consideration, I have come to the opinion that these students appreciate the attempt that we have made. We have tried to connect with them; and as far as we can tell, we have failed. However, this is not always the case. Sometimes, caring acts in strange ways. Often, when our caring is genuine, when our caring has no ulterior motive than what is best for the

student, the student may make a decision to accept that care at a later time, a much later time. I hope that this is true of Scott Benedict.

I think what often happens in these cases is that the teacher appeals to the child's ethical self. What I mean by this is that the teacher makes the child aware that there is a strong ethical self that exists within the child—an ethical self that the child might be ignoring. The child learns at some point that a better person exists —the ethical self—and through the caring teacher that better person is visualized and made real. Sometimes the child longs to be more like this ethical self; however, it may be some time later before the child makes an effort to actualize that ethical self.

It is this better self that also inspires the teacher. The teacher realizes that his or her own better self is enhanced when caring for difficult learners. The caring teacher realizes that the moment when meeting the learner's needs, the moment when helping the learner answer her own questions, and the moment when a the learner comes to sudden understanding—that moment is all important. It is a moment of utter joy and satisfaction not only for the learner but also the teacher. It is this joy in teaching and learning which motivates the teacher and learner to enhance the ethical self. It is this joy drives the teacher to be more receptive and encourages the learner to face the difficulties and pain associated with skill development. This joy enhances the ethic self. It is this joy which brings the teacher back the next morning after a difficult previous day. It is this joy which connects the teacher and learner, the teacher with other teachers in the building, and the joy which

connects all of humanity. The carer can maintain, support, and enhance the ethical self by other means as well.

The carer can find joy in the celebration of life all around him. I found great joy in the life and growth of my beautiful tree in the front of my house. This tree seemed to open its arms to the glory of creation, and it is for this reason that I was deeply saddened when I cut down those limbs. I felt this joy often when I observed my tree and this continues to this day. My caring attitude improved my own self-image and self-esteem. As I find my own self-image improving, I seek to improve the self-image of those around me. Thus, an ethic of care begins to develop within the inner circle of my relationships and may even extend beyond my inner circles of caring, intimate friends. Although most are very receptive to my relational attitude, some are not.

Teachers must realize this one important fact. The final decision to accept and to respond to care rests with the student. Veteran teachers become burnt out in teaching when their efforts are not meaningful, when their voice is not heard by those in authority, or, I believe, when their caring efforts are not completed. A number of the students in my study knew just how to respond as cared-for's. Teddy had been cared-for so long and his needs were so profound that his caring response was obvious. He returned the care with a huge, teeth grin or a loud rip-roaring sound. At first this was unusual but after a time it gave me great pleasure that he appreciated my efforts. Other students did not.

Caring for Students – When Caring is Difficult and Incomplete

Nearly all teacher participants in my study showed great disappointment and regret that they had not done more for some students. Each had a story of a student who was troubled and that they did not reach. In my own case of those students where caring was incomplete, there is a true sense of loss or guilt. I was devastated when a student like David Shorne replied "I don't want you to care!" The classroom teacher must remember that the final choice is with the student. Sometimes the world in which the child lives as in Scott Benedict is just too difficult and even though there are signs that the child wishes to find refuge in the classroom when it is a much safer and more comforting place, the other world in which they live is too invasive. Sometimes that decision to join the world again, to give the world another chance is sparked later in a human being's life. The classroom teacher cannot give up hope even when it seems that the child has. I wish to talk about hope in the school a little later.

Our children receive so many mixed messages in our schools and in their world it is often surprising that they are as sane as they are. Teachers often use the subject that they love as punishment for students. An algebra teacher gives students excessive math homework because students did not report to their assigned fire drill locations quickly enough. An English teacher has students write an extra 200 words on an essay because students were not paying attention as she talked about writing. This takes place more often than one would wish. Students are constantly learning as they make

meaning of the world. Caring teachers are constantly aware of the learning that is taking place in their classrooms and the messages that the teacher is sending.

A hot topic in our schools right now is the emphasis on “student learning.” One veteran teacher shared with me that this was one of the “biggest paradigm shifts that she has seen in the last 30 years.” What this teacher was referring to is the stress placed on “student learning” rather on “effective teaching.” However, I believe that our students are always learning. As soon as they awaken each morning, they are learning. The problem is not whether they are learning; the problem is “what are they learning.” The teacher’s concern should be that students are learning the skills that the teacher is emphasizing in the content area. Unfortunately, I believe, our students are learning more things that may be detrimental to their growth than favorable.

In this new world of standardized tests, we must make a concerted effort to personalize rather than standardize our instruction. Some students just do not do well in the traditional school setting. The school should give our young students hope; instead our schools today may be creating a sense of hopelessness for many of our students. These special students must be identified and creative methods of teaching must be implemented. These same students sometimes are abstractly identified as low achievers, emotional drop-outs and a number of other generalizations which relieve us of all responsibility. If a doctor has a sick child as a patient, he does not blame the child for being sick. He finds creative ways to try to help that child. We

must change our thinking when it comes to our sick children. Such was the case of Mark Jaspars. He reached out to me, and I was not receptive to his needs. I cared for him and he needed me. Of course, the easiest way to relieve my conscience is to say that caring is so exhaustive. There is just so much that one can do. However, it was not Mark's fault. He was trying to do what we ask of each child in our world—to engage in that world, to find meaning in the world, and to give back to the world our special gifts. Mark had tried to do that: he was an artist and saw the world through a very special lens, but he found no place in our traditional schools to pursue his dreams, to develop those dreams, and to perfect that unique perspective of the world—he retreated from my classroom; he retreated from all of his classes, and on June 6, 2006, he finally withdrew from this world.

Dangers of Care

Caring can be obsessive. My study also shockingly and graphically delineates what caring can do when it becomes pathological and obsessive. In Janet Madison's case, her father, I believe almost consumed her personality, not only her ideas but the pitch and tone of her voice were not hers but his. All too often we see parents, sometimes misguided and well-intentioned, living their lives once again through their children. Sometimes parents can love and care too much. We often see this same theme expressed by great writers. Toni Morrison comes to mind immediately in her compelling work *Beloved* where the mother Sethe loves her child obsessively

and so much that she takes the child's life rather than allowing the child to return to the horrors of slavery. There are many other examples such as Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* or Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* (works which are part of our high school canon). Literature and the arts also provide rich examples where children can see the power of care—both transforming or destructive.

Caring can also be exhaustive. Classroom teachers may realize that the demands of students may be too great. I believe that teachers must approach the needs of students democratically and seek to provide care to the needs of students equally. Sometimes this can become so exhaustive that the teacher may withdraw. I believe that this was the case with Larry McSherry. Larry just asked too much of me and at that time in my life and in my classroom I was just unable to meet his needs. When he withdrew, I also withdrew. Today I regret that decision. I am not sure that it was a conscious one. The only comfort that I have been able to feel and that I can extend to others is that even though our students may not give the appearance that they desire our care and may in fact disdain it, they may be fooling themselves and fooling us.

Another danger of care is the tendency towards paternalism. The caring relationship is often not a symmetrical one; caring does not always take place among equals, for it takes place between those who have needs and those who can fulfill those needs. The classroom teacher must realize that he or she is an authority figure that commands respect and power. By the very

essence of the caring relationship, the teacher is in a powerful position and the cared-for may become dependent, losing a sense of her own independence. This happens often in teaching when the student begins to rely too heavily on the teacher and only wishes to think as the teacher thinks or completely fails to think independently. At other times, the teacher may lose sight of the asymmetry of the caring relationship even though the student may not. With this privileged position, teachers may lose perspective and may only see the world through their own unique and privileged position and not the child's. Also, teachers may assume an artificial sense of self-importance. This is what happened to me when I sought to discuss Nick Anderson's senior research paper. Rather than approaching Nick as a student in need of help and trying to meet his needs as a caring teacher, I took his challenge personally, became overly aggressive, and took full advantage of my privileged position as an adult authority figure and veteran teacher. Fortunately, I was able to reassess my position during our conversation and a more beneficial and caring connection finally ensued—one that was beneficial to both of us.

Parochialism, another danger associated with caring, may exist in a caring relationship. When the caring relationship is a particular, concrete one, as it should be, the caring can become very partial. In the classroom, the teacher may find it difficult to meet the needs of others when he or she is trying to meet the needs of one. In parochialism, the teacher can become very withdrawn from the rest of the students and the teacher may only focus on the

one or two in need of care. The students who are in need are often those where care is convenient, easy, and natural or where the cared-for's are obvious or quite visible. The classroom teacher must take a democratic approach to meet the needs of all students, yet a concrete caring relationship must be developed between each child rather than a general caring relationship for the classroom community.

The Suppression of Care

It is easy not to care. Although everyone likes to say that he or she cares; really as a society, we delegate caring to a select few. Caring work can be exhaustive and messy. As caring workers are devalued, so their work is often devalued, also. Those in positions of power like to be thought of as caring, but in reality caring in our schools and other caring professions has been delegated to caring workers who are unproportionately women and "people of color." This is certainly true in education and I believe there is a reason for it—one that is deeply embedded in the political and social structure of our society.

Caring in our society shows need, and the needy are often considered as a burden. In American society, where the goal is self-reliance, independence, and autonomy, caring is seen as limited, weak, and dependent. Eli Zaretsky (1990), professor of history at the New School for Social Research, has said that: "It is a tragic paradox that the bases of love, dependence, and altruism in human life and the historical oppression of women have been found within the

same matrix" (Abel & Nelson, p. 7). There are many reasons for this, but what is obvious and integral here is that not only are caring workers devalued but so is their caring.

In education, those caring teachers mostly women willingly have given their time, effort, and energies to the learning of others and for the most part silently. Even though the act of caring creates a caring environment that enriches all those who come into contact there, all too often our society seeks to silence, oppress, and dominate the caregivers in our society: when society does this, it suppresses the actual caring, too. We constantly voice our desire to care for one another and to be cared for; but when it really comes right down to it, we delegate our caring to others within our society—and in identifying them as Others, those of privilege separate themselves from the responsibility or obligation of the caring.

Caring and the Business Metaphor

Values in our society such as rationality, autonomy, business sense, high degrees of competition, and accomplishment are praised. Those qualities which are emotional, reliant, nurturing, and needy are devalued. It is not surprising, therefore, that the business or capitalistic metaphor has gained such favor in the literature and dialogues concerning today's public schools. Our students are no longer our children who we must care for and nurture but are our customers. In "Treating Students Like Customers," professor of marketing and dean of the School of Business at Virginia State University,

David Bejou (2005) demonstrates this way of thinking. Bejou writes "How can schools develop the best relationship with their students?" He answers "Think of them as customers to be managed—for a long time" (p. 44). These customers must be offered a quality product (their education) and it is through the service of the business enterprise (teaching) that the product is packaged and delivered. There are a number of problems with this new approach to education other than the fact that once again we have lost sight of the child and have reduced the child to a vague abstraction.

My daughter recently worked at a local restaurant where she was a waitress working for minimum wage. She would come home with little money (the tips were poor) after working a double shift of 4 to 5 hours each. Not only had she made little money, but she had been mistreated in word and action by the general public. Her harsh treatment began to change her attitude about life and people: she became hardened against the people she met at work and even her loved ones. Work became drudgery; she could perform her job; she had the skills; she had lost a caring attitude for people. Luckily, she determined that this kind of business was not for her. Her customers were harsh, insensitive people who demanded much and gave little. Money can do this to people. If today's education is motivated by a desire for wealth with a complete disregard for people, we will be sending highly capable young men and women into the job market who will be competitive, successful in terms of financial success and insensitive to the needs of others. Nel Noddings (2003b) in *Happiness and Education* addresses this issue well

when she says “It is as though our society has simply decided that the purpose of schooling is economic—to improve the financial condition of individuals to advance the prosperity of the nation. Hence students should do well on standardized tests, get into good colleges, obtain well-paying jobs, and buy lots of things” (p. 4). What a lonely and alienated world we are creating for our children.

Caring in Today’s Schools

In her memoir The Year of Magical Thinking, Joan Didion (2005) writes with candor and clarity about a year of her life in 2003. In a short span of time, Didion is filled with seemingly insurmountable grief over the fatal heart attack of her husband of 40 years John Gregory Dunne and her utter helplessness when faced with the serious illness of her daughter Quintana. Her only child, seemingly stricken with the flu, develops pneumonia which, in a matter of days, leads to septic shock, a complete bodily breakdown, and a medically induced coma. Quintana recovers but consequently collapses two months later with a massive hematoma that requires immediate and intensive brain surgery. Relying on her instincts as a writer and journalist, Didion responds the only way that she knows how--by “going to the literature,” reading, learning, and studying her daughter’s gravely ill condition to understand better the physician’s language, thinking, and attitude.

“Information is control,” (p. 94) she writes and finds a textbook by Stephen G. Waxman, M. D., chief of neurology at Yale-New Haven, entitled Clinical

Neuroanatomy. She is especially intrigued by “Appendix A: The Neurologic Examination” called “the gilded boy story.” This story is read to patients to evaluate their memory and comprehension. The short narrative of Appendix A goes something like this:

In Rome at the coronation of one of the popes about 300 years ago, a little child was selected to play the part of one of God’s angels. So that his appearance “might be as magnificent as possible,” he was completely covered from the top of his head to the bottom of his feet in gold foil. However, rather unexpectedly the little boy fell deathly ill. Everyone proposed a plan to save the boy. Although everything was done for his recovery except the removal of the fatal golden foil, the little boy eventually died.

Patients are told to retell the story and to explain its implied meaning. Even Didion, a professional author, who creates fictional narratives with intricate plots and shades of meaning in her professional writing, is confused and finds it difficult to determine the meaning of the tale amidst the entangled and complex details. Didion (2005) writes “There was a morning on which the ‘gilded-boy story’ seemed to represent, in its utter impenetrability and apparent disregard for the sensitivity of the patient, the entire situation with which I was faced” (p. 106).

Joan Didion’s natural instincts to save her child, her maternal approach to care giving, her journal-like entries filled with raw and heart-felt human; her exploration into the personal yet universal experience of love and care; her frustration with the unique and ambiguous world in which she found herself;

and “the gilded-boy” narrative (an child reduced to arbitrary abstraction), and its similarities to today’s public education reinforce and illuminate powerfully my own encounters with the teaching profession and my own private experiences which became the focus of this heuristic study of the concept of care.

Joan Didion found herself in a world that was incomprehensible. With the genuine intention of saving her own child, she sought to inform herself—to study, to read, to research, to comprehend a world entangled with complex and sensitive issues. Similarly, I too found myself dealing with a concept that is as broad and as powerful as language itself. Like Didion, I too immersed myself in the phenomenon trying to learn all that I could and trying to inform myself in order to meet the needs of those wonderful children given to my care. Like Didion, I learned many things. Sadly, I learned that although the focus was on the concept of care as it relates to teaching, I began to see myself through the eyes of another and I began to question my own actions and strategies. The problem with caring is that the focus all too often is on the cared-for rather than the carer.

The narrative of “the gilded boy” (a child not saved but destroyed by powerful forces), and Didion’s own frustration at the testing situation which was ambiguous and arbitrary addresses much that relates to my own study. After reading this passage, one cannot help but pose one question after another: why is it so difficult to understand the apparent needs of a child? Why is care so often expressed but so rarely identified? Why are we as a

society so reluctant to listen to those who naturally provide care for our children, our infirm, and our elderly? Why are so many blinded by the glitter of new programs which disrupt the stability and consistently in a child's education? When will educators realize that it is only when creating concrete, caring relationships that we are able to make lasting and positive changes in the child? How many little angels must we lose before we accept the fact that we are not meeting the needs of our children? Why is it that the gilded boy story has resulted in ambiguous and arbitrary testing?

Over the past 32 years in public education, I have faced many challenges in secondary schools. At times I have felt the exhilaration of working with teenagers when they understood a new concept or when they were introduced to a world of ideas that they have never even knew existed. I have experienced the utter frustration of implementing new and progressive techniques and strategies in my classroom only to realize that they failed to meet the needs of my students. These proposals often came under the guise of educational innovations with the intention of stimulating learning, of engaging all students, of improving my classroom management and disciplining skills, of shaping me into the kind of teacher that I had always dreamed of being, or of providing a learning environment so complex and integrated that no child would be left behind.

I have written countless lesson plans and learning objectives. I have written curriculum maps, developed formative and summative assessments (both formally and informally), grouped my students (both whole and small),

integrated, networked, blogged, video-conferenced, and graphic organized. I have become a mentor, a political activist, a consumer advocate, a technocrat, and a board certified educator. I have fluctuated among teacher-centered, student-centered, and content-centered classrooms. I have cooperated, calibrated, and collaborated. I have studied various cultures to affect my ethnically and linguistically diverse students, have joined professional organizations to increase my teaching resources and knowledge base, have studied professional books and journals to immerse myself in my profession, have read high interest young adult literature to offer recommendations to my students, have incorporated more and more of the arts in my classroom to enhance understanding , have tried to incorporate lessons that affect multiple intelligences in hopes of tapping my students' human potential, have tweaked my pedagogy, and have expanded my methodology. I have done all of this because I want, as most teachers do, what is best for my students and care about them. Nevertheless, I have been told most recently that my students, and I still need to work harder. I have felt similar frustrations as Didion in understanding an unsympathetic world of education outside of my classroom which at times has seemed utterly unreasonable. My attempts to understand better the "language, thinking, and attitudes of that world led by educational theorists, professional administrators, and governmental policy makers" have seemed futile, if not, impossible. However, one innovation that does not seem too implausible is the transforming of our schools into "Schools of Hope."

Caring Can Create Hope

Not only is the business metaphor destructive, but the purpose of our schools should be to instill hope in our children. However, often the reverse is the case; without care, our schools often create hopelessness. The question remains how can we create more caring relationships in our schools? I believe that the first thing that we can do is to create caring projects that give our students hope for the future. Let me identify a few of these that can be immediately implemented to create caring relationships.

The first week of school each semester I try to get to know my students. I am not talking about just introducing myself and my students to introduce themselves. I want more than this. I want to get to know my students immediately on a personal level. This is not always easy. Some teachers like to pass around a questionnaire asking my students questions about their hobbies, organizations and clubs, favorite classes, favorite foods, favorite song and movie. I have never found these questionnaires a very effective means of really getting to know my students. Students fill these out through rote memory and are often vague and not very sharing. What I have my students to is to email me and tell me about themselves.

Students are so internet savvy that email is a natural way for them to respond. I ask that my students discuss themselves as human beings and as learners. Students are instructed to tell me anything that might be helpful to me as a teacher—anything that might help me be more effective. At first students are reluctant. They often begin this way: "I really don't know what

you want me to write about" or "I really don't know what to say" or "I am a horrible writer but I will try" and then they begin to write a long and thorough discussion of their family and their home life. They talk about issues that really interest them. Often, the student who begins by telling me that he is not a strong writer is the one that writes forever in the most fluent and clear prose and voice. Students like adults have much to say as long as they know that someone is listening. I keep a copy of their letters so that I can return to them when I need to determine what problems at home might be affecting the child. Here is an example:

Mr. Baker,

My name is Cathy Winters and I am in your English IV class first block. I am a senior and 17 years old. I live with my mom, dad, and younger sister, Karli; she is a freshman. We also have one dog, Chi-Chi, a chihuaua/terrior mix.

I am very close to my family. My mom was recently diagnosed with breast cancer and is undergoing chemotherapy. This has been a challenge for us, but I know if we keep God first in our life we can get through it.

On the weekends, I like to hang out with my friends and family. Usually, we go o my friend Ashley's house and play poker. I love to play Texas Hold 'Em! I have been very involved over my four years at North. I have been a football trainer for four years. Football is my favorite sport. I am also District 9 Secretary, a member of NHS, Key Club, Panther Pals, FCA, SUN, and involved in my Church Youth Group.

I have worked very hard for my grades in high school. I have made all A's except for one B in Honors Geometry. I hope to continue to work hard until the end of senior year and all throughout college. I am currently taking two classes at OSU-OKC for concurrent enrollment. I plan to attend OSU for the next 3 years, and OU for 3 years after that. It has always been my dream to become a physical therapist. I have been trying very hard to get many scholarships to help my parents pay for college.

I am looking forward to this semester; I have heard you are the best teacher at North. Thank you!

Cathy Winters

Teachers are not psychiatrists, but they also must wear many hats in the course of their daily routines. I am reminded of Scott Benedict who had to deal with some problems outside of school which directly affected his concentration and involvement in school. Sometimes this is too overwhelming for the child and all efforts to direct the student's attention to the subject matter is ignored. Sometimes the classroom teacher's attempts at reaching the child are incomplete and leave the teacher with a great sense of loss, disappointment, or guilt. The best that can be hoped for is that the teacher has tried everything that is possible and that all of the information that can be attained is understood in working with the student. In this case, I went to the guidance counselors and asked for their information which gave me a strong sense of Scott's home life, but his conflicts were beyond my control.

Another way of caring for the child in my classroom is to encourage parental involvement and to enhance the chains and circles of care as they pertain to a child's education. There are a couple of things that I do to involve parents directly in my classroom. When we study Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Hamlet,* I send a letter home to all parents asking them to write a letter to their child offering words of wisdom about the future as many go to college or technical schools, or enter the job market. As we read Polonius' words of wisdom to his own son Laertes, students await in excited anticipation to open their own letters and read what their mothers and/or fathers have written to their son or daughter. Then we compare these words of wisdom written by Shakespeare in the 16th century with modern day proverbs. Students are often in tears as they read such gems as "Guard your character against the norm of society that says 'me, myself and I' come first." "Laugh a lot—at yourself and with others." "Say hello first to everyone you meet. The world is full of timid, fragile souls." "Call you mother. She carried you for nine months and every thought she has had for the last 18 years has contained you in some way." "There is no pillow so soft as a clean conscience." And "Eat your vegetables and check your oil."

We recently held this project in my classroom, and I watched and listened to my students closely. Many of the letters contained words of advice from both the father as well as the mother. Gilligan and Kohlberg should have been there. Two distinct voices could be heard. Mothers cautioned their children to take care of their personal health and well-being; fathers warned

their children to spend their money wisely and to study hard. Both of these voices were clearly defined and evident. Both of these voices must be heard in our schools and in the public and private sectors. These are the voices of care.

Another way that I involve parents in my classroom is through a parent-student book discussion. Each semester my students select a novel or play that they would like to read and we contact the local book stores and have them order a number of copies. I try to help my students select a work that will enable both generations to share their views and perspectives. We have discussed such works as J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye,* Albert Camus' *The Stranger,* Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice,* and Dante Alighieri's *The Inferno.* We also mark a date on the calendar to hold the parent-student book discussion. This is usually a month or so away. On the appointed date parents attend our class during the school day. Parents often must take off work or rearrange their busy schedules to attend. I become the moderator of the book discussion, and we discuss important issues raised by the book.

A day or two before the discussion both parent and student write questions that they would like answered through the discussion. These are the questions that we use to direct our discussion. On the day of the discussion, parents enter my class with great pride and excitement. It is like they are attending high school once again. And to tell the truth, I often have a difficult time monitoring the discussion and preventing the parents from dominating

the conversation. My students walk out of the discussion with a great sense of pride that they could carry on an intellectual discussion with their parents and the parents show their pride, too. Their children have grown up to be responsible, insightful, critical thinkers, and hopefully caring young adults.

Recently, one father made a special point of telling me after our discussion that he used to love to read and for some reason he had quit. This book discussion had brought him back to reading and he would continue to do that. Another mother asked what was the next book that we were going to discuss, and finally one father and mother told the class of their family reading. The mother, father, and daughter each night for over a week turned off the television and read as a family instead. Actually, the father had stayed one chapter ahead of the rest of the females in the family as they read *Pride and Prejudice* and he would entice them with clues before they would begin a chapter that he had already finished.

Some caring educational theorists have recommended caring projects in schools. Often these projects would require radical changes in schedules or elaborate financial support. I believe that classroom teachers can begin now without elaborate programs and radical changes in an already overloaded classroom curriculum. One caring program would be the research paper.

Through my study and the collection of data, I noticed that the research paper was a center of focus of many of my students. Mark Jaspars had not written his paper; a friend had written it for him. Many of the students in my summer school English IV classes were there because they had failed to

write or complete their senior research paper requirement. The difficulty for teachers is that students find the teacher-designed topics boring and irrelevant. Consequently, I have developed a research paper that the students find fascinating, relevant, and challenging. Students must create a program where they provide compassionate health care for their own parents. They can choose either one or both parents. They can decide if they are going to provide assistance in their own home or provide care outside of the home. If they choose to care for their parents outside of their own home, then they will have to research facilities in which their parents are to stay. They are told to create their own criteria for judgment of these facilities. They must take in consideration the needs of their parents, their financial situation, and family who may wish to visit. All of their research is part of their paper and will require extensive investigation and note taking. Incidentally, health care professionals anticipate that most families will face the challenges of caring for their own families in the future when the baby boomers become senior citizens.

In this project, students must meet the challenges of a real life problem that they may well face in the future. It is a challenge for which we as a society are unprepared (and especially our children). Students, when evaluating health care facilities, often meet the present occupants and talk to them and share their assignments and ask elderly citizens about their lives. Each learns from one another. Students learn about caring first hand and in the course of researching for this project my classroom begins to change to a

classroom of mutual support and concern. Caring can do this; caring does do this.

The need to develop more caring assignments in the classroom and to create more caring individuals in our students is more important than ever. With the onslaught of standardized tests, students feel that they are validated by their test scores not by the kind of caring person that they are becoming.

Conclusion

Today there is a movement to create professional learning communities in our larger schools. The reason for this is to insure that all students meet the standards in skill development as established by State Departments of Education. The "testing craze" has become so pervasive that my seniors are being bombarded by tests in every direction. ACT and SAT test scores play a significant role in determining the college or university that they attend. AP Test scores weigh heavily in college admission director's decisions of acceptance to first choice colleges and support parents in financing rising tuition costs. Graduation tests are right around the corner. Teachers feel the pressure too as do the students. Although many teachers try desperately to avoid teaching to the test, test scores in some school districts affect teacher retention. With many of our schools throughout the country in dire financial straights, the business metaphor is becoming more and more popular as the corporate world of business wishes to see that students applying for entry level positions already have the skills needed to enter the business world.

In all of this madness created by testing and determining success by developing skills for high paying jobs, we must re-evaluate the need for care in our homes and schools. Through my data collection, I observed that where a strong caring relationship existed, the lives of both the carer and the cared-for were dramatically affected. Both the carer and the cared-for became students and teachers. Natalie was inspired to work harder; I was inspired to care for all of my students and to take a personal interest in their lives. My students taught me patience, tolerance, a strong work ethic, perseverance, trust, selflessness, and the importance of care. My students taught me that we develop a capacity to care which depends and broadens as we care. They also taught me the dangers of obsessiveness, parochialism, and paternalism.

Care requires both the carer and the cared-for to take a risk. This risk leaves the teacher vulnerable. Many teachers are unwilling to let down defenses and to let their students see them as human beings, but I have found that this is integral to becoming an effective and caring teacher. Students as the cared-for's must trust the carer and this requires for them to take a risk, also. Some students have been hurt so often by adults that they are not willing to take a risk and show their own vulnerability. This unwillingness may take many forms. Often students find safety in work after school to the early hours of the morning. They then come to school so tired that they cannot function and stay awake. Other students remain silent and quiet in class and shut others out. When this happens, the classroom teacher

must become attentive and responsive and try to enter into the world of the student and restore the trust which is necessary for a caring relationship to take place. Sometimes the world outside the school is just too overwhelming and demanding and intrusive for the teacher to affect the child and ask for the child's participation. John Dewey (1902) wrote that "What the best and wisest parent wants for his child, that must the community want for all its children. Any other ideal for our schools is narrow and unlovely; acted upon, it destroys our democracy" (p. 3).

Finally, a student in my Advanced Placement English Composition and Literature class just last week wrote a poem and the last stanza expresses best what should be happening in our schools:

I wonder why it is so difficult for us to realize
I wonder why it is so difficult for us to accept
That we should be learning how to care for one another.

Recommendations for Further Study

In my study as I analyzed my data and the students about whom I had written one omission became glaringly clear. Although I have been teaching primarily Advanced Placement students over the past 16 years, I did not relate many narratives based on their participation in my classes. There are many reasons for this, I think. Basically, I think that these students have the strong support and consistent care of well-intentioned and highly involved parents. Throughout the last years of my teaching career, we have a Monday

night Open House where parents are encouraged to attend the classes of their children, meet the teachers, hear about course work, and receive copies of the course syllabus and classroom rules.

On that night I meet those parents of my AP students as well as the parents of my regular students. However, my classroom is usually filled with the parents of my AP students. They question me, offer support and encouragement, leave their phone numbers and email addresses if I have any concerns about their child's progress and participation. These parents want me to know that I have their total support and involvement. The parents of students in my regular class rarely attend. The classroom of AP parents usually is overflowing; only the front row of seats is occupied by the parents of regular students. There are many reasons for this; I do not wish to direct my attention to those reasons now. What I do want to address is the life of the over-achiever.

Susan Headden (September 11, 2006) in "A New Case of the Old Back-to-School Blues" in *US News and World Report* points out that our AP students, what she calls the over-achiever is "overdosing on Ritalin, and threatening suicide over the occasional B" (p. 16). Headden is basing her article on Alexandra Robbins' recent bestseller *The Overachievers.* Robbins follows the life of four or five high achievers in the highly competitive Walt Whitman High School in Bethesda, Maryland. These students face many challenges from parents obsessed with success for their children to the intense competition of the college admissions process to drug use in order to

compensate for a lack of sleep, a lack of food, a lack of a basic social structure, and an abundance of stress and parental control. One student Sam writes, in Robbins' book, "School does not let a kid live. School has its bright moments, its entertainment, and its long-lasting value, but the overbearing competitiveness and work combine to create one of the most stressful environments I can imagine" (p. 24).

Robbins goes on to point out that much of the present competitiveness that our best students find in our schools today dates back to the landmark report, *A Nation at Risk* (1983) and what has been called the "longest sustained period of education reform in U.S. history" (p. 38). Robbins avers that our present system of education is based on a "certain foreign country" where "137 primary and middle schools students committed suicide during the 2003 school year" (p. 38). This is the same country that our government officials wished to emulate—Japan. Are we emulating Japan? Well, Headden cites a University of Michigan study which indicates that "homework has increased by 51 percent since 1981" (p. 16).

My study seems to indicate that those children with special needs are met with care. Those students who have a difficult time in adjusting to the traditional school setting and classroom or who are disruptive do indeed signal to the teacher that a caring relationship is needed. Sometimes these students are difficult to approach but an appeal to the students' ethical self or a reliance on the teacher's ethical self provide the teacher with a basis for overcoming the obstacles and meeting the needs of the cared-for. However,

with increased emphasis on test scores, PASS skills, and competition in the classroom, high college tuition costs placing greater financial pressures upon middle class families, a research study on the over-achiever is needed. My belief is that we must extend the concept of care to these students. It is through care I believe that we can keep a realistic balance in this crazy world of education and maintain what should be truly important to us—our children. In sum, Nell Noddings (2003b) addresses the problems of the over-achiever when she writes: "'Good kids' are defined by good grades. The teachers know very little about their students as persons" (p. 185). To know these students as persons is the first step to care. In the end it is through care that we are motivated to meet the needs of our students including the "over-achievers" so that we might develop a caring relationship for our students and for ourselves.

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