

**Exploring the teacher-student relationship in teacher education:
A hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry**

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Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Table of Contents | 2 |
| Attestation of authorship | 5 |
| Acknowledgements | 6 |
| Abstract | 8 |
| Chapter 1: Introduction | 9 |
| The phenomenon of interest: The impetus for the study | 9 |
| The purpose of the study | 11 |
| The context I bring to this study | 12 |
| <i>Relational experiences: Some informal interactions</i> | 12 |
| <i>Relational experiences as a teacher, teacher educator, tertiary educator, and researcher</i> | 13 |
| Pre-understandings | 16 |
| <i>“The teacher-student relationship begins in the first class”</i> | 16 |
| <i>“Teachers consider the teacher-student relationship more than students do”</i> .. | 17 |
| <i>“The teacher-student relationship is a causal relationship”</i> | 17 |
| <i>“The teacher-student relationship has a ‘between’”</i> | 18 |
| <i>“The teacher-student relationship influences the student’s ‘head, heart and hands’”</i> | 18 |
| <i>“In teacher education, the lecturer-student teacher relationship is increasingly task focused”</i> | 19 |
| <i>“The student and teacher in the teacher-student relationship”</i> | 20 |
| <i>“The teacher-student relationship is influenced by the ideological context of education”</i> | 20 |
| <i>The importance of the teacher-student relationship: Lamenting over the way it was and how it concerns the future</i> | 20 |
| Encountering the phenomenological research approach | 21 |
| Structure of the thesis | 23 |
| Chapter 2: The context of the teacher-student relationship | 26 |
| Traditional educational thought challenged: Education as an experience “with” | 26 |
| Traditional and current educational thought contested ideologically: Education as business | 30 |
| The ideological influence on higher education in New Zealand | 35 |
| Teacher Education in a changing ideological and tertiary context | 38 |
| Conclusion | 41 |
| Chapter 3: The teacher-student relationship | 42 |
| Relationship as an interpersonal “between” | 43 |
| The connectedness in relationship | 46 |
| The interconnectedness of relationship in community | 52 |
| Exploring the teacher-student relationship phenomenologically | 55 |
| Chapter 4: Philosophical Foundations | 57 |
| Understandings from Martin Heidegger | 58 |
| <i>Heidegger, Husserl</i> | 59 |
| <i>Ontology is primary</i> | 59 |
| <i>Dasein, Being-in-the-world</i> | 60 |
| <i>The human condition</i> | 61 |
| <i>Phenomenology</i> | 61 |
| <i>Hermeneutic Phenomenology</i> | 63 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| <i>Hermeneutic understanding, hermeneutic circling</i> | 64 |
| <i>Phenomenological reflection, paths, clearing</i> | 65 |
| <i>Phenomenological writing</i> | 65 |
| <i>Phenomenological analysis</i> | 66 |
| <i>Thinking</i> | 66 |
| <i>Poeticising</i> | 69 |
| <i>A thought in summary</i> | 70 |
| Understandings from Hans-Georg Gadamer | 70 |
| <i>Tradition and prejudice</i> | 71 |
| <i>Horizons</i> | 72 |
| <i>Language</i> | 73 |
| <i>Language and understanding</i> | 73 |
| <i>Understanding, interpretation, fusion of horizons</i> | 74 |
| <i>Hermeneutic Circling</i> | 75 |
| <i>Hermeneutic Conversation, Dialogue</i> | 76 |
| <i>A thought in summary</i> | 76 |
| The political challenge of Heidegger and Gadamer | 77 |
| Concluding comments | 78 |
| Chapter 5: Method | 80 |
| Beginning phenomenological research..... | 81 |
| <i>The context</i> | 81 |
| <i>Beginning with the phenomenological research community</i> | 81 |
| <i>Beginning to understand the challenge of phenomenological research</i> | 83 |
| <i>Journalling the process from the beginning</i> | 84 |
| <i>Gaining approval for the study</i> | 84 |
| Gathering the stories..... | 84 |
| <i>Locating the story tellers: Selection, recruitment & ethics</i> | 86 |
| <i>Gathering the stories in conversation</i> | 87 |
| <i>Gathering sufficient stories</i> | 90 |
| Working with the stories | 90 |
| <i>Working the text: Initial interpretive writing</i> | 91 |
| <i>Working the text: Interpretive writing towards essential meanings of the teacher-student relationship</i> | 93 |
| The challenges of interpretive writing..... | 96 |
| <i>Writing towards understanding</i> | 96 |
| <i>The constraints of language</i> | 96 |
| Phenomenological research as a lived experience for the researcher..... | 97 |
| <i>Research as a lived experience</i> | 97 |
| <i>Encountering the unexpected: Students from the past re-emerging</i> | 98 |
| Trustworthiness, representation and rigour | 98 |
| Concluding comments | 100 |
| Chapter 6: Always in relationship..... | 102 |
| When relationship matters..... | 104 |
| When the relationship is a matter of indifference | 111 |
| When the relationship does not appear to matter | 113 |
| When relationships are imbued with “dis-ease” | 116 |
| Concluding thoughts..... | 119 |
| Chapter 7: Comportment..... | 121 |
| Comportment as “how we are” | 122 |
| Teachers whose comportment inspires the students they teach | 126 |
| <i>Teachers who communicate respect inspire their students</i> | 126 |
| <i>“How teachers are” influences students</i> | 128 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| <i>Teachers’ “being-in-teaching” can be inspirational</i> | 130 |
| Teachers who inspire others towards a teaching career | 132 |
| Teachers whose comportment students dread | 134 |
| Concluding comments | 139 |
| Chapter 8: In the play | 141 |
| “Being-in-the-play” | 142 |
| The phronesis of play | 150 |
| Concluding thoughts..... | 159 |
| Chapter 9: Conclusion..... | 162 |
| Thesis of the thesis | 165 |
| Recommendations | 166 |
| Opportunities for further research | 170 |
| Limitations of this research | 172 |
| <i>Phenomenological method</i> | 172 |
| <i>Research design</i> | 173 |
| <i>Participants</i> | 173 |
| The influence of this phenomenological research | 173 |
| <i>Pre-assumptions</i> | 174 |
| Concluding comments | 175 |
| Appendices | 176 |
| Appendix 1: Ethics Approval | 176 |
| Appendix 2: Letter to participants..... | 177 |
| Appendix 3: Participant Information Sheet..... | 179 |
| Appendix 4: Informed consent | 182 |
| Appendix 5: Research question / Interview questions | 183 |
| Appendix 6: Extract from the transcript of an interview with Mary, followed by a crafted story | 184 |
| Appendix 7: Story Titles | 186 |
| Appendix 8: A story from two participants and their descriptive statements | 187 |
| <i>“Living with getting it wrong”</i> | 187 |
| <i>“Clicking with an-other”</i> | 188 |
| Appendix 9: A story, description and initial interpretation of a crafted story..... | 190 |
| <i>“Clicking with an-other”</i> | 190 |
| Appendix 10: Two examples of the notions for a participant | 194 |
| <i>Notions from Molly’s stories</i> | 194 |
| <i>Notions from Sally’s stories</i> | 197 |
| Appendix 11: An example of a poem which captures the notions in a participant’s stories..... | 199 |
| References | 201 |

Attestation of authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

David Laurance Giles

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Abstract

The relationship between teacher and student has always been a central interest of the educational process. While the nature of this relationship can be understood from various theoretical frameworks, research that seeks to understand the “lived experience” of this relationship is less prevalent. This research explores the phenomenological nature of the teacher-student relationship in the context of teacher education. Stories of the lived experience of this relationship were hermeneutically interpreted against the philosophical writings of Heidegger, Gadamer, and Buber.

The research answers the question: what is the meaning of the teacher-student relationship? Relationships are essential to the educational experience whether this is recognised or not, and whether we are consciously aware of this or not. Once established, relationships continue to exist beyond the time and space of the individuals influencing future relational experiences. In addition, a teacher’s comportment has been found to have a communicative aspect that is felt and sensed by others. A further essential understanding opens the play of relating. That is, the teacher and student experience their relationship as a play that is unscripted, uncertain, and lived beyond the rules of engagement. In this play, teachers who are attuned to relationship show a *phronesis*, or practical wisdom, as they relate moment by moment.

The outcomes of this research call into question technicist and instrumental models of teacher education which are presently underpinned by the dominant neoliberal ideology. Consistent with critical and humanistic approaches to education, this research calls for the humanising of the educational experience through the educating and re-educating of teacher educators and teachers towards essential understandings of relationship.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The focus of this study is the “teacher-student relationship”. Teachers and students are the human face of the everyday experience we call education. Conversations about education invariably include comments or stories about particular teacher-student relationships. The everydayness of these relational experiences is most commonly revealed in story form.

While we have all experienced the teacher-student relationship, some people’s vocation occurs in educational contexts where the teacher-student relationship is central to their daily activities. One such context is pre-service teacher education. Here, the teacher-student relationship is integral to the educational process as well as being content for academic consideration. The educational experiences provided for these pre-service teachers are intended to equip them for initial teaching positions in early childhood centres, primary or secondary schools.

In the increasingly complex role of being a teacher in New Zealand, it is critically important that beginning teachers explore their own experiences of the teacher-student relationship such that a growing sensitivity and attunement to this pedagogic relationship develops. Pre-service teachers take their prior experiences of the teacher-student relationship into their initial teaching positions; they cannot do otherwise. These experiences are part of their personal history of “being-in” the teacher-student relationship. An implication here is that teachers invariably “teach out of who they are” (Palmer, 1997, p. 1), thus these prior experiences influence the beginning teacher’s “way-of-being” with future students (Palmer, 1998).

The phenomenon of interest: The impetus for the study

This study focuses on the teacher-student relationship as it is experienced by lecturers and student teachers in pre-service teacher education programmes, rather than how it might be theorised. How do lecturers experience the teacher-student relationship with student teachers in pre-service programmes? How do student teachers experience the teacher-student relationship with lecturers in pre-service teacher education programmes? What are some essential meanings of the phenomenon known as the teacher-student relationship? In this study, the teacher-student relationship is explored

as the phenomenon in a phenomenological inquiry. While the inquiry focuses on stories of particular teacher-student relationships, the context of these stories involves a multiplicity of relationships that are present and in play in the same time and space.

As I engage in this research I do so with a history of life experiences of “relationship”. These relational experiences include my upbringing in a family of six children, my teaching experience in primary and secondary schools, my lecturing in teacher education programmes since 1990, and the numerous positions of leadership in education that have had a central concern for the relational culture of the organisation. My experiences of relationship continued as a father and parent. Similarly, the research I have completed has also had a relational focus. In particular, my Master’s thesis focused on an alternative ideology of education that had a relational concern. As I *return* to this phenomenon then, I do so with this history of experiences.

In addition to these experiences, observations of my colleagues in teacher education suggest that they are working hard to balance their concern for the teacher-student relationship in a tertiary environment that is increasingly managerialist and within teacher education programmes that are often technicist in nature (Browder, 1997; Dall’Alba & Barnacle, 2007; Thrupp, 1999; Thrupp & Wilmott, 2003). The student teachers too, seem to come to the teacher-student relationship under increasing pressure as they often have to manage full-time study, part-time employment, and wrestle with the financial realities of their study.

I have wondered if the importance of the teacher-student relationship in pre-service teacher education programmes is being challenged by pressing demands and the squeezing of time. Some educationalists (hooks, 2003; Palmer, 1997, 1998) would go further to suggest that teachers and students are actually engaging in teaching-learning experiences in a way that seeks to avoid “live” relational encounters with other people. Others, such as Freire (2003), Shor (1992), Gibbs (2006), Purpel & McLaurin (2004), and Diekelmann (2001), are calling for educational programmes and processes that affirm the teacher-student relationship as an integral and critical component of the relational connectedness that exists between teachers and students.

My experiences and wonderings have provided the impetus for this research, which was to look again at the teacher-student relationship and how this relationship is experienced

ontologically; a research project that appears not to have been undertaken before. The intention of the research was to recover, pre-reflectively, the essence of the teacher-student relationship. There is a challenge and intensity in engaging in phenomenological research. The contemplative nature of the research requires openness to pre-reflective understandings and their unfolding. In this process, Heidegger suggests, it is as if that which is most essential to us is that which withdraws from us (1968). Sheehan (2001) describes this similarly, suggesting that phenomenological researchers are “pulled in the draught” of that which is withdrawing. The implication here is that phenomenological research involves *turning towards* a phenomenon while submitting to a lived process that involves one’s entire way-of-being (Bengtsson, 1998; Dahlberg, Drew, & Nyström, 2001).

Prejudiced by my previous life experiences, I return to a phenomenon that seriously interests me. This doctoral research explores the phenomenon of the teacher-student relationship within the context of teacher education by asking the question: What is the meaning of the teacher-student relationship?

The purpose of the study

The purpose of this research is to explore the “lived experiences” of the teacher-student relationship in the context of pre-service teacher education programmes in New Zealand. In this study, pre-service teacher education programmes refer to any initial teacher education programme. The participants’ stories have been drawn from experiences in pre-service teacher education programmes that relate to Early Childhood Education and both primary and secondary schooling.

The purpose of this phenomenological inquiry is to gather understandings about the essential meanings of this phenomenon as it is lived in the everyday lives of particular lecturers and student teachers. In this way, taken-for-granted understandings of the phenomenon, which enable an attunement and sensitivity to this phenomenon, might be *un-covered*. My hope is that this research will turn me again towards a deepening appreciation of this phenomenon. Similarly, as this text is read, I am hoping that others might engage with their own experiences of the teacher-student relationship to better understand their way-of-being with this phenomenon.

The context for this research is pre-service teacher education. This context is important for a number of reasons. The student teachers and lecturers who have participated in this study are engaged in educational programmes that focus on the preparation of beginning teachers. In addition, these student teachers and lecturers experience the teacher-student relationship every day in teaching-learning experiences that might include the teacher-student relationship as content for inquiry, or in the context of practical teaching experiences where student teachers work with children. The beginning teacher's way-of-being in the teacher-student relationship has implications for their future relationships with children, the basis of this inquiry. The critical point here is that student teachers and lecturers are involved in teacher education courses that will, in turn, be influential in the subsequent stories of the teacher-student relationship for other people.

The context I bring to this study

As stated previously, this phenomenological inquiry occurs with a history of experiences and understandings of the teacher-student relationship. Heidegger (1996) suggests that our "pre-understandings" have a "forehaving" and a "foreconception", these being integral to our "being-in-the-world". Forehaving acknowledges that we are already in the midst of the world and its relationships before we say or decide anything about it (Harman, 2007). Similarly, our pre-understandings show a foreconception, which means that we are not just carried along unthinkingly by the world that is given to us, but we always approach that which surrounds us with a specific attitude or mood. Harman (2007) suggests that "we never fully escape this interplay between the pre-given and the interpretations we make of it, which are always unified in a shadowy, two-faced present" (p. 34). As the researcher, I am immersed in the world and its many relationships. I came to researching the teacher-student relationship with these experiences. These pre-understandings impact on my lived experiences with the participants and their stories. The next section considers particular contexts that have influenced my way-of-being towards the teacher-student relationship, while the section entitled pre-understandings considers specific pre-understandings of the phenomenon that I have brought into this inquiry.

Relational experiences: Some informal interactions

Prior to my first day of teaching, an elderly gentleman late in life took me aside to share a thought that lives on for me today. He provoked me with the thought that "the children I teach wouldn't remember anything I taught them, but they would remember

what sort of person I was”. Recent interactions with past primary and secondary school students have confirmed this.

As a parent, I sought to be proactive with my children’s teachers and enrolled my children, for the most part, in integrated schools that had a special character¹. My intention was that there should be a degree of synergy between the values and beliefs within our home and those outworked in my children’s schools. I held the view that parents are a child’s first teachers and that the role of the school was to support the parents with their educational endeavours with their child. This being the case, identifying schools that had a special character which would support the nature of our home was important to me as a parent. I was less concerned about my children’s academic endeavours than the effort they gave to the learning experiences provided by their teachers. I confess to siding with Mark Twain’s position: he declared that he never let his schooling interfere with his education. In his final year of secondary school, while organising parent-teacher interviews for me, my son provoked me, saying, “Only two of my teachers *know* me, Dad”. I had not expected his reply and felt saddened that this might be the case. It seemed to me that my son was alert to the nature of the teacher-student relationships he experienced as a secondary school student. What was my son saying about the nature of these relationships?

Relational experiences as a teacher, teacher educator, tertiary educator, and researcher

After teaching in a primary school, my second teaching position was in a single-sex secondary school which took pride in its academic and sporting achievements. I became increasingly concerned with the rigidity of this school in relation to the curriculum and the school’s willingness to consider students as a means of acquiring academic and sporting success at the expense of the particular student’s best educational interests. There were students who only attended to represent the school in inter-school athletics; other students who attended school to play rugby, leaving after the rugby season. These students had no interest in classroom activities. I experienced a similar frustration with a head of department whose views on the organisation of the curriculum

¹ The 1975 Integration Act by the New Zealand Government enabled private schools to receive operational funding from the then Department of Education. Integrated schools were required to have a statement as to the “special character” of their educational provision. Most often this statement related to a religious position (as in the Catholic or Seventh Day Adventist School Systems) or a particular educational philosophy (as in Montessori or Steiner Schools). The *special character* statement contractually obliged the schools to support the children from families who personally adhered to the particular values and beliefs underpinning the special character.

was simply to work through a text book without variation. His position was that the author of the text book knew why the curriculum was organised as it was in the book. The effect was that teachers in this subject area constrained the content of their teaching to the textbook. My concern for the students' experience of learning grew, as I felt the school legitimated content at the expense of the students-as-learners, as boys I needed to relate with to engage them in an interest and willingness to learn.

My next teaching position was as the Head of Department of Mathematics at a co-educational high school. In this position I was involved in a collaborative research project with IBM (NZ) and Massey University that sought to integrate the mathematics, science, English and social studies curriculums for students in years nine and ten. In contrast to my previous teaching experience where the textbook was seen as authoritative on the nature of the students' learning experiences, in this school, I was involved in rewriting the intended learning experiences for students with a view to making them more meaningful, relevant, and problem-based, and utilised the computer as an educational support tool. I became increasingly aware of the opportunities teachers had to construct influential teaching-learning experiences for their students and began to see how this influenced the way teachers and students related.

In 1990, I was employed as a lecturer in education, teaching in early childhood, primary and secondary pre-service teacher education programmes in a college of education. During this time, the importance of teacher education programmes in the preparation of beginning teachers became increasingly apparent to me. Teacher education programmes appeared to bridge students' previous experiences of being a student in the teacher-student relationship towards an appreciation and sensitivity of how they might *be* as the teacher in this relationship. During this time, I completed postgraduate papers in educational philosophy and history which supported a Master's of Education thesis which researched the dominant ideological features of an alternative school with a concern for relationships.

Upon the completion of my thesis, I was employed in a teaching and leadership position in a newly established private training establishment that sought to operate in a way that was consistent with a particular worldview². This organisation offered pre-service early

² The private training establishment was owned by a non-profit charitable Trust, which sought to provide educational services from a Christian worldview. The Trust held the view that this position did not

childhood, primary and secondary teacher education programmes as well as a counselling programme. I was extensively involved in curriculum development at paper and programme levels, along with the construction of several undergraduate degree programmes in teaching and education. Within eighteen months of employment, I took up the position of Chief Executive Officer / Dean of Education within this organisation. During this time, I co-wrote and presented an academic paper which called for a relational model in teacher education (Giles & Sanders, 1996). While my initial interest was the curriculum development within the organisation, my focus turned towards the organisational culture of the institution in light of my particular interest in the relational nature of educational practice (Giles, 1995). Collegial discussions considered the teacher-student relationship in relation to the growth of an educational community amongst staff and students, the design of new facilities, the titles given to those with responsibilities, and the pastoral care and mentoring of students. During this time, I was involved as a founding and executive member of the Teacher Education Forum Aotearoa New Zealand (TEFANZ), which gathered together providers of teacher education in New Zealand with a view to advocating politically for quality degree-based teacher education.

After serving for eight years in this role, I halted my teaching career, resigning from the position of Dean, to care for my terminally ill mother; a relational experience that was like no other.

My teaching experience recommenced in a different university with a priority on postgraduate teaching and supervision, and my doctoral studies. Much of my postgraduate teaching and supervision involved international students for whom English was often their second language. Over time, I became more attentive and sensitive to the messages and dialogue we shared relationally. I became alert to some of my taken-for-granted ways of “being-in-relationship”. I noticed how important the teacher-student relationship was for students. These students were particularly attentive to not only *who* I was but also *how* I was.

dictate a set of educational practices but rather informed the professional practice of education. In this sense, one of the intentions of this tertiary institution was to provide the initiative in researching ways of educating that were consistent with a Christian worldview. For more information, see Giles (1995, 2005).

Alongside my postgraduate activity, I began a doctorate. My doctoral studies initially sought to build upon my experience as a leader of a tertiary organisation with a special character. The initial focus centered on the development of the organisational culture within educational organisations. After an address on hermeneutic phenomenology by Emeritus Professor Nancy Diekelmann (University of Wisconsin) in the second semester of my doctoral research, I was personally challenged to revisit the experience of this critical relationship, having spent many years working from assumptions and theories. The focus of my doctorate was re-oriented towards the lived experience of the teacher-student relationship.

Pre-understandings

I have been involved in education for nearly five decades as a student and nearly three in the role of teacher. During this time, I believed that my awareness and understandings of the teacher-student relationship were deep. As I engaged in this research inquiry, I became increasingly aware of a range of assumptions that I had been holding about the teacher-student relationship. My assumptions have been informed by my educational experiences, my teaching experiences, a range of educational philosophies, and my own reflections on these experiences. As a means of gathering my pre-understandings, and articulating an understanding of these, I was interviewed by one of my supervisors prior to commencing this study. The interview focused on my experience of the teacher-student relationship as a student, teacher and as a teacher educator. It was recorded and transcribed for analysis. This interview forms the basis of the pre-understandings that were embedded in my thinking prior to doing the interviews and during ongoing analysis of the research data. These pre-understandings are reconsidered in chapter 9, the conclusion to this study.

“The teacher-student relationship begins in the first class”

I held the assumption that the teacher-student relationship was initiated in the first teaching-learning experience within a course. The first class was the context for the *start* of the teacher-student relationship. This beginning occurred for both the teacher and the student. Such an event required the teacher to give thought to *how* the first experience would take place. This planning would include how the first greetings would occur, how the classroom was organised, the boundaries that would need to be negotiated with the students, and how the students would engage with the teacher. I believed that the first class with a new group of students was a significant gathering that laid important foundations for subsequent classes. Wanting students to be actively

involved in their lessons, I encouraged them to contribute to the discussions, particularly when this related to the clarification of tasks or expectations.

“Teachers consider the teacher-student relationship more than students do”

Another assumption revolved around the idea that the teacher was in control of both the teaching-learning experiences and the teacher-student relationship. Within this, my unspoken assumption was that the teacher cared more about the teacher-student relationship than the students did. As a consequence, the teacher needed to take the initiative when it comes to relationship with students. I felt that the teacher’s greater concern for the teacher-student relationship would have the teacher consider the relational experiences after class more fully than the student would.

There have been occasions where I experienced teachers who did not seem to care about the teacher-student relationship. At these times, I used to wonder about who was caring for the relationship. It seemed to me that when the teacher-student relationship does not appear to matter to the teacher, it is the teacher who seems least affected by this. They appear to be more resilient. I believed that the risk in the teacher-student relationship to fall more fully on the student.

“The teacher-student relationship is a causal relationship”

Another assumption related to my tendency to rely on educational psychology to explain the teacher-student relationship and its influence on teaching-learning experiences. Educational psychology was a strong underpinning to my initial pre-service teacher education programme. I tended to explain the educative process as a causal experience. My emphasis on educational psychology was reinforced further by prevailing behaviourist and cognitive orientations to learning.

Fundamental to educational psychology is the notion that a person’s behaviour is of primary importance to the learning process. A person’s behaviour can be explained in terms of the causality between stimuli and responses, and conditioned through a range of reinforcers that are intended to change the behaviour (Lefrançois, 2000). These reinforcers might be positive or negative depending on the situation. They might even involve a teacher withdrawing from relating with a student as a way of influencing the student’s responses. In this way, learning is defined as a change of behaviour, a consequence of the interaction of stimulus-response-reinforcer events. It is the teacher’s

task to control these influences on a learner's behaviours, towards pre-determined behavioural objectives.

One of the similarly influential courses in my advanced educational studies involved the consideration of the *determinants of learning*, a set of teacher behaviours designed to raise the effectiveness of the learning process (Ashcroft, 1983). By managing certain variables in the teaching-learning experiences, the transaction of learning from the teacher to the learner is optimised. In this behaviourist and cognitive approach, students are able to more readily express their learning in behavioural terms. An important element of educational psychology is the teacher's apparent control over a learning process in which the learner is a passive receptor of information. In this way, the teacher "leads" the process.

While shifts in the orientation of pre-service teacher education programmes have occurred, compulsory *Learning and Teaching* courses in most teacher education programmes still accentuate the causal nature of the teacher-student relationship. The language of causality continues to influence existing understandings of quality, efficiency, and effectiveness in education.

"The teacher-student relationship has a 'between'"

I have become aware of the extent to which I have viewed the teacher and student as objects within a teacher-student relationship that exists *between* these objects. While I have used the term *interaction* to describe teaching and learning experiences, most often explanations about these interactions usually focused on the "between" of relating. I recall describing the teacher-student relationship as being made up of a teacher, student(s), and the relational transaction between these two objects.

"The teacher-student relationship influences the student's 'head, heart and hands'"

I have also held an assumption that the influence of the teacher-student relationship relates to three different spheres of the student: their character, knowledge and understandings, and skills, or, as Sergiovanni (1992) and Palmer (1998) have described, the student's "head, heart and hands". I thought of the student and the teacher as a number of integrated components; here the tendency to categorise and establish causality is again evident. I have held the view that the influence of the teacher and the

shared teaching-learning experiences impacts the student holistically and I have explained this influence in terms of these different spheres of the student's being.

“In teacher education, the lecturer-student teacher relationship is increasingly task focused”

I have always believed that the best educational practice should occur within teacher education programmes. Surely those who teach in pre-service teacher education bring with them relevant classroom experiences that are pertinent to the student teachers? While I expected to find some lecturer-student teacher relationships that were less dynamic, I did not expect to find lecturer-student teacher relationships that were antagonistic or contentious. For me, the preparation of tomorrow's teachers is a matter of serious concern. As such, I believe that a supportive lecturer-student teacher relationship is critical.

More recently, I have realised that the lecturer-student teacher relationship is being constrained by the technicist nature of many teacher education programmes. From 2000 in New Zealand, most pre-service teacher education programmes were shortened from four years of study to three, with greater priority placed on what teachers actually do. In this time, the student teacher is expected to be “academically” equipped to degree level while “professionally” equipped, after twenty-five weeks of practical experience, for his or her teaching career. The pressure on the teacher-student relationship has increased with the breadth of information students are expected to know, while all the time they are asked to critique, challenge, and arrive at an emergent philosophy for their practice. I have wondered how these recent changes in teacher education influence the experience of the teacher-student relationship.

In assuming that teacher educators model the best practice of teaching and learning, I am concerned about the feedback provided to student teachers completing practical teaching experiences. The immediate critique of these teaching experiences tends to be conducted against a pre-determined framework which identifies specific aspects of the experience for appraisal. It seems ironic that understandings of the teacher-student relationship are important learning outcomes of pre-service teacher education courses, while the student teachers and lecturers experiencing this relationship are afforded less time. In this way, the teacher-student relationship appears to be given theoretical consideration than a concern for the lived experience of this relationship. Under these pressures, lecturers may not practice or role model what they preach.

“The student and teacher in the teacher-student relationship”

Increasingly, I notice *how I am* as I am walking towards a class of student teachers. Most often, I plan the lesson on the previous day, allowing time to absorb its intent. I am mindful of how I am feeling on the day and what else was on my mind prior to this teaching episode. I notice occasions when other personal or professional experiences influence my attentiveness and responsiveness to the students. In the main, I have sought to contain and constrain these thoughts for the sake of the student’s teaching-learning experiences. After all, readiness for teaching is the very topic and purpose of our coming together. These ideas relate particularly to how I am in the teacher-student relationship during a lesson. Is this so for students?

At times, student’s out-of-class lives appear to influence *how they are* on a particular day. Most often, as a teacher I would gain only a sense of how life was for the student beyond their academic programme. While teachers and students relate in teaching-learning experiences, do they withhold something of themselves for the purpose of staying focused on their teaching-learning experiences?

“The teacher-student relationship is influenced by the ideological context of education”

An assumption I have held strongly is that each particular teacher-student relationship exists within a broader relational context. Previous experiences have raised my concern over the influence of the organisational culture on the teacher-student relationship. I believe that the context of the teacher-student relationship influences the expression of the relationship. While I expect the importance of the teacher-student relationship to be readily acknowledged in teacher education programmes, the priority given to student teachers and the experiential growth of this relationship varies enormously. Teacher education programmes appear to be orientated more to the fulfilment of academic expectations in the first instance.

The importance of the teacher-student relationship: Lamenting over the way it was and how it concerns the future

Over a long period of time and in many different contexts, I have found the teacher-student relationship to impact people deeply. I have assumed that many people, and teachers in particular, have a genuine interest in their relationships with others. I have assumed that a person’s interest in relationships would be seen and experienced by others. In teacher education, relationships are not something that just happens but

something that ought to be thought about deeply. I assumed teachers would be overtly concerned with sustaining active and engaging relationships with their students.

I have wondered about my concern for the teacher-student relationship. Do I have a genuine concern for the teacher-student relationship or am I primarily concerned about the changes that are happening in New Zealand's education system and their likely impact on the teacher-student relationship? Alternatively, am I just hankering after bygone days and the time and priority previously afforded to relational experiences? My experiences as a student in the teacher-student relationship and my experiences as a teacher in the teacher-student relationship together suggest that the teacher-student relationship is critical to the educative process.

In this section, I have outlined some of the pre-understandings that I have brought to this research. The following section outlines the way I encountered the phenomenological research approach.

Encountering the phenomenological research approach

My original doctoral proposal focused on organisational cultures that give centrality to the teacher-student relationship. I had intended to identify best practices within various organisational cultures that valued a relational educational environment. During this time, I attended a research presentation by Professor Emeritus Nancy Diekelmann on her phenomenological research.

What I heard and subsequently contemplated has been personally transformative. I reconsidered the extent to which my initial doctoral intentions were to capture data as theorised by participants rather than the lived experience of the teacher-student relationship. The notion of a *lived* experience was new to me, and yet it resonated with my own relational experiences. Turning my attention from theoretical understandings of the teacher-student relationship to the lived experience of this phenomenon, I embarked on a research journey that continues to impact every aspect of my living, teaching and experiencing; indeed, a humanising effect (Giles, 2007). The central focus of my research was identified at this time, that is, the lived experience of the teacher-student relationship.

My research journey continued towards a fuller understanding of a research approach that would enable such an inquiry. Again, the experience of listening to Professor Diekelmann had opened up the language associated with a research approach known variously as *phenomenology*, *interpretive phenomenology* and *hermeneutic phenomenology*. An invaluable experience at this time was the opportunity to continue the dialogue on this research approach with Professor Diekelmann and other phenomenological scholars, in a three-day immersion-like experience. I left this experience with the resolution that the research approach known as hermeneutic phenomenology was not only congruent with the focus of the research but also seemed to fit my way-of-being as a researcher and as a person.

It was at this point that my doctorate officially changed to a phenomenological inquiry of the teacher-student relationship. A subsequent decision involved the need to transfer the supervision of this research to supervisors who themselves had completed the challenge of hermeneutic phenomenological research at doctoral level and beyond. Associate Professor Liz Smythe and Dr Deb Spence were such people. Their passion for this research approach, their understanding and critique of Martin Heidegger and Hans-Georg Gadamer, along with their involvement in the education of others in the context of nursing and midwifery, have been the making of this research.

Another critical experience to my understanding of this research approach occurred with my attendance at the International Institute for Interpretive Phenomenology at the University of Wisconsin, convened by Professor Diekelmann. It was in this context that I encountered the philosophers informing this research approach. In particular, I found the writings of Heidegger and Gadamer to be invaluable in terms of *how* I approached the topic and how I worked to reveal the essential meanings of the phenomenon. The work of van Manen (1990) has also influenced me as a teacher educator and phenomenological researcher. It has assisted me to translate essential philosophical notions of Heidegger and Gadamer into the practice of conducting phenomenological research. Critically important here has been my appreciation of how the researcher is intricately involved in the research approach, and how the research text emerges as a fusion of the researcher's experiences with the phenomenon.

As I began to understand the interpretive priority of hermeneutic phenomenology I recognised that this research approach does not seek to gain the final word on a

particular research question. To do so would conflict with an understanding that our interpretations of an experience are always and inescapably located within a particular historicity and open to new interpretations (Gadamer, 1994). Similarly, the phenomenological concern relates to the nature of the lived experiences rather than an explanation of the phenomenon in theoretical or causal terms.

Another important consideration in hermeneutic phenomenology is the researcher's way-of-being *towards* the phenomenon. The research approach is more of a way-of-being than a tightly defined procedural approach. This research seeks "taken-for-granted" understandings within everyday experiences of the teacher-student relationship. Arriving at such understandings requires attunement with the phenomenon, as the phenomenon shows itself in the stories and text of the research. At times, the research process involved an initiative being taken, while on other occasions I felt led by the way in which the phenomenon was showing itself. Heidegger (1968) commented that that which is most essential to us is that which withdraws from us, until such time as we experience understandings in a type of "clearing" that enables thinking. The sensitivity and focus required by the researcher toward the phenomenon is intense and ongoing, and it has been important to create opportunities for regular and sustained contemplation and deliberation.

In this section I have identified some of the critical influences that have shaped the research approach and the subsequent research process. Greater elaboration of these ideas will occur in chapters 4 and 5 of the thesis. In summary, the hermeneutic phenomenological research approach was used to support an inquiry focused on the phenomenon of the teacher-student relationship.

Structure of the thesis

This thesis is presented in nine chapters.

Chapter 1, "Introduction", sets the scene for this thesis in relation to the impetus for this research, the personal context, and the pre-understandings I brought to the research. This chapter outlines the purpose of the research and my decision to use a phenomenological research approach.

Chapter 2, "The Context of the Teacher-Student Relationship", contextualises this research by providing a historical perspective on the centrality of the teacher-student

relationship. Recent tensions and competing demands of humanistic, constructivist and critical educators' demands for this relationship are considered, as these demands wrestle with the dominant ideology in education, economic rationalism.

Chapter 3, "The Teacher-Student Relationship", contextualizes the research by providing a review of the literature pertaining to the phenomenon of the teacher-student relationship. The central concern is how relationship is theorised in the literature.

Chapter 4, "Philosophical Foundations", describes the philosophical ideas that have underpinned this research. Of central importance are the philosophical writings of Martin Heidegger and Hans-Georg Gadamer, and the methodological considerations of Max van Manen.

Chapter 5, "Method", moves from the philosophical ideas to show how these ideas have influenced the shape of the research process. The intent of the chapter is to open the research process for scrutiny by others. An important consideration here is the researcher's own lived experience of researching in this particular way.

Chapters 6 to 8 present my interpretation of the essence of the phenomenon of the teacher-student relationship.

Chapter 6, "Always in relationship", explores the always-existing nature of the teacher-student relationship. This chapter explores the primordial connectedness of our "being-together-in-the-world" and the essential understanding that the teacher-student relationship matters.

Chapter 7 "Comportment", shows that comportment is more than a way-of-being. Our comportment shows *who we are* and *how we are*. Moreover our comportment has a communicative aspect such that it is known and sensed by others in a paralinguistic way.

Chapter 8, "In the play", describes how a teacher and student are immersed within the movement of a relational play. This play and its movement are the teacher-student relationship. In the play reveals a teacher's phronesis, or practical wisdom, in the

“uncertainty” of the relating that exists within in our everyday teaching-learning experiences.

Chapter 9, “Conclusion”, discusses the findings, implications for educational practice that emerge from this research, and recommends further research. This chapter considers the influence of the research experience on those that conduct phenomenological research.

Chapter 2: The context of the teacher-student relationship

The context surrounding the teacher-student relationship has always been contestable (Bennett, 1997; Purpel & McLaurin, 2004, Codd, 1999). This is no different today. The challenge of critical and humanistic educators to traditional educational thought is in understanding the educational process as an experience that happens *with* students. The experience of teachers *with* students is of central concern to these educators.

In the 1990's educational policy and practice was challenged by the economic rationalist ideology. The nature of the educational process was seen as a linear transaction that was measurable. The introduction of this ideology shifted the language and priorities for educational sector. The ideological reforms extended to tertiary education, higher education and teacher education. This changing and contestable context of the teacher-student relationship is the central concern of this chapter. The chapter considers the challenges to educational thought prior to the emergence of the *economic rationalist* ideology, tracking the influence of this ideology into tertiary education, higher education and teacher education.

Traditional educational thought challenged: Education as an experience “with”

In the last twenty-five years, a number of longstanding traditions in educational thought have been openly challenged from a number of different perspectives. For some, the level of concern represents a moral and spiritual crisis in education (Bennett, 1997; Chassey, 2002; Purpel & McLaurin, 2004; Shapiro, 2005). This concern extends to the absence of relational connectedness in educational organisations (Bennett, 1997; Burkhardt & Nagai-Jacobson, 2002; Gibbs, 2006; Miller & Nakagawa, 2002), teacher's fear of a live encounter with their students (Palmer, 1998), through to the lack of interest in the learning community within educational institutions (Bennett, 1997; Hurd, Stein, & Tinto, 2007; Intrator, 2005; Tinto, 1994)

In contrast, critical educators, postmodernists and humanistic educators consider the educational process to be an experience that occurs *with* the student in a specific context; a position that rejects traditional notions of an objectified and instrumental transaction *from* the teacher *to* the student (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991; Burkhardt & Nagai-Jacobson, 2002; Tompkins, 2005). Some educators (Freire, 2003; hooks, 2003;

Shor, 1992) have used the metaphor of banking to describe the traditional transactional model of education. In this metaphor, “deposits” of information are made by (active) teachers *into* (passive) students. These educators argue that educational process is not neutral in terms of the underlying values, rather it is a value-laden and a holistic experience that is shown in the relationship and exchange between the teacher and student (Bennett, 2003; Burkhardt & Nagai-Jacobson, 2002; Miller & Nakagawa, 2002; Riley-Taylor, 2002).

Critical sociologists have suggested that the entire education system has been set up on an industrial model of production that seeks to progressively enculturate students into the dominant ideological values and beliefs within the wider society (Bourdieu, 1973; Harker, 1990; Nash, 1983; Spoonley, 1979). Their concerns with traditional education extend to the organisation of schooling, the curriculum, the assessment regimes, the role of the teacher and student in the educational process, the value-laden nature of the process, the intended goals and outcomes, as well as the hidden curriculum (Bourdieu, 1973; Meighan & Siraj-Blatchford, 2003; Nash, 1983). Moreover, hegemonic practices are seen as a systemic part of an educational process that legitimises existing relationships of power within the student’s educational experience (Bourdieu, 1973).

One of the ongoing difficulties in any paradigmatic challenge is the rhetoric involved. Educators such as Habermas and Giroux suggest that critical approaches to education are concerned with ensuring that the outcome of the educational process is that of an educated citizen, a position similar to traditional academic thought (Giroux, 1981, 1988; Giroux & McLaren, 1989, Young, 1990). For critical educators, such a citizen would strive for a greater sense of social justice as this contributes to the social transformation of society (Cochran-Smith et al., 1999; Reed & Black, 2006; Tisdell & Tolliver, 2001; Zeichner, 1993a, 1993b). Such emancipatory transformations would need to be supported by meaningful and relevant educational experiences that seek to liberate and empower students as agents of change in an ideology-laden world (Mezirow, 1995; Sandretto, Lang, Schon, & Whyte, 2003; Zollers, Albert & Cochran-Smith, 2000).

Many of these more recent educational perspectives affirm the contextual nature of education. The *ecological systems* view of the educational context is described by Urie Bronfenbrenner as a multi-layered system of influence that moves from those closest to the students and their family, through cultural and community spheres to, ultimately, the

influence of socio-political concerns (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). Thus, educational experiences are both contextual and holistic because the influence of education is broader than the evidential change in a student's cognitive or behavioural abilities (Buber, 2002; Connor, 1992; Dunne, 1997; Riley-Taylor, 2002).

Holistic consideration of education recognises the importance of underlying values and beliefs, as well as the affective and inter-relational qualities of the students and teachers within the wider learning community (Bhindi & Duignan, 1997; Cunningham, 2001; Gibbs, 2006; Hartrick Doane, 2002; hooks, 2003; Kuk, 1993; Lorenzo, 1998; Palmer, 1998). Proponents of holistic education recognise that experiences occur for teachers and students in highly dynamic and interactive settings (Buber, 2002; Connor, 1992; Dunne, 1997; Riley-Taylor, 2002). The teacher's role is challenging and often involves the movement and management of paradoxical pressures and tensions in practice (Hare, 2005; Palmer, 1998, 2000).

In these critical, post-modern, and humanistic orientations to education the teacher and student roles are thought of differently. The teacher fulfils the role of a facilitator of students' learning, co-constructing their own learning and modelling the learning process with the students (Palmer, 2000; von Glasersfeld, 1996). The interactions between teacher and student have a subjective quality that constitutes something more than a cognitive and behavioural concern for learning. Vygotsky's sociocultural theory argues that the teacher's role in a socially mediated learning process is to scaffold the student's learning (Vygotsky, 1978). Bridging the perceived gap between a student's present understanding and where potential understandings might exist, the teacher proactively scaffolds intentional experiences for the student towards such an end (Vygotsky, 1978). In this process, the student is an active meaning-maker beside the teacher within a facilitated learning environment (von Glasersfeld, 1996).

In a similar way, the dialogue between the teacher and the student is critical to transformative forms of education (Ashworth, 2004; Mezirow, 1991; Schugurensky, 2002; Sefa Dei, 2002). Rather than being a passive recipient of information, the student is fully engaged *with* the teacher towards new learning possibilities (Palmer, 2000). From a critical perspective, transformative forms of education ensure that the curriculum is a vehicle for social change through the empowerment of the students

(Mezirow, 1991). In so doing, the curriculum is a lived experience *between*, and *shared by*, a teacher and a student (Riley-Taylor, 2002).

The humanistic challenge to traditional education views the learning process as a personal act to fulfil one's potential. Such a consequence is the result of human choice (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). The humanistic challenge raises concern over an education system that appears more focused on the production of particular student outcomes rather than the growth and development of student's potentialities (hooks, 2003). Moreover, the hegemony within current educational practice silences the participation of students in the educational endeavour (hooks, 2003; Palmer, 1998).

The challenge to traditional education extends to the legitimacy given to new paradigms for educational research. The increasing interest in qualitative research, embedded within interpretive and critical theorist paradigms, supports the critical, post-modern and humanistic perspectives on education. The educational experience is being researched with a greater concern for the contextual and interpersonal dimensions that reveal the teacher *with* the student. Rather than seek to measure and control teaching and learning experiences, qualitative research delves into the meanings of such experiences for the participants as a way of understanding and possibly changing the educational experience. In this way, the research experience is value laden and influences the researcher, the participants, and the research context.

Traditional positivist concerns for research validity, reliability and triangulation are giving way to qualitative concerns for trustworthiness and rigour. In a similar way, teachers' and students' experiences are seen as having experiential authority (Munby & Russell, 1994). Practitioner research, which values the authority of the participant's experience, has led to research approaches that attempt to capture a greater sense of the totality of the educational experience from inside the experience (Mutch, 2005). These new approaches to research include self-study (Dinkelman, 2003; Hamilton, 1998; Loughran, 2002), action research (Cardno, 2003; Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988; McNiff, 1988), autobiography (Louie Drevdahl, Purdy & Stackman, 2003), appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider, Sorenson, Whitney & Yaegar, 2000; Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2003), and narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). It is important to note that the approach to educational research has shifted in accord with the prevailing educational perspectives. Recent developments in educational research have shown an increased

interest in the context of the educational experience, the culture of the educational context (Beattie, 2002; Johnson & Hawke, 2002; Kezar & Eckel, 2002), the value-laden nature of the educational experience (English, Fenwick, & Parsons, 2003; Louie et al., 2003), and the alignment of educational philosophy to practice (Becherer, 1995; Giles, 2005; Palmer, 1997; Tierney, 1999), among other endeavours. Such research has been reported with “stories” rather than statistics, with the aim of finding resonance with the reader.

In summary, the challenge to traditional approaches to education has led to a reconsideration of the educational process, previously thought of as a transaction, with a greater appreciation of the educational context within which the teacher is *with* the student. In this way, the teacher and student are not objects that interact but subjects who share a common experience (Buber, 2002). When preparing students for society, teachers using these educational philosophies seek to empower students to participate in transformative change.

Traditional and current educational thought contested ideologically: Education as business

The most recent challenge to the experience of education in New Zealand over the last twenty years has been the radical restructuring of the New Zealand public education system under the influence of the economic rationalist ideology (Billot, 2003). The introduction of this ideology, also called the *New Right*, *monetarism* and *libertarianism*, in mainstream politics in New Zealand occurred with the incoming Labour Government in 1984 (Snook, 1991). After radically altering the business sector in their first term in government, the Labour party returned in their second term with a view to applying this ideology to the governance, management and operation of education across all educational sectors in New Zealand as this represented an “analytically more robust way of thinking about education” (Grace, 1991, p. 268). In 1987, the re-elected Labour government received a treasury brief entitled “Government Management” which argued that education was more of a private than a public good and criticized education for the poor performance of the economy (Butterworth & Tarling, 1994).

In due course the context of teachers’ and students’ educational experiences would be radically altered towards greater contestability and a return to evidential models of teaching and learning akin to the behaviourist orientation of earlier times (Tompkins,

2005). Moreover a transactional and instrumental model of education would underpin how the educational experience is viewed as a business transaction *from* an educational supplier (teacher) *to* a client (student) (Tompkins, 2005). The new ideology brings with it a new language to describe and position the educational endeavour.

While critical, postmodern, and humanistic challenges to traditional educational thought were largely fought within the academy, the ideological challenge of the New Right was politically orchestrated with ramifications for every area of society. The political agenda was to ensure the dominance of this ideology within the restructuring of the educational infrastructure in New Zealand such that a return to former approaches to education would not be possible (Codd, 1999; Snook, 1991).

The outcome of education has previously been considered a public good. The position of this new ideology is that every individual is self-accumulating and selfish, and “primarily directed towards the acquisition of wealth, status and power” (Lauder, 1987, p. 5). The educational experience is seen as advancing an individual’s possessions and economic capacity. In this way, educational “outputs” are seen to advance the economic potential of its clients (students) (OECD, 1993). The educational commodity is purchased and received in a business exchange or transaction taking place *from* the teacher *to* the student. It is important to note that there is less concern about the *context* of education as it is the exchange that is important. The exchange must be seen to have occurred and the quality of this exchange is a matter of accountability on the part of the provider (Castle, 2006; Codd, 1999). Consistent with economic rationalist underpinnings, the quality of the educational exchange is thought to be improved through greater institutional competition for public funds (Codd, 1999; Jiang, 2007; Snook et al., 1999). Competition, it is argued, enhances the quality of this service industry. In education, this would include a “consideration of merit” pay for highly performing individual teachers, institutional competition for the student “market”, and the contestability of state funds, amongst other regimes.

As education was reconceptualised as training and underpinned by a behaviourist orientation, the teacher’s role shifted to that of a supplier of educational information, a trainer, a controller of the educational process, and an objective evaluator of a student’s learning (Codd, 1999). In this context, the student is the client, the purchaser, and the consumer of the educational product. An important implication for the process of

teaching and learning here is the emphasis on the individual student, at a time when sociocultural developments had been moving educational thought towards the importance of the social and dialectical nature of the educational community (von Glasersfeld, 1996).

One particular change in the infrastructure of New Zealand's education system was the disestablishment of the Department of Education and the establishment of the Ministry of Education in 1988, along with the wider reform to the administration of educational organisations (Ministry of Education, 1988). The consultative and advisory mandate of the Department of Education was dismantled and ex-changed for centralised forms of control and accountability within the newly established Ministry of Education (Codd, 1999).

Another government agency that was established in parallel to the Ministry of Education was the Education Review Office (ERO). This organisation became the Minister of Education's agency for the evaluation of educational practice. ERO employees complete audits on a range of educational organisations and post their influential reports on the Internet as public documents (McKenzie, 1999). ERO reports can influence what funding an institution receives and can recommend various forms of Ministerial intervention in the governance and operation of a school. Evidence-based, quantitative data are gathered on schools' outputs and outcomes in terms of their operation, organisational culture, and pedagogical processes (Snook et al., 1999; Tompkins, 2005). Measurable output and accountability have become a formal and externally imposed requirement of school effectiveness and performance indicators (Carr & Hartnett, 1996; Codd, 2005).

A further initiative within these reforms was a new curriculum framework for New Zealand primary and secondary schools ("The New Zealand Curriculum Framework", Ministry of Education, 1993). The foreword of this curriculum document explicitly linked the educational outcomes of the schooling system with the international state of the New Zealand economy (Ministry of Education, 1993). The rationale went further and suggested that the purpose of the curriculum is to prepare a workforce that meets the challenges of a competitive international business environment (Ministry of Education, 1993). This is echoed in the curriculum frameworks of other countries (Brodinsky, 1993). Likewise, a new qualifications framework in the 1990's was re-

orientated to support the credentialing and commodification of information. The students' goal was stated as being the attainment of units of learning which might equip them in their vocational interests within the competitive employment market.

Under this ideology, the nature of educational research was reconfigured. In the first instance, the funding for educational research shifted to the government purchasing research initiatives that addressed the government's priorities within fixed time periods and with an increasing commitment to positivist and quantitative research approaches. This outcomes-funded research regime sought to shift the focus of educational research towards educational practice that was said to benefit the effectiveness of the educational system and thereby the cost-efficiency of the education industry for the economic benefit of New Zealand (Codd, 2005).

The New Right ideology continues to pervade the educational practices of teachers and students across New Zealand. Under the "Tomorrow's Schools" initiative (Ministry of Education, 1988), educational organisations were given operational responsibility within policy guidelines laid down by the Ministry of Education, while the control of curriculum and assessment standards was recentralised (McInerney, 2003). Under the influence of the New Right ideology, the nature and pace of reform has had a significant impact on the principal's role (Billot, 2003; Fullan, 2002; McInerney, 2003). Schools now operate as small businesses, with school principals performing tasks more akin to those of business managers (Billot, 2003; Fullan, 2002; Thrupp & Willmott, 2003; Yelder & Codling, 2004). Despite this changing role, principals' positions are invariably held by experienced classroom teachers; the basis of promotion to the principalship being their prior and successful teaching performance. The principal is expected to perform business-like functions as integral to his or her managerial responsibilities (McInerney, 2003; Thrupp & Willmott, 2003). This includes the employment or "termination" of staff, the construction of a strategic or business plan for the organisation, and the project management of key tasks within the school (Thrupp, 1999). Where a principal lacks these skills, the school's trustees can choose to use operational funds to appoint a school or business manager to oversee these managerial activities (Codd, 1996). The principal's role focuses on the overall leadership of the school, while the day-to-day operational and financial responsibilities are assigned to the school or business manager.

Further consequences of these ideological changes have been the proliferation of performance measures and increased administration aimed at providing evidence of the “quality” of institutions’ and individuals’ service to their stake-holders (Gunter et al., 2003). Thrupp and others describe these developments as showing the emergence of a new managerialist culture within New Zealand schools that is concerned with results, performance and outcomes (Alphonse, 1999; Pollit, 1990; Thrupp, 1999; Thrupp & Willmott, 2003). In the process, Alphonse (1999) argues, “Managerialism takes political and moral issues out of organizational discourses and recasts them in the neutral language of science, technology and bureaucracy” (p. 14). Such a technocratic rationality presents an “ahistorical and de-politicised view of educational governance and policy” (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985, p. 27) and neither promotes, nor tolerates an environment in which a democratic and participative culture can flourish (Alphonse, 1999). For Thrupp and Willmott (2003),

The key words in the managerial mantra are economy (curbing the amount being spent), efficiency (getting the most out of the money being spent), and effectiveness (achieving as near as possible the aims designated at the beginning of the process). (p. 29)

In summary, the challenge brought on by the New Right ideology occurred firstly at a political level with an incoming government. This ideology has become the basis of widespread restructuring and institutional adjustment and reform in New Zealand’s education system (Billot, 2003; Codd, 1999; Thrupp & Willmott, 2003). These reforms have impacted on the nature, content and possible outcomes of education, as well as the associated educational processes (Alphonse, 1999). The rhetoric suggests that the educational process returns to that of an instrumental transaction from a teacher to a student, as this constitutes a business exchange between a supplier and a consumer (Dall’Alba & Barnacle, 2007; Tompkins, 2005). The context for this exchange is perceived to be of less importance than the provision of an efficient and effective service to the consumer. The official outcome of education has moved from that of an educated citizen to that of an equipped and skilled worker (Ministry of Education, 1993). The introduction of this ideology has changed New Zealand’s educational landscape indelibly. Education has been officially reconceptualised as an economic transaction with institutions requiring a greater managerial presence (Thrupp & Willmott, 2003).

The ideological influence on higher education in New Zealand

Every area of educational provision in New Zealand has had to make some adjustments given the prevailing economic rationalist ideology. This is particularly true in the tertiary sector where clashing philosophies, ideologies and priorities are being held in an awkward tension (Browder, 1997). Higher education has been required to become increasingly competitive, contestable and linked to quality measures and performance criteria at an individual and organisational level (Codd, 1999; Jiang, 2007).

Traditionally, tertiary education operated from an academic traditionalist orientation (van Brummelen, 1988). Universities and other providers of tertiary education provided curricula that included liberal and professional studies (Barnett, 2003). The acquisition of knowledge was seen as a virtue, occurring on the path to becoming an educated person. Similarly, the university was also commissioned as a social critic of society and as a site for advancing knowledge through rigorous research activity.

With the New Right ideology, the traditional role, status, and academic freedom of universities have been radically altered in New Zealand (Codd, 2004, 2005; Jiang, 2007; Snook et al., 1999; Thrupp et al., 2003). Formerly, education was construed as a transaction conveyed from a teacher to a student in the interests of a public good. The philosophical challenges of critical educators, postmodernists and humanistic perspectives shifted the focus of attention from education as a transaction *to* the student, to the educational experience of a teacher *with* a student. These philosophical challenges supported the notion of a wider public good, and the empowerment and liberation of students as agents of change. Educators were focused on the quality of the educational experience rather than its control and measurement. Alongside these philosophical challenges came the introduction and restructuring of education in accord with the political agenda of economic rationalism.

The influential “Report on Post-compulsory Education and Training in New Zealand” (Hawke, 1988) describes the educational output in market terms, as “the quantum of knowledge, skills and values that has been added to the initial stock of a student or trainee as the result of the service of a provider” (p. 35). Education was now being seen as a private good (Lauder, 1987). Lessening state funds for education meant the introduction of user-pays regimes and the provision of long-term student loan systems (Jiang, 2007). In 2000, the Tertiary Education Advisory Commission (TEAC) was

established, which recommended a “more centrally steered and regulated approach” to higher education (Olssen, 2000, p. 40). With the establishment of the New Zealand Tertiary Education Commission and the issuing of a Tertiary Education Strategy, the government made it clear that the focus of the tertiary education system was the production of skills, knowledge and innovation that would transform the economy and meet the requirements of the local and international labour markets (Jiang, 2007). As the Ministry of Education (2001) would later state, “New Zealand needs an *outward-looking, future-focused* and *connected* tertiary education that contributes effectively to our nation’s transformation into a Knowledge Economy and Society” (p. 4).

The ideological influence in New Zealand extends to the roles of teacher and student in the educational exchange. In the transactional model of interaction, the teacher and student are involved in an objectified exchange of goods and services for the purpose of knowledge acquisition and skill development. Students can now consider the “value” of their purchased commodity; they are most likely accumulating a substantial financial debt in exchange for the opportunity to acquire this learning for their professional or vocational aspirations. This eventuality is the price of user-pays education (Codd, 1990, 2005).

The ideological restructuring of tertiary education in New Zealand has included the adoption of a single unifying qualifications framework which merges academic interests, vocational interests and the educational provisions of post-compulsory schooling programmes. The qualifications framework is initiated in the second or third year of a student’s secondary schooling and continues in step-like fashion throughout his or her life up to doctoral and post-doctoral studies. Inherent in the structure of the New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NQZF) is the emphasis on the acquisition and accumulation of “building blocks” of knowledge and skill that support an individual’s employment, any eventuality of a change in vocational path, and any change in a person’s vocational interests. In this way, the NQZF reaffirms the ideological position that education is a purchasable commodity acquired through a transaction from a supplier, as a private investment by the client rather than a right (Jiang, 2007; Yelder & Codling, 2004). The traditional ideal of education as predominantly a public good is something of the past in New Zealand policy, and now only remains in the minds of some providers.

Ideologically influenced changes in New Zealand also occurred at the managerial and organisational levels. Universities and other tertiary providers of higher education moved to compete for the enrolment of students in an attempt to capture the student market. Such endeavour recognises the threat of newly established, non-public tertiary organisations (Codd, 1999; Jiang, 2007). The organisational activity for capturing the educational market has resulted in the proliferation of multi-campus sites, an increasing number of online programmes, an increased flexibility of programme delivery, and the merger of some providers (Chassey, 2002). In addition, the new approach to funding tertiary institutions towards government-directed outcomes and the need for budgetary changes within these institutions has led to an increased concern for the economic viability of organisations. Chassey (2002) suggests that present “priorities have moved higher education more towards institutional survival and less towards education and the welfare of students” (p. 9). A concern for economies of scale has led to larger class sizes. Similarly, some teaching staff appear to be moving towards teaching approaches that are technicist and instrumental in nature, as they meet the students’ demands within this user-pays environment and pressing research agendas (Codd, 1999; Dall’Alba & Barnacle, 2007; Jiang, 2007; Mezirow, 1991).

A more recent influence of the ideological agenda in tertiary education is the introduction of the Performance Based Research Fund (PBRF) (Codd, 2004; Smith & Jesson, 2005). Tertiary providers compete with other institutions for contestable research funds on the basis of their institutional rankings of research productivity. Tertiary organisations have been required to establish management systems to collect the necessary strategic data from staff. Similar developments towards an “evidence-based” quality measure for successful tertiary teaching appears to have provided the impetus for recent developments in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL) (Boyer, 1990; Hutchings, 2002; Kreber, 2007; Richlin & Cox, 2004; Shulman, 2000). Of greatest concern to educational organisations is the acquisition of greater market share of potential student enrolments, increasing PBRF ratings, and shifting the day-to-day concerns towards the business of the organisation (Yielder & Codling, 2004). In a similar way, those that work in these tertiary institutions are reminded of the need to increase their research outcomes in furtherance of their institution’s bid for additional contestable funding (Astin, 1993).

Paradoxical practices characterise tertiary organisations. While management are organising the business endeavours of the organisation in favour of these ideological priorities, many teaching staff are still largely working with their students towards outcomes that are broader than this. The tension of this new political climate and the pervasive ideology will gradually influence how the relational educational process is experienced (Buber, 2002). Indeed, Bhindi and Duignan (1997) suggest that governance and organisation either facilitate or hinder the relational context.

Teacher Education in a changing ideological and tertiary context

The nature and provision of teacher education in New Zealand has changed over the last twenty years. Like other sectors in society, the teacher education sector underwent a rapid three-month Tertiary and Teacher Education Review of its organisation, funding and outcomes (Ministry of Education, 1997a, 1997b). As a consequence, teacher education, previously the domain of teachers' colleges and colleges of education, is now largely the domain of the University sector in New Zealand with some private provisions. Economic survival within the new ideological context has seen the merger of each of the colleges of education with its respective adjacent, larger, and more diversified university.

The challenge for teacher education programmes does not only relate to the delivery of pre-service, academic and professional programmes in the tertiary context, but also the need to grapple with the ideological implications of these tertiary environments for the preparation of beginning teachers (Ginsburg & Clift, 1990; Macintyre Latta & Hostetler, 2003). Previously teachers' colleges and colleges of education were specifically focused on the teaching profession and offered courses in pre-service teacher education as well as continuing and in-service teacher education. The goal of such pre-service programmes was an educated person who would have experienced the best practice of teaching from ex-practitioners modelling the delivery of a liberal pre-service teacher education programme (Barnes, 1998; Bennett, 1997; Hare, 2005). The major educational disciplines were firmly embedded in the teacher education programmes.

The ideological reforms return the dominant discourse on education to a "pre-democratic prescriptive and authoritarian orientation to teacher control, as well as the inclination to devalue teachers' professional standing and erode their collaborative base

and support for each other” (Alphonse, 1999, p. 14). In addition, policies that favour voucher systems for enrolment and the bulk funding of educational organisations have implications for the stability of teachers’ employment, given the possible fluctuation of student enrolment. Increasingly, contractual employment arrangements grind down teachers’ morale and dedication and can lead to inefficiency and falling educational outcomes (Alphonse, 1999).

Amongst the many changes for teacher education providers in New Zealand is the Ministry of Education’s renaming of their educational endeavour from teacher education to teacher *training*. The language of training is consistent with the vocational priority of the NZQF and the underpinning behaviourist orientation that suggests that the educational experience is a transaction. In this way, a teacher is increasingly becoming understood as a “pedagogic technician”, someone who can bring everything under their control (Alphonse, 1999, p. 16). This orientation “confines the teacher’s attention within the technical frame” (Dunne, 1997, p. 367). In a similar way, “teacher competency [becomes] a matter of mechanical efficiency [and] ... efficient pedagogic work production with an emphasis upon the basics” (Carr & Hartnett, 1996, p. 116). This technicist concern reflects the dominance of the technocratic rationalist ideology.

There is increasing pressure for beginning teachers to be trained within a behaviourist orientation, a return to a traditional transactional model of learning (Carr & Hartnett, 1996). In this orientation, teacher education brings the “outer world of skills and techniques, of facts and content, into the pre-service teacher” (Hare, 2005, p. 198). This orientation is likened to the production of teachers, and teaching is thought of as an applied science (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985). The teacher becomes the instigator of an exchange that is primarily intended to influence the student’s knowledge and skills (Hare, 2005).

This position contrasts sharply with the critical and humanistic notion that teachers are reflective practitioners who have the potential to engage with students in transformative, critical, and dynamic relational experiences. In addition, the development of a beginning teacher emphasises the formation of a person rather than knowledge production (Nelson & Berube, 1994; Palmer, 1998; Wilms & Zell, 2003).

Pre-service teacher education is faced with competing demands over the nature and delivery of pre-service teacher education programmes. Programmes have to wrestle with the ideological and behaviourist pressures of the NZQF on one hand, while on the other hand preparing student teachers to work within a schooling framework that is managerialist in terms of its organisation, technicist in terms of the rationality of the teacher's role, and constructivist in terms of the curriculum (Castle, 2006; Ministry of Education, 1993). Moreover the beginning teacher's own educational experience in a pre-service teacher education programme has shifted back to traditionalist transactional models of education; such is the nature of the hidden curriculum for these pre-service teachers (Ginsburg & Clift, 1990).

Teacher education programmes have also been changed in response to other ideological and contextual pressures. Since 1998, four-year conjoint pre-service education degrees have been reshaped as three-year teaching degrees. Courses in philosophy, sociology and history have been given less priority than courses that focus on the curriculum and pedagogical skills. Similarly, the time allocated for practicum experiences has lessened to fit in with the academic demands of the university-based programmes and the "semesterisation" of the academic calendar. In addition, it appears that student teachers on practicum experience are receiving fewer evaluative visits. In some cases, this evaluative task is being carried out by contracted staff. After the practicum, student teachers return to their pre-service programme with their academic lecturers. In this way, the academic and professional components of the pre-service teacher education programmes are being addressed separately.

With the onset of the ideological restructuring, providers of teacher education worked hard to ensure that their programmes were not broken into unit standards and placed on the qualifications framework as separate units of learning with specified measurable learning outputs (Codd, 1995; McKenzie, 1999). Gibbs and Munro (1994) were commissioned by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority to construct such a set of unit standards for teacher education. To date, no providers have sought to implement these unit standards because of concern by teacher education providers with the NZQF and its prevailing ideology (Castle, 2006). In spite of this, the most recent consultative document by the New Zealand Teachers Council (2007) entitled the "Review of Satisfactory Teacher Dimensions" involves the consideration of competency-based

standards for beginning teachers. It would appear that the priority for training is still at the forefront of national policy.

Conclusion

A number of educationalists in New Zealand have called for a rejection of the current ideological position in education. For these people, education is not a business transaction nor should it ever be. For the likes of Codd (1999) and Snook (1991), themselves critical and humanistic educators respectively, the crisis in education and teacher education in New Zealand derives from the direction given by educational leaders at a national level, the lack of concern for education as a public good, the dominant technicist orientation within education and teacher education, and the absence of any alternative discourse on education (Codd, 1990, 1999; Dall’Alba & Barnacle, 2007; Sergiovanni, 1992; Snook et al., 1999). Present managerial thrusts have had a dehumanising consequence through undemocratic and top-down processes (Carr, 2000; Sergiovanni, 1992; Wylie, 1995). Carr and Hartnett (1996) wonder whether education “is no longer regarded as an intellectually, morally, and politically important subject worthy of serious, open and public debate” (p. 116). Snook (2003) argues that enlightened understandings of teaching focus on the teacher as a person and on a teacher’s interactions with other persons - students. Snook’s (2003) call is for a greater humanising concern in education.

The context of the teacher-student relationship in teacher education is complex and changing in response to the many competing demands on this relationship. Beginning teachers have a wealth of personal relational experiences from their own schooling alongside relational experiences from technically orientated teacher education programmes, in a teaching service where managerialist and constructivist influences lie awkwardly together. With many years in compulsory schooling under a transactional model of education, and three years in a pre-service teacher education programme with a technicist orientation, it is difficult to envision how beginning teachers can be equipped for an action-sensitive pedagogy that engages students relationally in the critical task of education (Dall’Alba & Barnacle, 2007; Palmer, 1998; van Manen, 1990). In light of the complex philosophical and ideological context in New Zealand, a reconsideration of the relational experience and preparation within pre-service teacher education programmes is needed. What is the experience and priority of the teacher-student relationship in teacher education in New Zealand?

Chapter 3: The teacher-student relationship

The previous chapter considered the context of the teacher-student relationship. This chapter appraises literature pertinent to pre-understandings on relationship. Initially, literature that focuses on a “between of relating” is considered, after which literature that focuses on a “relational connectedness” is appraised. In addition, the literature that contextualises “relationship within community” will be discussed. While the review of the literature is organized in a sequential manner, the ideas within each section are connected. This chapter will conclude with a concern about the existing literature on relationship and the contribution phenomenological research might make to understanding the teacher-student relationship.

While an increasing concern for the centrality of the teacher-student relationship is apparent, how this relationship is conceptualised, theorised, and practiced varies considerably. For some, the essential aspect of the teacher-student relationship is what happens *between* the teacher and student, as if the relationship comprises an interpersonal space across which the teacher and student traverse (Hartrick Doane, 2002). For others, relationship speaks about a connectedness that exists. In this way, individuality has a relational nature. Bennett (1997) suggests that we are beings that live to relate; connectivity being basic to our humanity. Palmer (2004) describes our relational nature as our “true self”. The absence of such relating is interpreted by Palmer (1998) as a form of disconnection. Relational connectedness therefore emphasizes holistic relationship rather than the space between two relating objects. Others (Diekelmann, 2002; Palmer, 1997) discuss relationship in the context of community, drawing attention to the inter-connectedness of the many shared relationships that co-exist in everyday living. Moreover, the expression *relational community* is indicative of the holistic communing that occurs in relationship at various times. The relational community can be inviting, affirming, and engendered through relating (Diekelmann, 2002). Palmer (1990) suggests that further possibilities exist within community, more particularly, the possibility of uncovering of the sacred and “hidden wholeness” of humanity (1997, 1999b, 2004). The various positions described above attest to the complexity in the rhetoric and practice of relationship.

Relationship as an interpersonal “between”

The relationship between two people is often described as “inter-personal” (Buber, 1996). That is, the relationship involves people and exists between those involved. What lies between those relating is variously described as a space, a gap, or a dialectical opening which allows room for the relational happenings.

Interpersonal relating occurs in the *between* and *across to* the other person (Avnon, 1998; Metcalfe & Game, 2006). Alternatively, the relating takes place *over* the relational space, as interactions across the relational bridge. These “inter-actions” occur as “trans-actions” exchanged *from* one person *to* the other in relating. In some cases these exchanges have been likened to a transmission, indicative of the directionality of the exchange and the fact that the exchange is largely in the form of information giving (Metcalfe & Game, 2006). The interactions in an interpersonal relationship illustrate the functional nature of this relating (Avnon, 1998).

Buber (2002) suggests that this type of relationship tends to objectify the participants, the relationship, and the transactional nature of the relationship. Buber (1996, 2002) describes relationships that accentuate the difference between those relating as “I-it” relationships. These relationships show those relating to be two distinct, independent and objective people (Buber, 2002). In I-it relationships, one person tends to objectify the other, interacting as if relating with an object. Buber (2002) contrasts the I-it relationship with the qualitatively different I-thou relationship (mentioned in chapter 2 above). In this type of relating, the relationship appears to be less concerned with the space between the individuals and more about the responsiveness of each to their interactions with the other. Buber describes I-thou relationships as “real” living (Avnon, 1998). Buber (2002) does not believe that the different types of relationship are permanently fixed, but as responsive to the relational experience. In this way, relationships are inconsistent in nature. A person’s experience of relationship is influenced by the variability of their interactions with another (Metcalfe & Game, 2006).

An emphasis on the interpersonal nature of relationship is evident in a number of educational approaches and perspectives. It is apparent too, that while the relationship has a space that is shared, the individuals interact in very different ways within this space (Metcalfe & Game, 2006).

In Greek education of the Hellenistic period, the difference between the teacher's and the student's roles influenced the nature of their interpersonal relationship and the interactions that occurred within the relational space (Criore, 2005). Known as the *paidagogos*³, or child-leader, the teacher "inter-acted towards" the students in a way that ensured that the students followed his lead. The overt leader-follower relationship was a means to an end, the result being an educated citizen. The outcomes-driven relating focused on the change required by the student towards such a goal (Criore, 2005). The interactions were functional to the extent that they served an expressed intention.

The Jewish approach to education can be likened to a transmission model of learning. Interpersonal relationships serve the purpose of enabling the transfer of essential and culturally valued information, initially from the parent to the child (Horowitz, 1997). The parent's way of relating served their faith commitment and requirement to pass on scriptural teachings to their children. The parent's educational commandment is expressed in chapter 6, verses 6-7 of the Book of Deuteronomy in the Old Testament of the Bible (Ryrie, 1995):

These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons [sic] and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. (p. 282)

Central to the interpersonal relationship between the parent and child is the parents' responsibility to enculturate their children in the understandings, customs and traditions of their religious faith (Horowitz, 1997). Interactions involve the transmission or exchange of the tenets, principles and religious laws of Judaism *from* the parent *across to* the child. The parent is seen as an authoritative teacher, and quite possibly an authoritarian figure; the child's interactions are in response to the teaching figure (Horowitz, 1997). Darling-Hammond (1996) describes the student's role as requiring compliance with the tasks and instructions sent *over* the relational space between the teacher and the student. The relationship is critical to an educational process which seeks to influence subsequent Jewish generations (Webster, 1990). The relationship and relating is most often in the form of individual interactions between the teacher and student.

³ Ancient Greek, *paidagogos*, from *pais* (gen. *paidos*) "child" + *agogos* "leader". (See <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=pedagogue>)

The modern western educational approach promotes the teacher's role as that of a facilitator, coach or mentor (von Glasersfeld, 1996). Each of these roles influences the interactions between teacher and student, as these roles function with a responsiveness and reciprocity to the other person. In other words, the relationship requires interactions of a type that supports each person's role and the goals of the process. When the people present to the interpersonal relationship are of lesser importance than the efficiency and effectiveness of the educational interactions and transactions, the teacher-student relationship appears to be limited to technique. If the teaching technique becomes more important than the relationship then the relationship is a means to an end. Palmer (1999a) argues that good teaching can never be equated to technique. Indeed, according to Palmer (1998),

The tendency to reduce teaching to questions of technique is one reason we lack a collegial conversation with much duration or depth. When teaching is reduced to technique, we shrink teachers as well as their craft – and people do not willingly return to a conversation that diminishes them. (p.145)

Palmer's concern is that relationships that are reduced to an objectified I-it form of relating privilege technique and efficiency over relationship. Many educators would suggest that what Buber depicts as an I-it relationship is not only prevalent in our educational organisations but symptomatic of a wider trend towards reductionism in current educational philosophies and practices (Bennett, 1997; Palmer, 1999b; Tompkins, 2005). The educational experience is reduced to an exchange between the teacher and student as a form of transmission. In this approach, the relationship occurs in the form of a "two-dimensional, secularized" interaction (Palmer, 1999b, p. 23). The interpersonal relating between teacher and student emphasises technical and instrumental mechanisms and the measurement of their effectiveness (Dall'Alba & Barnacle, 2007). The risk is that educational approaches that attempt to standardize the interactions and expected educational outcomes also work to silence the student's voice in the relationship.

Palmer (1998) and others such as English et al. (2003), Riley-Taylor (2002), and Hultgren (1992) challenge the preoccupation and proliferation of educational approaches which describe the interpersonal relationship as causal and occurring between two objects. For these educationalists, the tendency to reduce relationship to a concern for technique reflects the current and prevailing ideological position.

Humanistic approaches advocate for a relational space between a teacher and student that is inviting and mutually beneficial. Teachers need to invite students to learning, sharing the power and responsibility for the educational interactions that occur between them (Hare, 2005). Rather than the educative task being a transfer of information, humanistic and other critical approaches to education suggest that education centers on teachers and students engaged relationally in inquiries of relevant and meaningful ideas (Freire, 2003; Mezirow & Associates, 2000). The relationship is more important than the exchange or interaction between the two separate entities. The relationship is nurtured as central to the educational experience and involves aspects of each person's being; that is, more than just their intellect (Buechner, 1992; Dall'Alba & Barnacle, 2007).

In summary, the literature pertaining to interpersonal relationships focuses on the exchange between the individuals in the relationship. The relationship is constituted by a space between two individuals. Across the space between these people, an individual instigates an interaction or transaction that has a causal influence. When the relating between a teacher and student is limited to interaction, the educational process is reduced to matters of efficiency and effectiveness of technique, rather than being about relationship. Yet there are other perspectives which consider relationship otherwise than as a *between*.

The connectedness in relationship

An alternative view of relationship shifts the attention from the functionality of the space between people to an inherent connectedness that is integral to relationship (Gibbs, 2006; hooks, 2003; Intrator, 2005; Palmer, 1998, 2004). This relational connectedness describes a basic bond of relationship (Bennett, 1997, 2003; Forsyth & Kung, 2005; Palmer 1993). In addition, the connectedness in relationship has a holistic quality drawing from, and influencing, the whole person.

Palmer (1997) locates relational connectedness within the depths of the human self. His concern is that being any more specific than this might reduce the origin of the connection to some arbitrary domain of the human self, be this emotional, intellectual or physical. Rather than name an arbitrary origin for relational connectedness, Palmer's (1999b) preference is to refer to this place as a "sacred" place, the sacred place being

“that which is worthy of respect” (Palmer, 1999b, p. 20). We sense the sacred in shared moments of relating, evidence of our deeper relational connectedness and our relational nature as people; a characteristic of our true selves (Intrator, 2005; Palmer, 1999b, 2004).

While the origin of relational connectedness appears to be illusive, some would suggest that this connectedness originates in the heart or soul of a person, a matter that is sacred, spiritual, and holistic (Intrator, 2005; Miller, 2000; Riley-Taylor, 2002; Middleton & Walsh, 1995). Palmer (1997) writes about relational connectedness and the heart as follows:

The connections made by good teachers are held not in their methods but in their hearts, meaning heart in the ancient sense, the place where the intellect and emotion and spirit and will converge in the human self. (p.2)

Similarly, Miller (2000) suggests that the educative process calls out and impacts teachers’ and students’ souls. As such, education has a spiritual outcome that occurs in the relatedness of those engaged in the educative process (Miller, 2000; Walsh & Middleton, 1984).

Palmer (1997) also uses the term *spiritual* to describe “the diverse ways we answer the heart’s longing to be connected” (p. 2) relationally. A link appears to exist between the sacred, the spiritual, and an acknowledgement and awareness of a deep-seated relational connectedness (English et al., 2003; Miller & Nakagawa, 2002; Palmer, 1998, 2004). For Burkhardt and Nagai-Jacobson (2002), living in relational connectedness is to live in spirituality. In a similar way, Leue (2004) points to the “essence of relational education as spirituality” (p. 2). Likewise, spirituality can not be overlooked especially as it “may serve as a guiding force for meaningful relationship” (Leue, 2004, p. 2). Rather than a religious orientation, the spirituality of relational connectedness is an “awareness of something greater than ourselves, a sense that we are connected to all human beings and to all of creation” (Nugent, 2003, p. 213).

Education that is holistic recognizes the relational connectedness of the teacher-student relationship. In contrast to transmission and transaction orientations to education which focus on the intellectual development of the learner, educational processes that value relational connectedness seek to nurture the wholeness of students through a genuine concern for the teacher-student relationship (Miller & Nakagawa, 2002). The

educational process, like relational connectedness, impacts the whole person (Buber, 2002; Palmer, 2004; Riley-Taylor, 2002). For some, education is about wholeness in the first instance (Palmer, 1999a). The link between relationship and a holistic connection is explicit in Otero & Chambers-Otero's (2004) position:

We cannot continue to make a commitment to educating the whole person while ignoring the relationships in which all learning occurs. While attempts are being made to address the social, physical and spiritual needs as well as the academic needs of learners, these efforts often result in more isolation. What is called for is a strategy to help us meet the articulated visions we have created to educate the whole person. (p. 3)

A concern for the education of the whole person necessitates a concern for the relational connectedness in the educational context.

Many Christian educators also affirm the relational connectedness of a teacher and student as sacred, spiritual, and holistic (Edlin, 1994; Gangel & Hendricks, 1988; Hoeffecker & Smith, 1986; Lambert & Mitchell, 1996; Morris, 1991; Phillips & Okholm, 1995; Richards, 1975; Weeks, 1988; Wilson, 2003). These educators hold the belief that we live in a world that has been created and sustained by a creator. In this way, all of the created order is connected, having been brought into being by the same creator. Moreover a relational connectedness exists within the created order and this is sustained through the ongoing activity of the creator within the created world. In this way, relational connectedness is integral to our humanity (Noebel, 1992; Pazmino, 1994).

The importance of a nurturing concern for relational connectedness is seen in the biblical mandate given to humankind (Edlin, 1994). From a Christian worldview, humans are charged with responsibility to act as relational stewards in the care and development of the created order, a responsibility given out of relationship and for the purpose of sustaining deep and caring relationships that are holistic in nature (Middleton & Walsh, 1995; Pazmino, 1994). While some Christian traditions might consider the teacher-student relationship to be more akin to a form of academic transmission (Van Brummelen, 1994), Walsh and Middleton (1984) suggest that transformative and liberal forms of Christian education hold relationship as centrally important. Indeed relational connectedness is lived out with a measure of improvisation as the teacher and student journey experientially together (Middleton & Walsh, 1995).

This experience is likely to involve the use of stories, parables or various dramatic and experiential forms of learning.

These educators point to the example of Jesus in the Bible as someone who showed a relational connectedness in his teaching. Such was the teaching ability of Jesus, that it was said his listeners and students were deeply touched by the “living” message (Ryrie, 1995 p.1456⁴). Jesus’ concern as a teacher extended to the provision of food, being available to groups and individuals, and the ability to tailor messages that were appropriate for particular people or students. By teaching “things new and old”, Jesus created intrigue and curiosity, deepening the relational connectedness and expecting the students to engage with ideas whose meanings were never explicitly stated (Ryrie, 1995 p.1469⁵). Using parables and metaphors, teachers like Jesus influenced their students towards contemplative thinking. The expectation was that the educative process impacted the student holistically. Students took on the characteristics of their teacher, becoming like their teachers as they began to embrace some of the teacher’s values and character traits (Ryrie, 1995 p.1461⁶).

In Maori philosophy, the concept of *Āta* affirms the relational connectedness of human beings and their world, advocating for teaching approaches that show deliberation and care relationally (Forsyth, 2006; Forsyth & Kung, 2005, 2006). Respecting others through careful and deliberate action is said to affirm the fundamental connectedness of humanity (Forsyth, 2006). The *Āta* philosophy is applicable to relationships within the context of education and to relationships more generally. Working relationally in this way reflects a sense of reciprocity and equity (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Gibbs, 2006). Moreover this reciprocity is further expressed in the concept of *Ako*. This concept represents a mutuality in the teachers’ and students’ roles such that the teacher is both teacher and learner, and the student likewise (Cameron, Berger, Lovett & Baker, 2007). Important here is the openness of the relational connectedness.

While relational connectedness is argued to be integral to our humanity, the nature of this connectedness can vary. Indeed, Palmer (1999b) would suggest that in many cases the experience of relating is more akin to a relational disconnection. Suggesting that

⁴ Matthew, chapter 7 verse 28

⁵ Matthew chapter 13 verse 52

⁶ Matthew chapter 10 verse 25

our being is orientated towards a connectedness, Palmer (1993, 1999b) argues that relational disconnectedness evokes deep pain. The pain of disconnection is lived out in all aspects of society including education. According to Palmer (1998), when teachers live in the pain of disconnection, they may live in fear of a live encounter with their students. Palmer (1993) writes,

Teaching is simply another word for the ancient and elemental bond that exists between the elders of the tribe and their young. When the bond is broken, both groups feel fearful and incomplete, and both will wish to reweave the relationship, no matter how profoundly alienated they may be. (p. 10)

The disconnection is also described as moments when the sacred has been “driven out” of the relationship. Palmer’s (1999b) view is that sacred moments can be driven out of the educational experience by reductionist and instrumental ways of thinking about education. In these times, individuals seek to hide their true selves, underestimating the difficulty of doing this. The disconnection may also be experienced as a lack of collegiality. Bennett (1997) argues that this is particularly true in the tertiary environment. He says, “the academy needs to pay more attention to the ... forms of togetherness we create and the ways they advance the common good. ... We need to recover and reappropriate this relational model” (Bennett, 1997, p. 1). Concerned for the disillusionment and disconnectedness of teaching staff, Intrator (2005) reminds teachers that “we become teachers for reasons of the heart. But often, as time goes by, we lose heart. How can we take heart, alone and together, so we can give heart – which is what good teachers do” (p. lvii).

A critical consideration in the understanding of relational connectedness is the idea that we project our inner selves in relationship. Contrary to instrumental approaches to education, relational connectedness includes the *who* that is relating. *Who we are* is central to relational connectedness in education. Palmer (1997) suggests that

Teaching, like any truly human activity, emerges from one’s inwardness, for better or worse. As I teach, I project the condition of my soul onto students, my subject, and our way of being together. (p.14)

It is this projection of ourselves in relationship that leads Palmer to argue that teachers “teach out of who they are” (1997, p. 1). Teachers teach from their whole, sacred, and spiritual selves. “It is not so much their subjects that the great teachers teach as it is themselves” (Buechner, 1992, p. 31).

According to Palmer (1997), the teacher's identity and integrity are a teacher's projection of their inner self: identity, in the sense that it is the self that teaches, and integrity, in the sense that teachers need to respect the relational connectedness with their students.

In a similar way, *how* a teacher comes to their teacher-student relationships is important. Palmer (1990) notes that "in the kind of teaching that Jesus and Chuancy Tzu did, freshness is crucial" (p. 36). For Palmer, "education is about ... renewing the vitality of life" (1999b, p. 18). It would appear that relational freshness is not only brought to the relational connectedness but the connectedness in relationship can engender a reciprocal freshness for those relating.

Healthy relational connectedness "can only be modelled and invited, ... not commanded" (Bennett, 1997, p. 5). However, in educational settings that value relational connectedness it is necessary to be aware of the risks that can occur as people open themselves up to the unfamiliar (Carreiro, 1999). Practices where a compulsion exists for students to share at a deep or deepening level are inappropriate to the fragility of relational connectedness (Hare, 2005). Buchanan (1993) describes the fragility of relationship as follows,

The vitality of the teacher-student relationship is connected by a "gossamer thread that weaves itself through the various characteristics" of both the teacher and student who are involved in the learning experience (Galbraith, 1989, p. 10). This relationship is the very heart of ... education. (p. 320)

Some pre-service and in-service teacher education programmes have sought to explicitly value the relational connectedness of teachers. In the Center for Courage and Renewal, Palmer and his associates offer programmes that offer the time and space for teachers to reflect on their life and work as teachers. In so doing, teachers are encouraged to reconnect *who* they are with *what* they do (Intrator, 2005; Palmer, 2000, 2004). As teachers explore and reclaim their vocational passion, it is hoped that *how* these teachers come to relationship is influenced. In the case of Bethlehem Institute of Education⁷, a central thrust for the organisation and culture as well as the teaching and

⁷ After the completion of an M.Ed. thesis on the dominant ideology of education on the Bethlehem College Campus, I took up an initial position as a lecturer in Bethlehem Institute of Education in 1995. From 1997 to 2003, I assumed responsibility for the leadership of Bethlehem Institute of Education as the Dean / Chief Executive Officer.

learning relationships, was the innate relational connectedness seen as fundamental to a Christian worldview (Giles, 1995; Giles & Sanders, 1996). As such, many aspects of the organisation and teaching were adjusted. This included a change to the teacher-student ratios, titles given to those with responsibility, the organisation of informal and pastoral activities, a weekly staff debate on the relationship of philosophy to practice, and the intentionality of describing the corporate life of the organisation as a community (Giles, 2001, 2005).

In summary, relational connectedness refers to a fundamental connectivity between people that appears to be innate to our shared humanity. The connectedness in relationship emphasises features that might be called sacred, spiritual and holistic, and are integral to education. One consequence for teaching is captured by Palmer's notion that we teach out of who we are (1997). That is, as teachers we project *who* we are and *how* we are to our students. Having considered the interpersonal nature and the relational connectedness of relationship, the next section of this chapter considers the interconnectedness of relationship in community as this might reveal a "hidden wholeness" of our shared humanity (Palmer, 1990, p. 37).

The interconnectedness of relationship in community

Although most considerations of relationship focus on two people, relationships in education often occur in the context of many other simultaneously coexisting relationships. Thus relationships exist in the context of many other teacher-student and student-student relationships. Indeed this can be a simultaneous sharing of individuals at times. The many relationships co-exist within a particular context that resembles a "web of communal relationships" (Palmer, 1998, p. 95). For others, the web of relationships refers to collegiality (Bennett, 1997), at other times, to community (hooks, 2003; Palmer, 1999b).

Where shared relationships show a likeness of character the group can be described as a *community*. Individual relationships are embraced within a wider set of relationships that appear to be similarly intentioned. The corporate group of relationships also show some shared attributes that give identity to the wider group. Meighan & Siraj-Blatchford (2003) would prefer to describe the community as exhibiting a shared and growing ideology as the basis of that community. Merton (Palmer, 1990) and Palmer (1999b) suggest that such communities have an emerging sense of wholeness that is

initially hidden. For Palmer (1999b), the “recovery of community is at the heart of good teaching” (p. 27).

Some educationalists suggest that teachers should intentionally engender a sense of community (Diekelmann, 2002, Dunne, 1997; Palmer, 1999b). In this process, students are invited in word and action to a greater openness of relationship as this facilitates a sense of community. The suggestion is not that individualism gives way to some kind of cloning of one another but rather that our Western emphasis on individualism is balanced by a communal concern. The model of community “preserves appropriate individualism ... a balanced model that includes the solitary and the communal, virtues of self-reliance and enrichment by others” (Bennett, 1997, p. 2).

hooks (2003) advocates for communal practices in education, suggesting that schools and other learning institutions become “communities of hope”. Like hooks, Leonard and Willis (2008), Palmer (1997) and Walker (2006) maintain that a community of hope is essential to teaching and learning. If the classroom becomes a space where a sense of community emerges, Palmer (1998) argues that the community is then able to explore, imagine and think broadly. As teachers and students are “living the questions” (Intrator, 2005) of their own inquiry, there is the possibility that their dialogue might connect them with, as Palmer (1999b) expresses it,

...the “great things” of the world and with “the grace of great things”...We are in community with all these great things, and great teaching is about knowing that community, feeling that community, sensing that community, and then drawing your students into it. ... [opening] ... the door to a world of imagination and thought. (pp. 28-29)

The “grace of great things” has a similar meaning to that of the sacred. As Palmer (1990) suggests, “By recovering the sacred, we might recover our sense of community with each other and with all of creation” (p. 37). Palmer seems to be suggesting that utilitarian philosophies of education lack something profoundly important to humanity, that is, a connectedness beyond self.

Classrooms that intentionally engender a sense of community have been referred to as *learning communities* (Tinto, 1994) and *communities of practice* (Wenger, 1999). Tinto (1994) argues that understanding the educational organisation as a learning community is the first step towards such practices. Educational leaders are called upon to practically engage with the learning community for which they are responsible. Doing

so brings an awareness of the importance of pastoral activities and the fostering of other inter-relationships towards the shared and expressed mission of the organisation. Underpinning the learning community are organisational values that typically support shared decision making and the respect and tolerance for others.

Critical and humanistic educators, in their call for radical change in the modern and progressive educational system of the 20th century, “argue for school reform, but from a different angle – one focusing on the nature of relationships that can change educational cultures” (Gallego, Hollingsworth & Whitenack, 2001, p. 240). The valuing of relationship is experienced within the culture of the learning community, a critical component of teacher’s and student’s experience of the hidden curriculum. The role of relationship and relational practice is pivotal to this human-centred process (Paterson & Zderad, 1975). Some educationalists (Bennett, 1997; Palmer, 1998; Tompkins, 2005) argue that the teacher-student relationship is more important than the content of education. Many educationalists advocate for a return to a central focus on relationship rather than the present preoccupation with performance and outcomes-based education, a “result of our culture’s obsessive goal orientation” (Tompkins, 2005, p. 90-91; Gallego et al., 2001; Ironside, 2001).

In summary, relationship can be considered as existing *between* two people, or as pertaining to relational connectedness, or in terms of the web of inter-relationships that co-exists simultaneously in the context of a relational community. This latter suggestion calls educators towards an awareness and responsibility for such a community. In a similar way, the experience of community can be engendered through the intentional activity of concerned educators. Such practices are not engendered for the sake of learning and teaching in the first instance but rather a reflection of the communal nature and relational connectedness of all human beings. Envisioned with a desire for a greater sense of community in our learning organizations, educationalists such as hooks and Palmer note the unintended benefits of students experiencing a sense of place and purpose in their world. This includes the students’ educational and personal outcomes resulting from a growing appreciation of the hidden wholeness within our world.

Exploring the teacher-student relationship phenomenologically

There is a growing interest in research that engages with the ideas of relational connectedness and learning communities. It would appear that the applicability and relevance of relational connectedness and community to tertiary education is no less important. Indeed, Palmer (1999b) expresses specific concern about the relational practices of tertiary organizations. He says:

I don't think there are many places where people feel less respect than they do on university campuses. The university is a place where we grant respect only to a few things – to the text, to the expert, to those who win in competition. But we do not grant respect to students ... We do not grant respect to tentative and heartfelt ways of being in the world where the person can't think of the right word to say, or can't think of any word at all. We do not grant respect to voices outside our tight little circle, let alone to the voiceless things of the world. We do not grant respect to silence and wonder. Academia is a culture of fear. ... We are afraid of hearing something that would challenge and change us. (p. 21)

A further concern relates to research approaches that theorise about relationship with a view to instrumental and technical teaching and learning approaches. While there is value in theorising from empirical data about relationship, it is equally important that educational research considers the lived experiences of relationship as this draws us towards the essence of the phenomenon of relationship. There appears to be a dearth of educational research that sensitively and contemplatively explores the *a priori* nature of relationship. Some exceptions here would be the work of van Manen in secondary teacher education (van Manen, 1990) and Diekelmann's research within nursing education. These phenomenological researchers seek an ontological consideration of the phenomenon of relationship as this shows itself in the participant's lived experiences.

This research contributes to an appreciation of the essence of relationship focusing on the lived experiences of teachers and students engaged in pre-service teacher education. In this way, the teacher is a lecturer in a pre-service teacher education programme while the student is more commonly referred to as a student teacher. It might be argued that the best experiences of teaching and learning occur in the preparation of our classroom teachers of tomorrow. Surely, if a vision of a humane and critical educational practice is to be realised, then the students need to experience this as a model of best practice. In this way, beginning teachers might have educational experiences that contrast with their

experience of a progressive schooling system that is becoming increasingly instrumental, technical, and outcomes focused.

It is the intention of this research to phenomenologically explore the teacher-student relationship as experienced by lecturers and student teachers in the context of teacher education. The research seeks ontological understandings of the essence of the phenomenon of relationship, drawing upon the philosophical writings of Heidegger and of Gadamer, and many influential educators such as Buber, Palmer and hooks to aid the interpretation of these experiences.

Chapter 4: Philosophical Foundations

Gadamer (1976) and others (Koch, 1996; Rorty, 1979; van Manen, 1990) suggest that phenomenological research comes with a tradition which guides the researcher in his/her endeavours. Indeed, the “broad field of phenomenological scholarship can be considered as a set of guides and recommendations for a principled form of inquiry that neither simply rejects or ignores tradition, nor slavishly follows or kneels in front of it” (van Manen, 1990, p. 30). Similarly, Smythe, Ironside, Sims, Swenson & Spence (2008), suggest that the “way of being-phenomenological ... ‘comes’” (p. 17).

Phenomenological research occurs *within* a dynamic and complex array of influences. The research process is constantly in flux as the necessity for a way forward within the research resides in tension with the researcher’s ongoing and lived experience of the phenomenon (Smythe et al., 2008; van Manen, 1990). Without the “grasping of pre-defined steps”, the research is experienced as a “felt” and uncertain journey, that is lived in moments where new possibilities arise, a kind of being-in-the-play of researching (Smythe et al., 2008, p. 17). The movement of the research engages with the researcher’s growing attunement to the phenomenon and his/her own prejudices and pre-assumptions.

van Manen (1990) suggests that “a real understanding of phenomenology can only be accomplished by actively doing it” (p. 8) because phenomenological research calls for a way of being-in the research that is alert, alive, and aware. The researcher’s way-of-being *in* the research must have a sense of continuity and purpose that influences, and is influenced by, the research experience itself. As the researcher senses a way within the phenomenon’s showings and the philosophical literature, the phenomenological way becomes “a letting-go and trusting that the thinking and new understandings will come and will lead” (Smythe et al., 2008, p. 17). Staying in the research involves the contemplative intensity of “living towards” the phenomenon in the knowledge that that which is most essential to us withdraws from us (Heidegger, 1968). The contemplative nature of the research involves a deepening attunement to the taken-for-granted and pre-reflective meanings of the phenomenon. Progressively, the researcher reaches for philosophical literature that might illuminate understandings.

Hermeneutic philosophy underpins phenomenological research. As such, this research is underpinned by the philosophical writings of Martin Heidegger and Hans-Georg Gadamer. While not easy to understand, reading their works has been essential to my ongoing understanding of the ontological nature of phenomenology and its quest for exploring the *a priori* nature of our everyday experiences (Caelli, 2001; Koch, 1996). This way of researching is not for every question, nor for every researcher; however it is a way that has “fitted” me. Having previously completed an ethnographic research project for my Masters of Education thesis, this research approach was new to me. Yet, the contemplation, intuition and openness of this research approach are congruent with personal attributes that are embedded in my nature. After participating in a research seminar and experiencing phenomenological research in action, the decision was made to embark on a phenomenological research journey exploring a phenomenon that is critically important to me as a researcher / teacher educator. This intuitive decision was exciting. I had found a research approach that seemed to “fit” my way-of-being and the way in which I wanted to frame my research question for this research project.

Discussion so far has intended to show the relationship between the phenomenological research approach and the researcher. The purpose of this chapter is to lay open particular understandings from Heidegger and Gadamer that have assisted the “movement” of this research. By so doing, the soundness of the research approach can be seen in the way the philosophy has been embedded in the inquiry process (Ehrich, 1999; Koch, 1996).

Understandings from Martin Heidegger

What drew me to Heideggerian literature was my interest and intention to explore the ontological nature of the teacher-student relationship as my research project. This philosophical literature has been critically important in understanding the hermeneutic phenomenological research approach. Similarly, the priority of the *a priori* and the centrality of hermeneutics in this approach have continued to draw me into these writings. What is important here is that I have come to Heidegger’s philosophical literature through listening and reading about research that was underpinned by Heideggerian understandings and conducted as phenomenological and ontological inquiries.

Heidegger, Husserl

Martin Heidegger [1889-1976] was born in Germany and was a student of Edmund Husserl [1859-1938], the father of phenomenology (Cohen, 1987; Koch, 1996; Polkinghorne, 1983; Scruton, 1995). Husserlian phenomenology is essentially the study of lived experience in the “lifeworld” (van Manen, 1990). Its emphasis is on the world as lived by a person, not the world or reality as something separate from the person (Lavery, 2003; Valle, King & Halling, 1989). The lifeworld is understood as what we experience pre-reflectively, without resorting to theorising or conceptualisation, and often includes what is taken for granted or common sense (Husserl, 1970). For Husserl and Heidegger, the term phenomenology is described by the maxim “to the things themselves”, that is, the essential meanings of phenomena present in the lifeworld (Heidegger, 1996, p. 24). Research informed by phenomenology seeks to illuminate essential meanings in our lived experiences that may be taken for granted.

Husserl and Heidegger disagreed about the way this exploration of lived experience occurs (Lavery, 2003). While Husserl focused on understanding beings or phenomena, Heidegger focused on *Dasein*, translated as “the mode of being human”, or “the situated meaning of a human in the world” (Lavery, 2003). While Husserl was interested in human beings as “knowers”, Heidegger viewed humans as being concerned beings with an emphasis on their way-of-being in an already existing world (Annells, 1996).

Husserl’s process of phenomenological reduction or bracketing suggests that researchers must bracket out the world and their individual biases in order to arrive at the essence of phenomena (Lavery, 2003). However, the process of suspending one’s judgement in order to see more clearly was seen by Heidegger as unachievable, and later by Gadamer as futile. “Heidegger went as far as to claim that nothing can be encountered without reference to a person’s background understanding” (Lavery, 2003, p. 8).

Ontology is primary

Departing from his former mentor’s phenomenological approach, Heidegger’s approach to phenomenology “emphasised a need to understand *being*, especially the ways in which humans act in, or relate to, the world” (Gutek, 2004, p. 88). In this way, Heidegger championed a phenomenological approach that was centrally ontological in which “the most significant order of reality is meaning, not matter, and in which

meaning is organized according to aesthetic principles instead of the principles of formal logic” (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 159).

The links between philosophy, phenomenology and ontology are very clear for Heidegger. Heidegger’s focus on ontology, the study of being, reflects his position that “philosophy is ontology” (Crotty, 1998, p. 96). For Heidegger (1996), “ontology and phenomenology are not two distinct philosophical disciplines among others. These terms characterise philosophy itself with regard to its object and its way of treating that object. Philosophy is universal phenomenological ontology ...” (p. 34). Heidegger agrees that phenomenology is the way into ontology. He writes, “Phenomenology is our way of access to, and the demonstrative manner of determination of, what is to become the theme of ontology. Ontology is possible only as phenomenology” (Heidegger, 1996, p. 31). As such, “the ontological is primary” (Annells, 1996, p. 5).

Dasein, Being-in-the-world

Heidegger’s concern is described as the “situated meaning of a human in the world” that is, the reality of human experience that is present in, and hidden from, awareness (Annells, 1996, p. 4; Lavery, 2003; Polkinghorne, 1988). Heidegger explains his concept of Dasein as “the mode of being human”, the situated meaning of a human being-in-the-world, and the pivotal notion of human everyday existence (Lavery, 2003, p. 7). Dasein is a new “understanding of what it is to be human, and can refer to a single person or to a general way of being. ... Dasein is an entity which to each of us is ourself ...” (Annells, 1996, p. 4). Dasein is present to the particular while concurrently immersed in the multi-relational existence referred to as our world.

The concept of Dasein moves beyond the subject-object paradigms to a concern for existence. Indeed existence should not be thought of as some fixed physical reality. For Heidegger, “Dasein as openness evolves as an open region where possibilities arrive and leave. Dasein as openness is Heidegger’s retrieval of what it means to be human from the hypostasizing certainty claims of post-Cartesian thought” (J. Diekelmann, 2005, p. 14). Dunne (1997) describes Dasein as the “fundamental existentials”, a “basic mode of Dasein’s Being” and, the “original character of human life itself” (p. 110). Immersed in being-in-the-world, Dasein as openness is situated and never static, always projecting into possibilities of being.

The concept of Dasein assumes that the person and the world are co-constituted, inseparable, and an integrated unity (Koch, 1995; Overgaard, 2004; Young, 2003). Moreover any “understanding of being ... belongs to being-in-the-world” (Heidegger, 2001, p. 196). As such, humans make sense of their world from within their existence, their “being-in-the-world” (Heidegger, 1996, p. 49). Dasein is also the kind of being that is “always-already” as a being-in-the-world, “being-on-the-way” to itself (Heidegger, 1999). Being human, then, “is to always already be in-the-midst of a specific situating that is constantly in flux” (Smythe et al., 2008, p. 5).

The human condition

For Heidegger, the human condition is something that co-constitutively embodies each one of us. Ontologically we are beings-in-the-world that have been thrown into an already existing world (Dunne, 1997). Dasein is situated in the midst of the world, “in the midst of what there is” (Overgaard, 2004, p. 121). Our thrownness is not a “finished fact” (Heidegger, 1996, p. 179). Diekelmann (2005) expands on this notion of thrownness suggesting it “includes mortality, situatedness, ... things as available, presence-absence, ... and the capacity for thinking interpretively” (p. 15).

Dasein is a self-interpreting way of being. Dasein seeks understandings of its ownmost being, concerned for how to be in the temporality of present and particular moments (Diekelmann, 2005). Such a concern is a felt and “embodied” concern, intuited in the movement of being-in-the-world (Overgaard, 2004). How Dasein *is* occurs in the particular and situated moment. In this way, Dasein acts on the world from within the thrownness, projecting onto the always-already present world.

Phenomenology

Previously in this chapter, it was noted that “Phenomenology is our way of access to, and the demonstrative manner of determination of, what is to become the theme of ontology. Ontology is possible only as phenomenology” (Heidegger, 1996, p. 31). The term *phenomenology* signifies a “concept of method” that characterises a “how” of philosophical research (Heidegger, 1996, p. 24). The research endeavour of “letting something be seen from itself is a conscious effort to get beyond the givens of some foreclosed present” (Diekelmann, 2005, p. 20). The aim of phenomenological research is to establish a renewed contact with original experience, prior to theorising about it, and to bring to “light the meanings woven into the fabric” (Rainguber, 2003, p. 1155) of the experience because this enables understanding of human life (van Manen, 1990).

“The lifeworld, the world of lived experience, is both the source and object of phenomenological research ... [indeed] the starting point and end point” (van Manen, 1990, pp. 36, 53). Phenomenological research explores the lifeworld ontologically, “re-covering” a “deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences” (van Manen, 1990, p. 9). Phenomenological research studies the lifeworld “as we immediately experience it pre-reflectively rather than as we conceptualise, categorise, or reflect on it” (Schutz & Luckmann, 1973, as cited in van Manen, 1990, p. 9). Lived experiences are systematically studied as they reveal themselves to us, rather than as we rationally reduce them to theory (Satina & Hultgren, 2001; van der Mescht, 2004; van Manen, 1990). Such understandings of our life-world are pre-reflective and *a priori*, most often showing the taken-for-grantedness of our everyday experience (Heidegger, 1996).

Phenomenology is a way of researching the essence or essential meanings of phenomena. Simply, phenomenology is “the study of essences” (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. vii). The term *essence* refers to the essential meanings of a phenomenon; that which makes a thing what it is (van Manen, 1990). Heidegger (1977) describes the essence of a phenomenon as “the way in which it remains through time as what it is” (p. 3). van Manen (1990) suggests that

A good [phenomenological] description that constitutes the essence of something is construed so that the structure of a lived experience is revealed to us in such a fashion that we are now able to grasp the nature and significance of this experience in a hitherto unseen way. (p. 39)

The researcher’s understanding of an essence is always “on-the-way”, partial, and particular to the experiences from which the interpretations were formed. There is the possibility, in phenomenological research, that new meanings emerge about a phenomenon that draws “something forgotten into visibility” (Harman, 2007, p. 92). The challenge of phenomenology is to describe what is given to us in immediate experience without being “obstructed by pre-conceptions and theoretical notions” (van Manen, 1990, p. 184). In a similar way, phenomenological research makes a distinction between appearance and essence, between the things within our experience and what grounds the things within our experience (Ehrich, 1999; van Manen, 1990).

In light of the ontological concern in phenomenological research, the research procedures are very different from conventional approaches (Barnacle, 2001a). Polkinghorne (1988) points out that:

Because the realm of meaning exists in a different ontological mode from the physical reality through which it can be represented, we cannot know it using the same procedures we use to know the physical realm. Knowledge of the realm of meaning is gained through interpretive or hermeneutic procedures, exemplified by the procedures used to understand the meaning of a poem. (p. 159)

Merleau-Ponty (1962) argues that turning to the phenomena of lived experience means “re-learning to look at the world by re-awakening the basic experience of the world” (p. viii). This turning of lived experience to some abiding concern refers to turning “to the things themselves”. Rather than a prescribed methodology, the researcher contemplatively attunes his or herself towards the phenomenon’s showing. In this way, “phenomenology means a way of staying true to what must be thought” (Harman, 2007, p. 155). This is not to suggest that phenomenological research is haphazard or casual in its approach. In contrast, the study of phenomenona is meticulously disciplined; the researcher contemplates the texts of lived experiences in a sustained manner, always mindful of his or her own pre-assumptions.

Hermeneutic Phenomenology

A variety of terms have been used to describe phenomenological research influenced by the philosophical writings of Heidegger, including *interpretive phenomenology* (Benner, 1994; Darbyshire, 1994), *hermeneutic(al) phenomenology* (Annells, 1996; Benner, Tanner & Chesla, 1996; Berman, Hultgren, Lee, Rivkin, Roderick & Aoki, 1991; Crotty, 1998; Giorgi, 1997; Laverly, 2003; Sharkey, 2001; Walters, 1996) *philosophical hermeneutics* (Gadamer, 1994; Koch, 1994, 1996; Madison, 1991; Schwandt, 2000; Taylor, 1985, 1995), *Heideggerian phenomenology* (Benner, 1985; Diekelmann, 1993; Kellett, 1997; Rather 1994; Smythe et al., 2008), *Heideggerian hermeneutics* (Diekelmann, 1992; Kondora, 1993; Smythe et al., 2008), *phenomenological hermeneutics* (Barnacle, 2001b; Sharkey 2001), and *Heideggerian hermeneutic phenomenology* (Diekelmann & Ironside, 1998; Walters, 1995).

The philosophic framework and underlying assumptions of my study begin with Heidegger as the forerunner of modern day hermeneutic phenomenology. For the most part I will be referring to my research as hermeneutic phenomenology. For me, the expression hermeneutic phenomenology captures two central understandings of this

research. Firstly, it is *phenomenological*, in the sense that the inquiry explores a particular phenomenon, the teacher-student relationship; secondly, the inquiry is *hermeneutic*, in the sense that the inquiry seeks to lay open prior and variable understandings of things, disclosing the essence of phenomena in the process (Annells, 1996; Malpas, 1992). Crotty (1998) suggests that “for Heidegger, hermeneutics is the revelatory aspect of ‘phenomenological seeing’ whereby existential structures and then Being itself come into view” (p. 96).

Hermeneutic understanding, hermeneutic circling

Heidegger considered understanding to be a basic form of human existence. Understanding is not a way we know the world, but rather the way we are (Lavery, 2003; Polkinghorne, 1983). Heidegger argued that human experience in its original form is hermeneutically meaningful (Polkinghorne, 1988). The starting point on the journey to Being is our pre-understanding of being that we all possess and which he calls the “forestructure” of Being (Crotty, 1998). Reaching these pre-understandings and uncovering phenomena remains a phenomenological process throughout, moving towards the “phenomenological explication of human existing itself” (Palmer, 1969, p. 42).

For Heidegger, ontology, phenomenology, hermeneutics and language are brought together in a “lived inquiry”. The phenomenological researcher’s exploration of the way we experience the world necessitates being-in-the-world in a certain way as a researcher (Hultgren, 1995). van Manen (1990) suggests that the act of researching involves “the intentional act of attaching ourselves to the world” (p. 5). Conducting research in this way, the researcher questions “the world’s very secrets and intimacies which are constitutive of the world, and which bring the world as world into being for us and in us” (van Manen, 1990, p. 5).

Rather than a body of principles or rules for interpreting texts, Heidegger’s hermeneutics starts with a phenomenological return to our being and then seeks to unfold pre-understandings in order to make explicit what is implicit, grasping in the process the meaning of being itself (Crotty, 1998). In this way the phenomenological quest begins with a pre-understanding of Being and involves the circular movement of hermeneutic phenomenology. Heidegger encourages us to “leap into the [hermeneutic]

circle, primordially and wholly” (1996, p. 297). Understandings of this hermeneutic circle will be further developed when Gadamer’s understandings are considered.

Phenomenological reflection, paths, clearing

Critical to the hermeneutic circling of phenomenological research is the researcher’s inclination to dwell with the research text, reflecting and seeking to grasp the essential meanings of something as this effects a more direct contact with the experience as lived (van Manen, 1990). Heidegger (1996) describes phenomenological reflection as following certain paths of thinking towards a clearing where something could be shown, revealed, or clarified in its essential nature. These paths need to be discovered or invented in the *movement* of the research as a response to a question at hand (van Manen, 1990). Tossed to and fro in the tension of pre-understandings and the phenomenon’s showing, the researcher seeks a clearing where thinking the “as yet unthought” occurs (Heidegger, 1996).

Phenomenological writing

Fundamentally, hermeneutic phenomenological research is a writing activity. “Research and writing are aspects of one process” (van Manen, 1990, p. 7). Upon hearing the recount of lived experiences, the researcher “writes and re-writes the stor[ies] until they consider ... their interpretation captures the ‘essence’ of the experience” (Grant & Giddings, 2002, p. 17). The importance of phenomenological writing cannot be understated as phenomenological research is the “bringing to speech of something” (van Manen, 1990, p. 32). In most research approaches, researchers write up his/her understandings. In phenomenological research, the researcher writes to understand. It is in the experience of writing that the researcher contemplatively articulates essential understandings and meanings. In a similar way, “one does not write primarily for being understood; one writes for having understood being” (van Manen, 2006, p. 721).

Blanchot (1981) suggests that the phenomenological researcher, or writer, “can only write if one arrives at the ‘instant’ towards which one can only move through space opened up by the movement of the writing” (p. 104). It is as if phenomenological writing writes itself (van Manen, 2006). Phenomenological writing, for Mostert (2002), is like “falling forward into the darkness, in that it seeks to communicate that not yet known through deep description of what has been lived” (p. 4). van Manen (2006) captures this as, “writing creates a space that belongs to the unsayable” (p. 718). The

phenomenological researcher writes to make interpretive leaps of understanding in the meaning of a phenomenon (Mostert, 2002). In the lived experiences of the phenomenological research process, the researcher lives the question itself (Hultgren, 1995; van Manen, 1990). Taylor (1985) states that, “to be human is to be already engaging in living an answer to the question” (p. 75). The researcher must, while writing, hold open particular ideas about the essence of the phenomenon alongside other showings of the phenomenon in the tension of coming to understand (Barnacle, 2001b).

Phenomenological analysis

The deepening analysis of the texts of lived experiences seeks to uncover essential meanings presently taken for granted. The analysis is ongoing and occurs as phenomenological writing (van Manen, 1990, 2006). Particular stories of a lived experience are read and reread in the process of hermeneutically interpreting the text for the meaning of everyday experiences. In the process, the researcher dwells with the stories in an immersion-like experience that holds open the text in dialogue (Barnacle, 2001b). In so doing, the researcher surrenders in an expectation that meanings will emerge that call out particular notions central to an understanding of the phenomenon (Giles, 2006). van Manen (1990) suggests that

Making something of a text or of a lived experience by interpreting its meaning is more accurately a process of insightful invention, discovery or disclosure – grasping and formulating a thematic understanding is not a rule-bound process but a free act of “seeing” meaning”. (p. 79)

The researcher lets meanings come that they haven’t seen before, “something that feels somewhat mysterious” (Mostert, 2002; Smythe et al., 2008; van Manen, 1990). The researcher seeks to “intuit understandingly and to understand intuitively” (Crowe, 2006, p. 210). In the difficulty of coming to understand phenomenon, the researcher searches for “language that authentically speaks the world rather than abstractly speaking *of* it ... a language that reverberates the world” (van Manen, 1990, p. 13).

Thinking

Heidegger’s thinking on thinking points to an embodied thinking that reveals the experience of thinking as playful, to and fro movements, attuning our being to that which calls us (Smythe, 2005). In this, a person influences and is influenced by thinking. Thinking then has a reciprocity and restlessness (Smythe, 2005). The movement of thinking has been described as a travelling where the way of thinking is more crucial than any thought of the destination (Smythe, 2004).

Heidegger distinguishes between calculative thinking and meditative thinking. Smythe (2005) summarises these ways of thinking as follows:

Heidegger's (1959b/1966) notions of calculative and meditative thinking describe thinking that pushes ahead, more likely to follow predetermined design, as opposed to that which stops and contemplates, more likely to play and keep open the possibilities of anything to show itself as itself. (p. 250)

Heidegger (1966) argues that meditative thinking is the kind of thinking most important to us and yet the most vulnerable (Smythe, 2004). In meditative thinking, we need to dwell "on what is closest; upon that which concerns us, each one of us, here and now; here, on this patch of home ground; now, in the present hour of history" (Heidegger, 1966, p. 47). Such meditative thinking is an experience that Heidegger (1992) describes as "being-lost-in-thought." In these moments our coming to understanding is as "a free act of 'seeing' meaning" (van Manen, 1990, p. 79). The critical understanding that arises from these different kinds of thinking is that "ways of thinking are ways of being" (Smythe, 2005, p. 250). As such, thinking is embodied, bodily; "a breathing-thinking" (Smythe, 2004; Smythe, 2005, p. 234). This "bodying forth" belongs to Dasein's being-in-the-world (Diekmann, 2005).

In a similar way, Heidegger suggests that "our moods call us to thought, show us what matters, and capture our attention" (Smythe, 2005, p. 232), attuning our way-of-being as thinking. Thinking, then, relates to "that which calls to think" as "Thinking is thinking when it answers to what is most thought-provoking" (Heidegger, 1968, p. 121, 28).

"Un-thought" thinking is seen as inviting us, calling us, and seeking us (Diekmann, 2001; Smythe, 2004, 2005). "The call to thinking lies in the mystery of a knowing that comes" (Smythe, 2005, p. 234). For Heidegger, thinking stems from thoughts that are given, rather than the opposite; "...we never come to thoughts. They come to us" (1971, p. 4). Equally important is the need to "prepare ourselves to hear that call to think when it comes and respond to it in an appropriate manner" (Gray, 1968, p. xi). Such a call to thinking can arise out of our reading, writing, pondering, or dialogue with others (Diekmann, 2001; Smythe, 2004, 2005). In these particular moments listening becomes attuned, open and problematic (Smythe, 2005).

Smythe (2005) suggests that "the thinking of research is the being of research" (p. 256). The process of being-in hermeneutic phenomenology is like a journey of thinking that

weaves through the reading-writing-contemplation of the inquiry (Smythe et al., 2008). The thinking within hermeneutic phenomenology is not a cognitive and intellectual activity of theorising but a “bodily being-in-the-world experience” (Smythe et al., 2008, p. 13). In the process, “Research as thinking either opens or shuts possibilities of play ... The thinking of the researcher cannot help but play with ideas, with questions, toying, wondering, for it is the nature of being human” (Smythe, 2005, p. 250). How thinking is thought in research occurs in the phronesis⁸ or practical wisdom of the moment within a particular context.

As researchers, we are “always–already” being called to be uncertain in our thinking (Heidegger, 1996; Smythe, 2005). The researcher quickly appreciates their loss of control and certainty in grasping essential understandings. In a similar way the researcher lives towards uncovering the essential meanings of phenomena (Giles, 2006).

Phenomenological research involves the leading of the researcher by the phenomenon. This form of research involves “thinking that which is pointed to as something to be thought about” (Smythe et al., 2008, p. 4). This way of thinking might involve contemplation and purposeful deliberation, where we make ourselves available for thinking. Such availability should not be thought of as an appointment to think, but rather understood as the openness of being which allows a deepening attunement to being and thinking (Barnacle, 2001b; Smythe, 2004).

The researcher cannot will or dictate when or how thinking should occur. The researcher must trust that the process or way “will reveal itself amidst the thinking” such “that as ideas come together the new and unique pattern will emerge” (Smythe, 2005, p. 251). This trust involves a letting go of the certainty or givenness of a research process. Smythe (2005) summarises this as follows:

No matter what the methodological stance, there is a thinking that comes to us all that is part of our humanness. Perhaps the key is “comes to us”. It is beyond methodology. Methodologies such as phenomenology demand meditative, transformative, insightful thinking ... (p. 254)

The researcher needs to let his/her “thinking find its own way, to await the insights that emerge” (Smythe et al., 2008, p. 11), not a working out but rather a letting come (Dunne, 1997; Smythe et al., 2008).

⁸ A discussion of phronesis is featured in chapter 8.

Immersed in a research experience that is lived, the researcher is increasingly attuned to showings of the phenomenon. As researchers dwell in their pre-understanding and the movement of the experience, turning towards the phenomenon's withdrawing from the grasp of rational deduction, they are drawn to what is essential. Heidegger (1968) articulates this so:

When man [sic] is drawing into what withdraws, he points into what withdraws. As we are drawing that way we are a sign, a pointer. But we are pointing then at something which has not, not yet, been transposed into the language of our speech. We are a sign that is not read. (p. 18)

As the thinking moves, essential meanings are uncovered. The challenge for the thinking in the research continues with the challenge of articulating this. As Rilke (2002) suggests, "Few things are in fact as accessible to reason or to language as people will generally try to make us believe. Most phenomena are unsayable, and have their being in a dimension in which no word has ever entered" (p. 173).

Poeticising

It is not uncommon in the movement of phenomenological reflection to find oneself "poeticising" the essence of an experience as a way of holding open, in poetry, meanings that gather within the text. Poetry can hold open understandings and lead us towards essences. Heidegger is not surprised that poetry has a role within phenomenological research. He suggests that "our existence is fundamentally poetic" (1949, p. 283) and that the essence of poetry is "the establishing of being by means of the word" (1949, p. 282). Poetry can provide a clearing where Being is illuminated (Crotty, 1998). The researcher as poet "reaches out with poetic thought into the foundation and the midst of Being" (Heidegger, 1949, p. 289).

In this study, I have come to a greater appreciation of the inadequacy of language in capturing the essence of Being. Words in sentences felt, at times, inadequate in capturing the essence. During this time, I wrote the following poem to remind myself to hold my phenomenological experiences open to the unsayable.

No one will know ...

*No one will know
what is beyond words,
I will not be the teller
what words could I choose?*

*Such words would have to be "felt"
and then such words would be "inaudible",
How then can such words be given?
and who will speak them?*

*Is this place-of-being then hopeless?
Only in as much as,
no one will fully know
what is beyond words.*

(D Giles, 28/05/05)

The challenge for the hermeneutical phenomenological researcher is to remain attuned to the phenomenon's showing while seeking to hold his/her ongoing interpretations open for further thinking. Our experiences are greater than our capacity to articulate them. Yet poetry has a way of showing that goes beyond what can be "said".

A thought in summary

Heidegger's philosophical understandings of the ontological nature of our being-in-the-world are critical to this research. These understandings provide the philosophical underpinning for the thinking that has occurred within this research process as well as influencing the depth of engagement with the phenomenon (Sharkey, 2001). It should be noted that the presentation of understandings from Heidegger, followed by Gadamer, is an attempt to acknowledge the scholarship of these philosophers. Their ideas on many occasions build on and substantiate the other. In this way, there are many interrelated ideas. Like Heidegger, Gadamer's writings have influenced my understanding of phenomenology and an ontological appreciation of relationship as the essential phenomenon in this research.

Understandings from Hans-Georg Gadamer

Gadamer was a former student of Heidegger who sought to build upon many of his former teacher's ideas, extending Heidegger's work into practical application

(Gadamer, 1976; Lavery, 2003; Polkinghorne, 1983). Dunne (1997) suggests that Gadamer has brought hermeneutics to the very centre of philosophy. For Gadamer, the work of hermeneutics was not about the development of a procedure for understanding, but the clarification of the conditions within which understanding itself takes place (Lavery, 2003). Gadamer (1994) summarises his real concern as “not what we do or what we ought to do, but what happens to us over and above our wanting and doing” (p. xxxviii). What appears to be pivotal here is that we always stand in a tradition and that this tradition is intricately linked to the language that speaks it (Crotty, 1998).

Tradition and prejudice

Gadamer (1994) argues that we are thoroughly historical beings with an historically effected consciousness. Our way-of-being stands in this historicity or tradition. This tradition is essential and integral to our interpreting of everyday experiences. Tradition is not something we can free and distance ourselves from but rather tradition is involved in all understanding (Gadamer, 1994; Schwandt, 2000). Gallagher (1992) explains tradition as “a living force that enters into all understanding ... [and] despite the fact that traditions operate for the most part “‘behind our backs’, they are already there, ahead of us, conditioning our interpretations” (pp. 87, 91).

In a similar way, Gadamer (1994) suggests that our being-in-the-world is always prejudiced. “Prejudices are merely the conditions by which we encounter the world as we experience something” (Koch, 1996, p. 177). They act as a condition of knowledge in that they determine what we find intelligible in any given situation (Koch, 1996). In addition, these prejudices include “unfounded discriminatory actions ... self-evident certainty ... ideology ... [and] pretensions of being free of all prejudice” (Diekelmann, 2005, p. 23). Similarly, inherited historical and cultural notions are located within our prejudices (Barnacle, 2001b; Crotty, 1998; Schmidt, 2005). Gadamer’s concern is that we acknowledge our own possible prejudice as “the first necessary step to the retrieval of any prejudice that is naively covered over” (Diekelmann, 2005, p. 23).

Where Husserl advocates “bracketing out” prejudices prior to inquiry, Heidegger and Gadamer point to the impossibility of this. Gadamer (1994) considers the elimination of one’s own concepts as not only impossible, but absurd. It is impossible to do otherwise because our prejudices are an essential part of our being-in-the-world (Johnston, 2007). It is only common sense, suggests Gadamer (1994), that the

researcher brings himself or herself *into* the research inquiry. The phenomenological researcher becomes increasingly aware of his/her prejudices and the influence of these on his/her current inquiry, mindful that their being is continually guided by preconceptions and anticipations that remain hidden (Gadamer, 1976). A critical point here is that the researcher must live with an acknowledgement of his/her prejudices, as difficult as this may be. Gadamer (1994) likens our self-awareness to “a flickering in the closed circuits of historical life. That is why the prejudices of the individual, far more than his judgments, constitute the historical reality of his [sic] being” (pp. 276-277). Such prejudices, formed in tradition, are integral to our being and enable and limit our understanding as we engage with our own biases (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Diekelmann, 2005; Koch, 1996).

Horizons

Our prejudices can be thought of as a horizon influencing “the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point” (Gadamer, 1994, p. 302). The horizon is “not a rigid boundary but something that moves ... and invites one to advance further” (Gadamer, 1994, p. 245). In this way, our horizons are dynamic and temporal, moving with our experiences in the world. For Gadamer (1994) to have a horizon

...means not being limited to what is nearby but being able to see beyond it. A person who has an horizon knows the relative significance of everything within this horizon, whether it is near or far, great or small. (p. 302).

Diekelmann (2005) suggests that Gadamer’s task was to show that history is always at work as a horizon. Gadamer’s notion of making sense of our world from within our existence is similar to Heidegger’s view that we act within a background of bodily, personal, and cultural practices that are always present (Annells, 1996; Lavery, 2003). While our historical horizon or our historically affected consciousnesses is shaped by the past, the shape of our future becoming is also limited and enabled by our horizons, past and present (Crotty, 1998; Diekelmann, 2005; Spence, 2004).

The historical horizon is constantly in movement with the horizon of the present (Annells, 1996). As the historical horizon is projected, so it is “simultaneously superseded” by the movement of the experience (Crotty, 1998, p. 100). Our lived experiences are dynamically charged with the intersubjective movement of horizons and the temporality of each moment (Dall’Alba, 2004). Bergoff (1997) describes this as being “inescapably situated by the ... contexts of our lived experiences” (p. 8).

Language

“Language embodies tradition by transmitting meanings pre-reflectively” (Spence, 2004, p. 142). Tradition is wedded to language, indeed the essence of tradition exists in the medium of language (Gadamer, 1994). In a similar manner, “everything presupposed in hermeneutics is but language” (Gadamer, 1994, p. 381). The primordial being of language is expressed by Dreyfus (1991) as, “language is as Dasein is ... it exists ... Dasein uses language as a tool to point out aspects of its shared world” (pp. 218, 221).

For Gadamer (1976), “language is the real medium of human being” and this is central to understanding (Crotty, 1998; Diekelmann, 2005). Human existence depends on language because reality happens within language (Bingham, 2005; Diekelmann, 2005). Gadamer’s (1994) view is that “language is the fundamental mode of operation of our being-in-the-world and the all embracing form of the constitution of the world”. In this way, our whole experience of the world is made possible from “language as a medium” (Gadamer, 1994, p. 457). Contrary to the view that a human being is the creator and master of language, “it is language which is and remains his [sic] sovereign” (Taylor, 1985, p. 239). In short, language speaks *us* (Gadamer, 1994).

Language and understanding

Language and understanding are inseparable; structural aspects of human being-in-the-world (Lavery, 2003; Palmer, 2006). For Gadamer (1994), “language is the universal medium in which understanding occurs” (p. 389), that is, “language facilitates understanding” (Spence, 2004, p. 142). At the core of understanding is language (Crotty, 1998). Language is “living ... and takes place in events of understanding” (Palmer, 2006, p. 3). The role of language in our ongoing understandings is captured by Spence (2004) as follows:

When trying to make sense of their situation, human beings pose questions and fumble for answers. Through language, they reflect on the adequacy or otherwise of their interpretations, and in accepting, rejecting, and refining their articulations, they are able to move from inchoate experiences to ones that more clearly define and facilitate ongoing understanding and expression. (p. 142)

The facilitation of understanding involves movement and reciprocity, as understanding and interpretation are bound together. In this way, “language ... enables reflection on past experiences and is the medium through which past and present understandings fuse to enable the development of understanding” (Spence, 2004, p. 142).

In the first instance, language discloses the fore-structure of understanding in what Heidegger considered to be merely “reading what is there” (Gadamer, 1994, p. 269). For Heidegger (1996), understanding as *fore*-understanding comes first. Dieckmann (2005) explains,

We do not first deal with objects and/or subjects as mental constructs. We are always-already actively engaged in purposes. The medium of language is what lets any object come into words: a mutual belonging of interpreters and language obtains (p. 29).

All interpretation then takes place “in the medium of language that allows the object to come into words and yet is at the same time the interpreter’s own language” (Gadamer, 1994, p. 389).

Understanding, interpretation, fusion of horizons

Understanding is always interpretation, indeed “understanding occurs in interpreting” (Gadamer, 1994, p. 389). The nature of Being and human being is disclosed through interpretation. “Interpretation is the primordial condition of human self-understanding” (Blumenfeld-Jones, 1997, p. 5). Importantly, understanding is a mode of being and is “lived or existential” (Schwandt, 2000, p. 196).

Gadamer (1986) distinguishes between two different senses of interpretation; pointing to something, and pointing out the meaning of something:

“Pointing to something” is a kind of “indicating” that functions as a sign. “Pointing out what something means”, on the other hand, always relates back to the kind of sign that interprets itself. Thus when we interpret the meaning of something, we actually interpret an interpretation. (p. 68)

The first kind of interpretation “is not a reading in of some meaning, but clearing a revealing of what the thing itself already points to ... We attempt to interpret that which at the same time conceals itself” (Gadamer, 1986, p. 68). In this way, “an interpretation of an experience is always also a withdrawing of all that still remains hidden, silent, unspoken” (Smythe et al., 2008, p. 7). Self-understanding, then, is always on-the-way; it is on a path whose completion is a clear impossibility (Gadamer, 1987). Our interpretation is always an evolving process with definitive interpretation being an impossibility (Annells, 1996; Laverty, 2003).

Interpretation occurs through the fusion of horizons (Koch, 1996). For Gadamer, the fusion of horizons is seen as a dialectical interaction between the expectation of the

interpreter and the meaning of the text (Polkinghorne, 1983). In this process, understanding “happens within a relationship of vulnerability to the text, that ... arises out of a fusion of the contexts of both interpreter and text in the one fluid medium” (Dunne, 1997, p. 105). The interpreter’s horizon is already being “stretched beyond itself, so that it is no longer the same horizon that it was independently of this encounter” (Dunne, 1997, p. 121). The fusion of horizons is such that, “as the historical horizon is projected, it is simultaneously superseded. To bring about this fusion in a regulated way is the task of what we called historically effected consciousness” (Gadamer, 1994, p. 307). Thought in this way, “understanding is ... less ... a subjective act than ... participating in an event of tradition, a process of transmission in which past and present are constantly mediated” (Gadamer, 1994, p. 290). The fusion of horizons in understanding is actually the achievement of language (Gadamer, 1994).

Hermeneutic Circling

The phenomenological researcher lives in a challenging and continuous interpretive process known as hermeneutic circling (Dunne, 1997; Gadamer, 1994). The hermeneutic circle cannot be avoided. What is important is being in the circle properly (Bleicher, 1980; Dunne, 1997; Johnston, 2005; Koch, 1996). The process of hermeneutical reflection involves a to and fro circling movement towards an “ontologically positive significance” (Gadamer, 1994, p. 266), that is, the essential meanings of the phenomenon being researched. In this process of circling with a deepening attunement, the researcher seeks to hermeneutically interpret essential meanings of a phenomenon (Dunne, 1997; Schwandt, 2000).

The continuous nature of the hermeneutic reflection and revision does not stop, because projections continue to be projected upon. Gadamer (1994) summarises this continuous circling process thus:

Every revision of the fore-projection is capable to projecting before itself a new projection of meaning; rival projects can emerge side by side until it becomes clearer what the unity of meaning is; interpretation begins with fore-conceptions that are replaced by more suitable ones, (p. 267)

Understanding is always provisional and continuous as the hermeneutic reflection moves between the parts and the whole of the phenomena; the near and the far of the horizons at work, in ever-widening circles (Gadamer, 1994). In this manner, the whole is understood in terms of the detail and the detail in terms of the whole. Alternatively, the oscillating “movement of understanding is constantly from the whole to the part and

back to the whole” (Gadamer, 1994, p. 291). On the way, the hermeneutic circling brings understandings and interpretations of ontological phenomena to language.

Hermeneutic activity is central to the writing process which underpins hermeneutic phenomenology. For this reason, it is important that phenomenological researchers have a continuity in this interpretive process as they sensitise themselves to the particular phenomenon (Blumenfeld-Jones, 1997; Schmidt, 2005; van Manen, 2002). van Manen (1990) describes the hermeneutic circling of the phenomenological researcher as a *reading-writing-rereading-rewriting activity* which is vital to the hermeneutic re-covering of the essence of a phenomenon. Interpretations are written and rewritten in a deepening hermeneutic process (Heidegger, 1996). Alternative interpretations are continuously explored (Buchanan, 1993). Importantly, this “attune-full” writing process moves the researcher towards the nuances of the phenomenon being explored.

Hermeneutic Conversation, Dialogue

The contemplative revisiting of interpretive writing against personal and historical horizons is a form of hermeneutic conversation. The conversation is extended by ongoing life experiences and dialogue with the text and others. The meanings embedded within the text arise in conversation and dialogue that is part of the ongoing experience of the research (Castle, 2006; Sharkey, 2001). More generally, Gadamer (1996) suggests that, as human beings, “a dialogue is what we are” (p. 166).

It is in the conversation with the text where understandings emerge for the researcher. “Language is only properly itself when it is in dialogue, where question and answer, answer and question are exchanged with one another” (Gadamer, 1996, p. 127). The important dialogical relationship and movement between question and answer informs our understanding. The question for Gadamer is a hermeneutic priority (Carson, 1986). For Gadamer (1994), “to ask the question means to bring into the open” (p. 363). In this way, questioning is central to the understandings that emerges from the fusion of horizons.

A thought in summary

As a former student of Heidegger, Gadamer sought to build on his teacher’s ideas extending his work into practical application. Central to Gadamer’s contribution to philosophy is the role of hermeneutics and the conditions within which understanding

itself takes place. Gadamer's writing has been influential to my way-of-being in this phenomenological research project.

The political challenge of Heidegger and Gadamer

I have drawn from Heidegger's understandings and thinking in this research project. I distinguish here between my affinity with Heidegger's thinking in terms of what it means to be human, from any comment or support of the person, Martin Heidegger. I acknowledge that there are mixed feelings about Heidegger; some take the position that Heidegger made a political error in the 1930s and that his philosophy is "tainted with Nazism" (van Hooft, 1999, p. 299). As a consequence, Heidegger has been charged with anti-democratic sentiments and insensitivity to the Holocaust, amongst other charges (van Hooft, 1999). The concern is that Heidegger intentionally, if not deliberately, saw his role in education as assisting in the transformation of the German culture and society toward National Socialist ends (Collins & Selina, 2006).

For others, such as Young (1998), there is no link between Heidegger's philosophy and the policies of Nazism. He writes, "None of Heidegger's philosophy ... is implicated, either positively or negatively, in fascism, and neither, therefore, is the essential man" (Young, 1998, p. 214). Heidegger was said to be concerned with the intrusion into German culture of the modernist individualist spirit and the technological worldview that was shared by American capitalism and Soviet communism (Harman, 2007; Young, 1998). Heidegger believed this "un-German" mentality might be changed through political and systemic changes, only to learn in hindsight that this would not be achieved by the agenda of the National Socialist party (Feldman, 2005; van Hooft, 1999). Expressing his disillusionment with the regime as he addressed the Freiburg denazification committee Heidegger states, "I accepted the social and national (not National-Socialist) component, but rejected its intellectual and metaphysical underpinnings in the biologism in Party doctrine, because the social and national component as I saw it, had no essential connection with the ideological doctrine of biological racialism" (Feldman, 2005, p. 185). The translators of Heidegger's book, "Mindfulness", boldly state that there is "clear evidence that he disagreed with the politics of Hitler and National Socialism. ... Heidegger deeply expresses a critique and disapproval of the ruling clique" (pp. xxxix-xl).

Like Heidegger, questions have been asked of Gadamer, given their close alignment. Because Gadamer had had polio he was able to avoid military commitments. Some have suggested that Gadamer's concentration on his work hid his sympathy or resistance to Hitler's regime (McLemee, 2003). While appearing politically clever, Gadamer suggests that he "had a moral motive: Not to lose the confidence of my Jewish friends. On the whole, this feeling of solidarity that I experienced enabled me to hold out during this time" (Gadamer, in Palmer, 2001, p. 130). Gadamer's comments indicate his personal angst during this time.

I found the writings of Heidegger and Gadamer have challenged and provoked my thinking. Moreover their views on the ontological nature and hermeneutic essence of being have been personally liberating as this has enabled an opening of essential meanings of the teacher-student relationship. As a consequence, I have come to the position that my knowledge of this controversy means that my reading of Heidegger's and Gadamer's writing evokes the need to read and work with the literature with a questioning mind.

Concluding comments

The tradition of phenomenological research is found in the philosophical literature. In the case of hermeneutic phenomenology, Heidegger's ideas continue to be opened up by Gadamer and others. The phenomenological research tradition requires the researcher to acquire the essence of the research process as this is opened up in the philosophical literature. In the practice of engaging in phenomenological research, the researcher is required to seek the essence of the tradition belonging to the phenomenological way, while also attuning his/her being towards the essence of a particular phenomenon.

Phenomenological research is a lived experience for researchers as they attune themselves towards the ontological nature of phenomenon while learning to "see" pre-reflective, taken-for-granted, and essential understandings through the lens of their always-already pre-understandings and prejudices (van Manen, 1990). Heidegger (1996) declared that what is essential to our understanding withdraws from our rational grasp for control and certainty. As the phenomenological researcher remains towards that which withdraws from us, we are likened to a signpost pointing to the withdrawing (Heidegger, 1996). In phenomenological research, the researcher is a signpost pointing towards essential understanding of the research approach as well as essential

understandings of the particular phenomenon of interest. In this way, the phenomenological research approach involves the researcher moving on a path, one that honours the tradition of the research approach, and lives the question (Diekelmann, 2005; Gadamer, 1994; Heidegger, 2003; Hultgren, 1992).

van Manen (1990) suggests that the phenomenological researcher must initially identify a phenomenon that seriously interests him/her. In the case of this research, the lived experience of the teacher-student relationship was identified as the phenomenon of serious interest. The phenomenon of the teacher-student relationship exists as part of my everyday experience in education and has been personally lived and theorised over a long period of time. The call for a phenomenology of relationship is not new. Seamon (1989) stated nearly two decades ago that “we desperately need a ... phenomenology of relationship” (p. 259) and more particularly, a phenomenology that eventually offers practical help to educators.

The following chapter will consider the specific and particular processes that have been used in the process of this phenomenological research. Chapter 5, “Method” provides detail of the application of Heidegger’s and Gadamer’s understandings to a hermeneutic inquiry which explores the phenomenon of the teacher-student relationship.

Chapter 5: Method

Phenomenological research brings together philosophical foundations and methodological considerations in an ongoing dialogue. I have found that this dialogue is concerned with the way or “path” of the research as well as my way-of-being in the research (Giles, 2007; Smythe et al., 2008). As a phenomenological researcher, I am part of a contemplative research process that unfolds (Ironsides, 2005). In this process I am increasingly attuned to my prejudices and their influence, as well as the movement of the phenomenon (Smythe et al., 2008; van Manen, 1990). The important point here is that it is in my relationship with the research text that the path is found (Heidegger, 2003). The paths or methods, suggests van Manen (1990), “cannot be determined by fixed signposts. They need to be discovered or invented as a response to the question at hand” (p. 29). In this way, the phenomenological method is not understood as a set of investigative procedures but rather as methods that are contingent upon the phenomenon in question, informed by the philosophical literature, the insights of previous phenomenological researchers, and lived through my experiences as the researcher (Ironsides, 2005; van Manen, 1990). In summary, the phenomenological methodology is unlike other research approaches. It is a turning towards a phenomenon rather than a preoccupation with research techniques (Gadamer, 1994).

The lack of prescription in phenomenological research should not suggest a casual approach to the research. In contrast, van Manen (1990) suggests that the phenomenological research approach requires “scholarship” as the researcher becomes a “sensitive observer of the subtleties of everyday life and an avid reader of relevant texts in the ... humanities, history, philosophy, anthropology, and the social sciences as they pertain to his or her domain of interest” (p. 29). The challenge of the scholarship relates to the complexity of working with experiences that have layers of meanings (Smythe et al., 2008). Given that one’s prejudices are continually present to any endeavour, there can be no pre-set way to conduct phenomenological research.

The purpose of this study is to explore lived experiences of the teacher-student relationship by lecturers and student teachers in pre-service teacher education programmes. The study seeks to illuminate the shared meanings of this relationship as a way of uncovering new possibilities for the centrality of this relational experience in

pre-service teacher education. As the study shows the phenomenon, so the text calls the reader and practitioner to an action-sensitive pedagogy that enables pedagogic thoughtfulness and tact in “being a teacher” (Richardson, 1994; van Manen, 1990).

In this chapter I will show what I did and how the nature of the inquiry evolved in a process that wrestled with the phenomenon. The chapter moves through sections that are headed “Beginning phenomenological research”, “Gathering the stories”, “Working with the stories” and “The challenges of interpretive writing”. The chapter concludes with a discussion of phenomenological research as a lived experience for the researcher, wherein the researcher is found exploring the essence of phenomenology in philosophical writing, alongside the phenomenological inquiry of the teacher-student relationship.

Beginning phenomenological research

The context

The context for this research is pre-service teacher education in New Zealand. This particular phenomenological research project explores everyday lived experiences of the teacher-student relationship. The teacher-student relationship has always been critically important to me. Since 1990, I have lectured in teacher education programmes within a college of education, a private training establishment and two universities. While conducting this research, I have remained as a full time senior lecturer in a school of education. Prior to my teaching experience in teacher education, I spent over a decade teaching in primary and secondary schools in New Zealand. In a similar way, my previous research and academic writing point to the importance I place on the teacher-student relationship. I have previously completed research on alternative ideologies of education (Giles, 1995), relational teacher education (Giles & Sanders, 1996), and values-based organisational practice (Giles, 2005). What has remained consistent across the various teaching positions and the research I have completed is a primary concern for the importance of the teacher-student relationship.

Beginning with the phenomenological research community

A significant influence at the outset of this research was the wider phenomenological research community. Being new to phenomenological research, I valued hearing the experiences of other researchers whose stories opened the dynamic movement of their

phenomenological inquiries. My attendance at three international conferences for interpretive and hermeneutical phenomenology, held at the University of Wisconsin (USA), George Mason University (USA), and AUT University (New Zealand) was inspirational. At a local level, I became involved with a phenomenological research community; a Heideggerian reading group. Other individual researchers and scholars who are an integral part of the relational community have also influenced my journey. The two senior academics who supervised this research brought to this task their own experience of completing phenomenological doctorates, as well as having supervised doctorates and research projects using this methodology.

The initial topic for this inquiry focused on relational pedagogy because this represented a particular values-based practice. Discussions with members of the wider research community challenged the nature of the research as being primarily concerned with the theoretical application of a pedagogical approach. Through these discussions, I came to understand that phenomenological inquiry considers lived experiences. Similarly, my interest in Parker Palmer's writing influenced the shape of my initial research question. This was framed as, "What is your experience of teaching in a 'Palmer' way?" I was challenged to return to lived experiences and focus on an underlying phenomenon. The phenomenon upon which I focused my concern was the teacher-student relationship in the context of teacher education. The possible research questions that were shaped included: "What is the experience of the teacher-student relationship?" and "How does the teacher-student relationship *matter* in the teaching-learning experience?" The research question for this research was finally shaped as "What is the meaning of the teacher-student relationship?"

On another occasion, I was helped to understand the role of philosophical literature in a phenomenological inquiry. I was encouraged to describe my intended research as interpretive phenomenology with a Heideggerian analysis. This helped to clarify the role of the philosophical literature in assisting the contemplation and deliberation on the stories of lived experiences. As a consequence, my understanding of the philosophical literature has developed alongside the collection and interpretation of the participant's stories.

Another example of the influence of the wider research community occurred in a research seminar led by Professor Diekelmann on her research into *narrative pedagogy*.

I listened to the way the stories were collected from the participants and the concern for a rich description of the lived experiences because this became the text for interpretation. Professor Diekelmann frequently modelled the phenomenological approach, starting from a particular story and extrapolating an interpretation that progressively moved to reveal ontological understandings. This experience acted as a signpost for my interpretive writing and influenced the construction of my data chapters as they seek to show essential meanings of the phenomenon of interest.

Beginning to understand the challenge of phenomenological research

Another challenge was the complexity and lack of specificity of the methodology. I felt I needed to embark on a journey of uncovering the method within the philosophical literature and to understand, in the process, how I was to *be* in the research. I began to appreciate that my challenge as a phenomenological researcher was to lay open essential meanings of the phenomenon in everyday experiences. In this way, I needed to uncover understandings of the phenomenon that are, for the most part, unseen and taken for granted.

While I appreciated the need for a thick description of the phenomenon, because of previous experience with ethnographic research experience, I had a very limited understanding of the fundamental importance of the place and priority of interpretive writing in hermeneutic phenomenological research. “Hermeneutic phenomenological research is fundamentally a writing activity [where the] research and writing are aspects of one process” (van Manen, 1990, p. 7). In a phenomenological sense, to do research is “a bringing into speech of something” (van Manen, 1990, p. 32). Phenomenological writing intends to have us see what we haven’t before, showing the phenomenon in a new way (Mostert, 2002). The writing is fused into the research activity where writing and re-writing continue in a hermeneutic circle toward understanding (van Manen, 1990). Moreover, the writing is embodied and lived itself as a careful, thoughtful and deepening experience.

This research approach challenges my need for certainty and the use of logical deduction. I learned that phenomenological analysis was paradigmatically different from a linguistic analysis of the words in the text. Phenomenological analysis seeks hidden meanings. I began to understand that the seeing of meanings reveals possibilities rather than certainty, and that my way with the text was critically

important. van Manen (1990) describes this possibility as a moment that arises where the researcher “sees” the meaning of the phenomenon; a process of “openness” that is more akin to a revelatory moment than theoretical deduction (van Manen, 1990). This discovery-oriented method requires me to have an attitude of openness in order to let unexpected meanings emerge (Giorgi, 1997; Mostert, 2002). The challenge of this deepening and attune-full interpretive writing experience lay in waiting for me.

Journalling the process from the beginning

From the inception of the research project, I kept a journal of conversations, teaching notes, quotations, interactions and reflections on the phenomenon under inquiry. This journal did not have daily entries but recorded and dated thoughts that were encountered in the research process. At times, the content reflected on my own experiences of the teacher-student relationship as a matter of self-discovery. On other occasions, the journal writing was a means of working with language to describe the essence of a particular story. In this way, the journal records the insights gained and in the process makes them available for ongoing phenomenological reflection (van Manen, 1990). In a similar way, the information within the journals has been re-read for this chapter as a way of re-gathering various moments within the experience of this particular research journey.

Gaining approval for the study

This doctoral research, entitled “Exploring Relational Experiences in Teacher Education”, was approved as an interpretive phenomenological research project by the Doctoral Studies Board of AUT University, New Zealand. The research question for this study was, “What is the meaning of the teacher-student relationship?” Approval for the study was granted by AUT University’s Ethics Committee, who approved the research design on the 6th October 2004 (Reference number 04/155, see Appendix 1).

Gathering the stories

The first stories gathered in this research were my own stories of the teacher-student relationship. An interview was facilitated by one of my supervisors. This interview enabled me to experience a hermeneutic interview as being more akin to a conversation. The aim of this hermeneutic interview, in hindsight, was to keep the question open (van Manen, 1990). The interview did not involve any planning on my part other than the organisation of the equipment for recording purposes. Reflecting on this experience, I came to see the importance of the ease with which I had shared my stories and the sense

that the interviewer was as engaged and interested in the stories as I was. When reviewing the questions I was asked, I noted the probes that sought more detailed description of my experiences. The experience of being interviewed was very different from the piloting of a set of interview questions. It was foundational to my understanding of how I was to be in this research. The stories shared through this conversational interview were essential to the ongoing research process. The experience significantly altered how I thought about my own experience of the phenomenon and how I thought about my way with the participants.

My stories became a text for an exploration of prejudices and pre-assumptions I held in relation to the phenomenon. I was aware that the problem of phenomenological inquiry “is not always that we know too little about the phenomenon we wish to investigate, but that we know too much” (van Manen, 1990, p. 46). The interview was recorded, transcribed and interpreted as a way of making more explicit *how I was* towards the phenomenon at the initial stages of this research. One example related to my recollection of an experience with a teacher who drew my attention to an unusual knack he seemed to have in knowing what I was thinking. It was as if he had an instinctive understanding of who I was beneath my student image. He seemed to relate to me as a person in class and out of class. This particular experience had occurred in a difficult and challenging moment. Interestingly, I also recalled that this teacher had been influential in my decision to pursue teaching as a career. Other stories also showed the influential nature of the teacher-student relationship. One such experience occurred with a teacher who appeared to be more concerned with orchestrating political change than relating to me in a personable manner. The nature of the teacher-student relationship in this story concerned me. In other stories I recalled very vivid experiences of teachers who appeared to speak *at* me with little concern for my thoughts.

Reflecting on my stories, I wondered if good teachers “move towards” their students. Somehow the movement seemed to be more than an emotional response. I wondered if the influence of the teacher-student relationship was in the movement *from* the teacher *towards* the student. It interested me that my thinking about the stories seemed to be from a teacher’s point of view. Even though some of my stories recalled my experience as a student, my working with the stories appeared to enable the teacher’s perspective while limiting the student’s perspective in the interpretive process.

van Manen (1990) suggests that raising awareness of one's own experience of a phenomenon can provide "clues for orienting oneself to the phenomenon and thus to all the other stages of phenomenological research" (p. 57). In my case, I learned that I was favouring the teacher's perspective in my interpretive writing. Some of the pre-understandings in this interview have been integrated into chapter 1, where my initial pre-assumptions are documented.

Locating the story tellers: Selection, recruitment & ethics

The participants in this study were student teachers and lecturers from five different pre-service teacher education providers within New Zealand. Participants were selected if they were currently engaged in pre-service teacher education as a student teacher or as a lecturer.

The first participants were identified in consultation with my supervisors. The first lecturer was known to me whereas the first student teacher was someone I had not previously met. When the participant's stories were returned to the participant for their review, they were asked if they could refer me to other people I might approach to contribute to this research project (see appendix 2). This process of recruitment is known as the *snowballing* approach (McIntyre, 2005). As I received the details of potential participants, I phoned them to discuss the research project. In most cases the potential participants had heard about the study from the participant who had referred them.

While the research proposal anticipated the contribution of fifteen individuals, seventeen participants agreed to take part in this study. They represent a sample of lecturers and student teachers in teacher education programmes in New Zealand. Nine of the participants were lecturers and eight were student teachers. Three participants identified themselves as Maori, one identified as Pasifika, one as Malaysian; all the remaining participants identified themselves as Pakeha⁹. Fourteen of the 17 participants were female. The participants were aged between 20 and 60 years.

⁹ Pākehā is a Māori term for New Zealanders of predominantly European heritage.

The initial contact with participants was made by telephone. During this conversation, the purpose of the research and the nature of the participant's involvement in the research were outlined. With an initial consent given over the phone, an appointment was made where the prospective participant and researcher met to discuss the research project more specifically and in relation to the Participant Information Sheet (see Appendix 3). Discussion included the expectations of the participant, the confidentiality and anonymity of the participant's contribution, the processes for checking the stories, and receiving a copy of a report of the thesis at the conclusion of the research. Prior to the interview commencing, written informed consent was obtained from each participant (see Appendix 4).

During the audio taping of the interview, it was agreed that the participants might use the identifying names of others in their stories. These names were removed from the transcript and pseudonyms applied. When the stories were returned to the participants for checking, the list of pseudonyms was attached for the participant's review.

The participants were asked to review the information, delete or amend any parts of the data, and to return a signed copy of their stories in the stamped addressed envelope that was provided (see Appendix 2). Only minor edits were made by a few participants. These edits mostly related to the chronology of an event or the grammatical tenses that were used within a story.

The computer files of the digital data, transcripts, stories, the list of pseudonyms and all correspondence with the participants were password protected. The signed consent forms and transcripts were known only to me and to my supervisors. The audiotapes and transcripts were stored in a locked cabinet.

Gathering the stories in conversation

The purpose of a phenomenological interview is to gather thick descriptions of everyday experiences, in this case, experiences of the teacher-student relationship (Benner, 1994; van Manen, 1990). Each participant in this study was interviewed in a one-off conversation at a location that was determined by the participant. Several chose their offices, most chose their homes, and two chose a café. The interview lasted between 45 and 90 minutes. After reviewing the transcript for each interview, it seemed

unnecessary to return for a second interview. The detail and the clarity of the data seemed sufficient.

I began the interview by drawing attention to the phenomenon in question; the teacher-student relationship within the context of teacher education. In addition, I outlined the way the participant's contribution would be considered, their involvement in sharing experiences and reviewing their stories, and the way their stories would contribute to the understandings gained about the phenomenon. Invariably, we discussed our respective educational and vocational paths. It was very apparent that the participants were keenly interested in sharing their experiences of the teacher-student relationship. During this time, I was very specific about my need to gather descriptive stories of actual experiences of the teacher-student relationship.

The participants were asked open-ended questions that would enable a description of "particular" stories focusing on the teacher-student relationship (see Appendix 5). More specifically, the opening question for teachers was, "Can you tell me about how you relate to students; can you give me some examples?" At times, this question drew a lot of theorising from the teacher about the importance, or otherwise, of the teacher-student relationship with little description of actual experiences. The question was useful in opening the conversation. The second question was, "Tell me about a time when you felt you really made a difference to a student's learning experiences". This question was particularly close to the overarching research question: "What is the meaning of the teacher-student relationship?" The final question for teachers was, "Tell me about a time when you found it difficult to relate to a student". The participants were encouraged to offer several stories in response to the second and third questions.

When I was interviewing student-teachers, the first interview question I asked was, "Tell me about a really good teacher you have had". I wanted to start the interview with a story about a positive experience as a way of settling into the conversation with the participant. This question was not difficult, although one participant had to think for a while, commenting on how few good teachers exist in teacher education. The second question was, "Tell me about a relationship with a teacher that seemed to influence your learning, for better or worse". The final question for the student-teachers was, "Tell me about a time when you found it difficult to relate to a teacher". These questions were integrated into the flow of conversation.

I set out to develop a conversational relation with those being interviewed and focused my attention on the description of the participant's stories (van Manen, 1990). I saw my role as two-fold; firstly, to be *in* the conversation with the participant as they re-gathered past events and re-told particular stories, and secondly, to ensure that the description in the story was as full or as detailed as possible (van Manen, 2002).

In most cases the interview quickly became a conversation that appeared to have a "life" of its own (Gadamer, 1994). The participants appeared to be keen to tell their stories, quickly losing awareness of the tape recorder in the process (Giddings & Wood, 2001). The audio taping allowed me to immerse myself in the stories of the participants and remain open to the opportunity of contributing a comment or a probe. What mattered in each conversation was the openness of each person to the conversation, and the recognition that each participant's conversation was "uniquely itself" (Smythe et al., 2008, pp. 9-10). These unique conversations often ended by lapsing into silence; contemplative moments that had a sense of fulfillment (Bollnow, 1982). Following the interview, I recorded some thoughts in my journal in relation to the experience of the interview and details that particularly caught my attention. Sometimes this was particular expressions or the general mood of the conversation.

Each interview was transcribed as a handwritten text. This was my way of returning to the conversation and staying near the experience. With one hand on the tape recorder and a pen in hand, I relived the experiences for a second time. This process seemed to have greater benefit than my single attempt at transcribing directly on to a computer. My handwritten notes were subsequently typed. During the hearing, writing, and reading process of transcription, I began identifying and marking parts of the text that particularly related to the teacher-student relationship. Frequently used expressions, such as *connected*, *open*, *between*, and *allowed to speak*, were noted as being a part of the language of a number of the participants.

Once each transcript was completed I followed a process similar to that described by Caelli (2001). I began by reading the typed transcript alongside the handwritten transcript that contained notes and highlighted words. During this reading, the parts of the transcript that described the teacher-student relationship were identified and marked. Using the participant's words, I then reconstructed or crafted stories in a chronological

and/or logical order. The words and meanings that described the experience were kept, while additional and superfluous words were deleted. The goal was to stay close to the experience. Appendix 6 is one example of an excerpt from a transcript that was crafted into a story and then sent to my supervisors for their review. Because the entire text is the story, there are no speech marks.

Each transcript contained several stories, and to aid identification I gave each story a title. Some of these titles related to the theme of the story and, on other occasions, the central figure was named. A list of story titles for two participants can be seen in Appendix 7. Each participant was then sent their set of stories for their verification, clarification, addition or, if necessary, deletion. When the participants had reviewed and returned the stories, phenomenological interpretation began in earnest.

Gathering sufficient stories

Having interviewed seventeen participants, gathered and crafted one hundred and nineteen stories of the teacher-student relationship, and completed a description and several interpretations for every story, I believed I had enough data. I was satisfied that new stories were largely re-telling an essence, or essential meaning, that was previously expressed in an interpretation. At this point, the gathering of stories was suspended so that I could move to a deeper interpretative appreciation of the stories in relation to the phenomenon under inquiry.

Working with the stories

After familiarising myself with a set of stories and with the approval of the participants, I worked hermeneutically in search of essential meanings of the teacher-student relationship, the phenomenon under inquiry (Caelli, 2001). In some cases, I started this process by listening to the interview tape again but on most occasions I re-read the transcript and my notes.

I then wrote a description for each of the participants' stories. This was typically no more than a paragraph. An example of two descriptive statements can be found in Appendix 8. Once the description was completed, each story was considered interpretively.

Working the text: Initial interpretive writing

This part of the hermeneutic process of analysis began with the following questions: What was the story about? What was the story telling me about the teacher-student relationship? After reviewing my notes for a story and considering the questions above, I was immersed in thinking about the story while typing about its meanings. I found that it was in the process of writing that meanings emerged. During these times, I would also notice the re-emergence of my theoretical pre-understandings of good relational practice. On one occasion, I became interested in the use, or otherwise, of people's names because this gave an indication of the nature of the relating. I held the position from my previous studies in educational psychology that the use of names was critical to establishing and maintaining a positive affective and relational climate. I noticed that on some occasions that name of the teacher or student was not easily recalled. I began to wonder if people lose the names of those involved in a relationship that was of concern to them. Upon further consideration my thinking changed. There was insufficient data to support this idea and neither were these emerging ideas ontologically oriented, this being the nature of a phenomenological quest.

Similarly I found it less constructive to make extensive notes that might structure a possible interpretation. I needed to resist the temptation to categorise, in favour of creatively writing in a way that might help the hidden meanings to be revealed from the text. Interpretations were re-constructed as I became increasingly attuned to other possible interpretations. I found it necessary to dwell with the interpretation of a particular story through several drafts before moving on to the next story. This meant that most stories were hermeneutically worked for an extended period of time. An example of a story, its description and initial interpretation can be found in Appendix 9. It is important to note that at this point the interpretations did not draw upon the philosophical literature, and only occasionally drew upon the writings of Palmer and Buber.

The next step in my hermeneutic process was to re-read the entire set of stories and interpretations for a participant and consider what the set of stories contributed to my understanding of the teacher-student relationship. During the re-reading, warm and cool spots (Peshkin, 1988) were experienced. These were moments that helped me recognise a pre-understanding and the way it positively or negatively influenced my interpretations. This process was completed as a writing activity that involved the

writing-reading-re-writing-re-reading of a written statement that I referred to as the notions across the stories. The notions stand out as a fluid idea that appeared to be showing essential meanings of the phenomenon under inquiry (Spence, 2004). Two examples of the notions for a particular participant can be found in Appendix 10. Sometimes the written statement describing the notions within a participant's stories was constructed as a poem. An example of a poem that captures the essential notions of the teacher-student relationship for one particular participant can be found in Appendix 11.

It was critically important that I remained open to contemplatively think about the meanings within the stories. Heidegger (1996) suggests that interpretive writing allows thoughts to find us. At times, this involved suspending the writing and finding silent spaces to contemplatively and imaginatively *be* with the data. This was most often achieved while fishing or driving. It seemed that in the process of these activities, I moved into an openness of thinking about the underlying meanings that was fresh and original. For van Manen (1990), hermeneutically interpreting the meaning of a text or a lived experience is “more accurately a process of insightful invention, discovery or disclosure-grasping and formulating a thematic understanding is not a rule-bound process but a free act of ‘seeing’ meaning” (p. 79). Importantly, suspending my writing for contemplative opportunities lessened my tendency to make simplistic deductions or inferences for ideas that emerge.

When all the stories of a participant had been hermeneutically interpreted to this level, the entire set of stories and their interpretations became the basis of dialogue with my supervisors prior to commencing the process again with the next participant. During this time, the quality of the interpretive writing was discussed, interpretations were challenged, and my “cool and warm spots” or prejudices became a matter of debate. An example of such a spot has been my tendency to more readily apportion blame to the teacher in the event that the teacher-student relationship was a matter of concern. I believed the teacher to be responsible for the overall quality of the teaching-learning experience and this included the nature of the teacher-student relationship. In dialogue, and as a consequence of re-reading some of the stories, I appreciated more fully the way students actively influence the teacher-student relationship. In so doing, I came to understand how students “move” the relationship and influence the teacher's way-of-being.

In a similar way, some of my interpretations seemed to oversimplify the realities of the teaching-learning experience. Concerned for the teacher-student relationship, and apportioning greater responsibility on the teacher, I had overlooked the context of the experience. For some teachers, the teaching-learning context was that of a lecture theatre with over a hundred students. My challenge was to fully understand the experience being shared by the participant rather than emphasising and idealising certain practices that might demonstrate the potential value of the teacher-student relationship in these contexts. The dialogue with my supervisors was an occasion to phenomenologically affirm, or otherwise, and often these interpretations were immediately re-written. Typically, an interview and its associated interpretive writing would take place over the period of a month. This process extended the data collection and interpretation of the interviews over an eighteen month period. The sustained period of time enabled what felt like an immersion experience in and with the text.

Having reached this stage, I began engaging extensively with the philosophic literature, focusing particularly on the writings of Heidegger and Gadamer. I carried into my reading of this literature, the interpretive writing that I had completed on the stories. In this way, I was conducting an initial search for ontological understandings that could further illuminate the analysis.

Working the text: Interpretive writing towards essential meanings of the teacher-student relationship

The new layer of interpretation introduced phenomenological notions and other ideas from the literature to shed more light on the possible meaning inherent in the phenomenon. I re-read the entire set of stories, descriptions and interpretations. The purpose was to find phenomenological themes in a whole sense rather than themes relating to each participant. While re-reading the stories, I made a new set of notes which included aspects of the story that appeared to have something to say. For instance, in the case of the story in Appendix 6, my notes, comments, and questions on the story were as follows:

Mary's story about Peter: Making a difference

Peter "surprises" the teacher

Acts / behaves differently

"be's" different to teacher's everyday experiences

Student's difference in "being" is "seen" in the moment

A particular moment

Why does some relating bring the unexpected?

*Is it the “unready-to-hand” brought “present-to-hand”?
What does a student bringing the unexpected mean in terms of relating?
In terms of dialogue?
Student’s change appears to show itself in a moment
“bethinking” the teacher
surprising the teacher
Student brought out new dialogue, new voice
Teacher-student relating changes from student’s way of being?*

My thoughts captured specific text from the story as well as my own deliberations in response to what I was reading. These notes were written and collated for all the stories.

These notes were re-read again, as I identified a set of initial emerging themes across the stories that appeared to have what van Manen (1990) describes as, “phenomenological power” (p. 90). The themes revealed essential meanings of the phenomenological essence of the teacher-student relationship. van Manen (1990) notes that the “essential quality of a theme ... [is that we] ... discover aspects or qualities that make a phenomenon what it is and without which the phenomenon could not be what it is” (p. 107). In this way, a good theme “seems to touch the core of the notion we are trying to understand” (van Manen, 1990, p. 88). The essence of what has been taken for granted as self-evident and, as such, remains silent to us – just beyond words. As Smythe et al.(2008) note, the theme is not “stripped out of the data” (p. 11) but the theme is a way to “show what we see or hear in a text” (p. 11).

The initial themes identified were *embodiment*, *between*, *dialogue* and *influence*. The term *embodiment* was to suggest that relating appears to involve all of a person’s being. Relating involves beings. There is a holistic nature to the teacher’s and student’s relating. The term *between* was to suggest that relating appears to be more than the interaction of two people. The experience of relating appears to have a life of its own *with*, and in spite of, the people involved in the relating. The third term, *dialogue* tried to capture the reciprocity and flux that seemed to exist between a person’s relating and the influence of this relating on the openness of their audible dialogue. It is as if a person’s way-of-being can shape the audible contribution of another. The final term, *influence*, was to suggest that the relating between teacher and student appeared to have a continual influence on each person. It seemed as if each person was always within this influence in his or her physical presence or absence. These themes were refined and altered in due course as philosophical notions were brought to the inquiry. The

philosophical literature was read and re-read alongside the interpretive writing as this enabled a deepening ontological appreciation of the themes in relation to the phenomenon.

Having identified the initial themes, the stories were again re-read with a view to identifying the stories that might best show each of these themes. During this reading, I noted aspects of the stories that did not seem to be captured by the initial themes. This included terms and phrases such as *mood*, *moment*, *open*, *felt*, *respect*, *silencing*, *face*, *eyes*, and *care*. I reconsidered the extent to which the initial themes embraced these terms. This led to the first adjustment in the way the themes were being described.

The theme of embodiment was not developed as a separate theme. The embodiment of relating was seen as contributing to each of the other themes and, as such, was integrated into the other themes. Ontologically, I have argued, our being-in-the-world is a bodily being; that is, an embodied way-of-being. The second theme was refined to focus more centrally on the “living play” of the relating, which seems to be more ontologically robust than the language of “a between”. I felt that the expression *between* tended to take the meaning of relating to more of an ontic appreciation, emphasizing the teacher-student relationship as a transaction. For me, this was not the essential meaning of this theme. The essential meaning of relationship I sought to show related more to the dynamic, moment by moment, intuiting that was living and playful. Moreover, it appeared to me that the constant playfulness of relating has an uncertainty. This theme forms the basis of chapter 8, “In the play”. In so doing, this chapter draws upon Gadamer’s notion of play. The third theme was also refined after further reading of both the stories and the philosophical literature. More than the influence of audible dialogue, I felt this theme ought to be focused on the influence of each person’s entire way-of-being in relating and how this influences the voice and dialogue within the relationship. The philosophical notion of comportment is particularly pertinent to this theme and became the basis of chapter 7, “Comportment speaks”. The final theme of influence, that is, the continuous nature of relating, was also edited. The title of the theme did not capture the phenomenological essence of the always-and-already nature of relating. The Heideggerian philosophical notions of *Dasein* and *Mitsein* (being-with) captured more succinctly the essence I was attempting to articulate. This theme forms the basis of chapter 6, “Relationship exists”.

Having reshaped and refined the themes, I wrote about each of these themes as separate chapters for this thesis. In writing these chapters, I use actual stories to show an essential ontological meaning of the teacher-student relationship. Data that appeared to be peripheral to the theme, but interesting nonetheless, have become part of conference presentations and subsequent publications (Giles, 2006, 2007).

The challenges of interpretive writing

Writing towards understanding

In phenomenological research, the interpretive act occurs in the writing experience. The crafting of a phenomenological text occurs in experiences of writing which are complex, fluid, and interwoven (Diekelmann & Ironside, 1998). While some research approaches write to show understanding, the writing within phenomenological research not only shows understanding but seeks understanding. van Manen (2006) puts it this way, “one does not write primarily for being understood, one writes for having understood being” (p. 721). Critically important here is the notion that it is in the act or movement of the writing that a space is created “that belongs to the unsayable” (van Manen, 2006, p. 718). The writing is “being-in-writing”, or as Mostert (2002) puts it, “Phenomenological writing has been likened to falling forward into the darkness” (p. 4). Meanings emerge as the text and the researcher engage in a dialogue, in a continuous, creative, and hermeneutic conversation (Koch, 1999; Miller, 1996).

Similarly, phenomenological writing occurs in the tension of my lived experiences of the phenomenon and my increasing awareness of my own prejudices (Hultgren, 1992). Sustaining the phenomenological concern for contemplative thought and interpretive writing can be personally taxing. In my case, I have sustained the continuity of this research while continuing in a full-time teaching position, relocating my home several times, experiencing the deaths of my mother and sister, and changing my place of employment. Rather than distracting me from the research, I sought to look through these experiences, reflecting in my journal comments about the relating that occurs during these moments. My research experience has been lived fully as someone who is “fully” in the world.

The constraints of language

There are times when the phenomenological writing process was a real struggle, particularly when the words I used did not seem to capture the essence of the

phenomenon. Somehow the words were limiting and reduced the phenomenon to more of a rational account of the experience. After being provoked by my supervisors to use poetry to capture the essence of some of the enduring themes, the phenomenological power of this form of expression was immediately apparent. Poetry thus became an integral part of my movement towards the essence of the phenomenon. Poetry has an openness and appears better suited to crystallising essential meanings, holding them open for further hermeneutic circling and explanation (Crotty, 1998; Heidegger, 1949). Palmer (2006) suggests that getting back to poetry has the potential to both reveal and conceal the essence of our lived experiences. Indeed, van Manen (1990) suggests that the phenomenological project is a poeticising project.

Phenomenological research as a lived experience for the researcher

Research as a lived experience

Phenomenological research is itself a lived experience for the researcher (Giles, 2007). It proceeds in an embodied manner, like “a being-given-over to some quest” (van Manen, 1990, p. 31). The research process calls for the attention of the entire being (Smythe et al., 2008; van Manen, 1990). It has been suggested that phenomenological inquiry requires the researcher to “live the question”, if not become the question (Gadamer, 1994; van Manen, 1990). Summarising, van Manen (1990) states that “a phenomenological question must not only be made clear, understood, but also ‘lived’ by the researcher” (p. 44).

A particular and unexpected experience for me was those moments when I appeared to be living out my interpretive writing. This was particularly the case as I wrote the discussion chapters. I felt very attuned to my ongoing experiences of the theme at the same time I was writing about it. While writing “to measure the depth of things ... [I came] to a sense of [my] own depth” (van Manen, 1990, p. 127). Moments arose in my teaching-learning experiences, and in other informal relationships, that showed the essence very clearly to me. While writing the second data chapter on the communicative aspect of comportment, I was wrestling with some very difficult concerns within my workplace. I became mindful of the influence of how my relating appeared to influence the way I contributed audibly. Similarly I began to notice more fully, my internal and inaudible dialogue that occurred in these difficult moments.

These experiences remind me that I investigate experience as I live it, as an engaged and embodied activity (Abbey, 2000). The important point here is that the stories of the participants' lived experience are a re-gathering of their previously embodied experiences, told to a researcher in an embodied manner, while I engage with my own embodied stories. In this way, I am dynamically engaged with the text of other people's lived experiences while at the same time my historicity remains in front of me. Since I cannot come to grasp the mind of the participant nor recover the past as it was, I must stand within my own historical context, the result of which leads towards an ongoing experience of clashing and competing interpretations (Heidegger, 1996; Gadamer, 1994; Koch, 1995, 1996, 1999). In this way, my lived experience has as much to do with my own deepening attunement to the phenomenon.

Critically important to this phenomenological inquiry is my immersion in the research process. I have dwelt in the research inquiry as a lived experience (Gadamer, 1994; Heidegger, 1996). My experience appears to be similar to Schmidt's (2005) experience. He states that the research process was like "spiralling through phases of enthusiastic engagement, leading to confusion, intellectualism, letting go, contemplation, phases of knowing, not knowing and occasional insight, ... keeping him forever awake, alive and connected with what matters in life" (p. 131).

Encountering the unexpected: Students from the past re-emerging

In this research journey, I encountered a number of experiences that provoked wordless understandings of the phenomenon. One particular set of unexpected experiences was the pleasure of meeting up with three students I had taught in the past. One of these students was in my first primary school class twenty-three years previously. These meetings were unplanned and initiated by my ex-students. While these occasions revolved around the telling of stories from the past, I was reminded of the transformative influence of the teacher-student relationship. These experiences reminded me of the playful nature that unexpected relating can bring. It is as if relationships live on, playfully or not, even while our regular face-to-face interactions are not occurring. Such playfulness within our lived relating forms the basis of the third data chapter, "In the play".

Trustworthiness, representation and rigour

As a phenomenological researcher, I appreciate that my research endeavours need to be trustworthy and have rigour, meeting standards that have been set by the philosophers

of this research approach. Smythe et al.(2008) suggest that the trustworthiness of a study is known first by researchers themselves, who test out their thinking by engaging in everyday conversations with those who share the interest or who are living the phenomenon. The trustworthiness of this research project can be seen in how transparent the interpretive writing has been laid open for consideration on a regular basis with supervisors, scholars, researchers, in regular doctoral presentations, research seminars and conference presentations. Within this relational community, I have been open and responsive to the interpretive feedback of others. Not only this, but I have remained in a teaching position along side colleagues in pre-service teacher education programmes, sharing my thinking and findings for their comment.

On numerous occasions, the resonance of others during a dialogue has provided a “hallmark of trustworthiness” (Smythe et al., 2008, p.22). One particular occasion involved a visiting lecturer to the school of education where I work. I had previously interviewed this person, worked with their stories and written a poem to capture the essential meanings across their stories. I posted this poem on the wall above my desk for ongoing contemplation. Unbeknown to me, this person visited my office, read the poem, commenting on how “deep” the poem was, and how much it resembled their own thinking about the teacher-student relationship. Resonance – yes! Resonating “with our sense of lived life ... [as] a good phenomenological description is collected by lived experience and recollects lived experience – is validated by lived experience and it validates lived experience” (van Manen, 1990, p. 27). The “phenomenological nod” can show the trustworthiness of this research. When my interpretive writing clearly speaks to the essential meanings of the phenomenon, others confirm this through a phenomenological nod. The nod occurs when the “essence ... of an experience has been adequately described in language, if the description reawakens or shows us the lived quality and significance in a fuller or deeper manner” (van Manen, 1990, p. 10). The phenomenological nod confirms for me that I have been writing in a way that suggests I am approaching understandings that are shared by others. This is not to suggest that the final word has been spoken about the essence of the teacher-student relationship.

In addition, the reader is able to “audit the events, influences and actions of the researcher” (Koch, 1996, p. 178). The trail of decisions, and the decision making process has been the basis of this chapter. Decisions have been outlined and argued

with exemplars of working documents included in the appendices as a way of assisting the review of my practice as a phenomenological researcher.

This research has also shown rigour in its meticulous paper trail, organised and accountable electronic storage, sustained attention given to the phenomenon, and an increasingly transparent and interpretive phenomenological approach. I appreciate that “in the end, as in all phenomenologies, it must be left to the thoughtful reader to decide on the accuracy of the phenomenological description” (Schmidt, 2006, p. 66).

Concluding comments

This chapter outlines the process of this particular phenomenological inquiry. The process is unique to me in terms of how the path of the research evolved, and how I found a way of being-in the research that opened the phenomenon for hermeneutic consideration. The research process was not laid out prior to the commencement of the research. Instead the movement of the research occurred as I turned to the phenomenon of the teacher-student relationship, in my own stories, in the participant’s stories, and in the hermeneutically interpretations. In this way the interpretive writing process moved from descriptions and interpretations of each participant’s stories to deepening interpretations that drew upon ontological notions from the philosophical writings of Heidegger and Gadamer. This movement in writing has occurred as I have become attuned to the movement of the essential meanings of the phenomenon under inquiry.

Critically important to the outcome of this research has been my ability to remain sensitive to the influence of my own prejudices as these were found in the interpretive writing. The dialogue with supervisors and the wider research community has been essential to the ongoing phenomenological nod. Similarly, the rigour of the scholarship of hermeneutic interpretation has called into question the adequacy of language at times. This research utilised poetry as a way of holding meanings open while in formation.

In this research, phenomenologically powerful themes emerged. These themes were shaped and re-shaped in the writing-reading-rewriting-rereading interpretive process. The themes that form the basis of the next three chapters provide a deeper appreciation of the ontological nature of the teacher-student relationship. These themes relate to the always-already nature of relating, the basis of chapter 6; the influence of a person’s

way-of-being as this comports to others, the basis of chapter 7; and the playful life of relating, which is the basis of chapter 8.

Chapter 6: Always in relationship

This thesis has considered literature regarding the context of education and the phenomenon of this inquiry, the teacher-student relationship. In addition, the philosophical foundations and method provide an understanding of the research journey. The next three chapters are data chapters that consider different essential understandings of this phenomenon.

Humans relate and indeed, to be human is to relate. Moreover, humans are always in relationship. There is a relational connection between people that is essential to our shared humanity (Heidegger, 1996). In this way, “Dasein has its being as being-with-others” (Collins & Selina, 2006, p. 63). Heidegger (1996) refers to the primordial existence of Dasein’s “being-with-others” as *Mitda-sein* (p. 107). *Mitda-sein* refers to an almost subliminal connection between people. The ontological nature of being-in-the-world is as “being-together-in-the-world”; alternatively, “the world is always already the one I share with others” (Heidegger, 1996, p. 118). For Nancy (2000), all of being is in touch with all of being. As such, existence is a co-existence; the essence of being is only as co essence (Nancy, 2000). “Being cannot be anything but being-with-one-another, circulating with the ‘with’ and as the ‘with’ of this singularly plural coexistence” (Nancy, 2000, p. 3). Heidegger (1996) suggests that humans are always in an in-flux relational connectedness. While human beings have some influence as to the “nature” of the relating, *we* is integral to being human.

Relating as beings-together-in-the-world, we show our care for others as an “existential” of our living (Young, 1998, p. 59). Such care is an essential structure of life and “embodies Dasein” (Inwood, 1997, p. 52). Similarly, care is being “already-in, plus being amidst, plus being ahead” and primordial to our everydayness (Young, 1998, p. 59). Dasein’s being-in-the-world as “care” involves an orientation or relation to others. One expression of care is solicitude which is the care for other people (Inwood, 1997). It should be noted however that solicitude is not necessarily directed towards the best interests of others and may be shown, for example, as neglect.

The teacher-student relationship is a particular relationship that is experienced ontologically between a teacher and student as *Mitda-sein*. In this chapter, I propose

that the ontological nature of teachers' and students' relationships is taken for granted. It would appear that predominant educational discourses perpetuate an individualism of the educational endeavour devoid of the ontological givenness of being-with.

The primordial nature of our being-with-others is shown in the phenomenon of relating. Similarly, the relational nature of being-with others is experienced as *mattering* to those involved. Mattering is essential to how we are being-with-others relationally (Elliot, Kao & Grant, 2004; Rayle, 2006). Rosenberg (1985) describes the phenomenological experience of mattering to others as sensing that we are noticed by and are important to others. Humans sense the interest of others and the valuing of the relational experience (Corbiere & Amundson, 2007). In this way, mattering involves an emotional pull within and between those relating (Hargreaves, 2001). Levinas (1969) would associate the emotional pull of mattering with the inability of the authentic self to do enough for the other. The authentic self seeks to fulfill the responsibility that is felt for the other (Alford, 2007). In this way, the mattering of others is charged with an ethical demand (Joldersma, 2006; Levinas, 1985, 1996; Marcus, 2007). For Levinas (1969), the mattering of others awakens our primordial responsibility for the being-with-another. Relationships always matter. Yet, the nature of the mattering differs in every situation. The nature of the mattering is profoundly important to the relational experience (Elliot et al., 2004; Rayle, 2006).

Teachers and students are always in relationship. The world is made up of a multiplicity of relationships that link us to other people in their presence or absence. The interpersonal mattering is specific to the teacher and student (Dixon, 2007). How this relationship matters to the teacher and student inheres in the experiences of being-in relationship. "Teachers can enthuse their students or bore them, be approachable or stand-offish" (Hargreaves, 2001, p. 1057). As such, all teaching is inextricably emotional and shows the nature of the mattering (Hargreaves, 2001).

In some moments, the relationship between the teacher and student is recognised as mattering, while in other moments the relationship might appear to be one of indifference to one person. Still further, there are other occasions when the teacher-student relationship might not appear to matter to either person. The ways that the always-already, *Mitda-sein* relationship matters in the teacher-student relationship is the central focus of this chapter.

When relationship matters

When the teacher-student relationship matters, the teacher's and student's relational experience is engaged, connected and respectful of the other. This aspect of the phenomenon is revealed in stories that show teachers who "feel for" their students after a difficult lesson or in a moment where the students are personally distressed. In other stories, the mattering of relationship is shown in the face-to-face encounters with another person. Still other stories show that what matters in relationship can be minor actions of remembering details from a conversation to the singling out of a teacher. While variously experienced, the relationship matters.

The following story is recalled by a teacher whose relationships with students matter. The story describes two very different experiences between the teacher and students across consecutive classes. The teacher's concern for the students is revealed as follows:

About 3 weeks ago on the second last day before the semester break, out of the blue one student said, "We really enjoy your classes". It was funny that on that day I was teaching beyond the finish time of 4 pm but it didn't feel like it.

The next day I had the same class on the last day of term. I had a lot to teach. I was feeling pressurised. They did not seem interested. I said, "Now look here, I've got things I've got to finish". They were a bit uptight. After a while, I drew them into a discussion. I carried on and taught to 4 pm. I dragged on to 4 pm. In spite of this, they still said, have a good break.

When I left the class, I looked around the campus and there was no one around. I should have just said I know there are times when I can trust you to go home and look through these readings. I should have just accepted that this was the last day, accommodate that, and say, I trust you. I was very troubled and went and shared this with a colleague. I went home and went out for dinner. Throughout the whole dinner I was thinking about this class. It spoiled my holiday. (I8:S10)

In this story the teacher-student relationship matters to everyone. The students show their care through their informal comments to the teacher about the course and in their farewells prior to the vacation (Rayle, 2006). This teacher mattered to the students before, during and beyond the classroom experiences.

The teacher reveals a different kind of mattering. The teacher recalls feeling pressured by time and the tasks to complete in the lesson. Concerned by the movement and pace

of the lesson, the teacher works to keep the students on-task. Previously absorbed in the need to complete tasks in the hope that students would take in the information provided, the teacher later recalls the nature of the relational experience with the students. The teacher is so focused on ensuring the students receive the content they need, that she overlooks their more human needs, to get away for a holiday. What mattered initially then for this teacher was different to what mattered for the students.

This lesson was about the completion of the tasks. This was not a lesson where the teacher's relating would "let the students learn" (Heidegger, 1968). As the teacher reflects on the lesson, she is concerned that she prioritised the completion of the tasks when she should have recognised the implications of the vacation. On this occasion, the teacher senses a conflict about what matters most. In some ways, these students had already left the learning experience disengaged from relating with the teacher.

As the students departed with their farewells, the students remind the teacher of their relationship and how the teacher mattered in the relationship (Frymier & Houser, 2000; Rayle, 2006). Similarly, as the teacher notices the absence of other people on campus, the teacher is reminded again of her way of being-with the students in the lesson, that is, "her mattering" of the teacher-student relationship. The teacher's concern for the students continues to matter as the events of the lesson are shared with a colleague and is then carried into an evening meal, a holiday, and beyond. The relational experience of being-with these students is not over for the teacher. It affects the teacher's professional and personal life (Rayle, 2006). She remains attuned to the students through an ongoing conversation within herself and with others. She pictures the students and their expressions as she seeks answers to how she related to the students in this particular lesson (Alford, 2007). Lessons do not end with the clock times. They live on in the teacher's and student's historicity as endless and open to further understanding (Gadamer, 1994; Rayle, 2006). The teacher's concern reveals what matters as the lesson unfolds. The relationship is privileged over concerns about content in the reflective mood that stays with her.

In the following story, a student recalls a teacher who expresses her concern about the possible impact of the topic of a lesson on her students.

I remember one class was on the prevention of child abuse. The first thing this teacher did was to give a very heartfelt and personal speech

apologising in advance if someone in the room may have had a personal history of child abuse and if any information that she was going to share was going to bring up hurtful memories. I just thought, she's actually thinking about the people she's lecturing to. She's not just giving a lecture and imparting information. It's actually at a human level. That was one of our first lectures with her. I just thought, "Wow". (I13: S2)

Prior to the start of a particular lesson, a teacher shares her concern in relation to the topic ensuring that the environment is safe for her students (Frymier & Houser, 2000). The topic might challenge some students personally, and her concern anticipates how the students might respond to this information.

The teacher arrives in a conversational relation that started in the student's absence and opens this conversation with the student (van Manen, 1990). The teacher's concern for the student is evident at the start of the lesson and the student becomes aware of the teacher's prior thinking and concern (Rayle, 2006). Importantly, the teacher's care was for the student's benefit and shown as a sensitivity to the student's prior and lived experiences of the topic (Young, 2003).

The teacher is concerned about the person, the fellow human being, with whom she experiences this particular course. This concern is broader than an academic consideration and takes into account the student's whole being. This holistic concern is that of a genuine educator (Buber, 2002; Heidegger, 1968). Buber (2002) writes that, "for the genuine educator ... concern is always the person as a whole, both in the actuality in which he lives before you now and in his possibilities, what he can become" (p. 123). While the content of the lesson is important, the teacher's added concern is the student as a person in this class.

When the teacher-student relationship matters to both teachers and students, they show a caring concern that connects them relationally. This story shows such solicitude from the teacher towards the student's best interests. The teacher shows that she has been thinking about the students in the forthcoming lesson, having a sense of responsibility for their way of being-with the other (Levinas, 1969). This student could sense that the teacher was interested in them and their relational experience (Corbiere & Amundson, 2007). This student felt that their relationship mattered to this teacher such was the care experienced (Wessler, 2003).

In the following story, a student approaches a teacher to withdraw from their academic study but the teacher's "care-full" concern engages the student in an unexpected dialogue. The story is as follows:

I remember a girl who came to me and said she was going to pull out of her course. I said, "Why's that? What's going to be different when you come back next year?" She said, "Well, I will have solved my problems". I said to her, "Do your parents have problems?" And this kind of stunned look came over her face and she said, "Yes". I said, "Have you got grandparents alive?" "Yes". "Do they have problems?" "Yes" she said. So I said, "What's going to be different next year?" I said, "When I've got problems, what I do is go to the Health & Counselling service; that always makes a difference". We looked up her records. She had about 4 or 5 assignments to complete. She lightened up. I said, "So next time you have a problem, what are you going to do?" "I'll go to counselling". I said "What else?" "Who are you going to ring?" "I'm going to ring you". "And what are you going to do if there's a problem", "I'm going to ring you and leave a message on your phone". (114: S1)

Students withdraw from their studies for a variety of reasons. The process typically involves a conversation with an academic staff member and formal resolution of the decision. This student expected and sought such an outcome yet, in conversation with a teacher who cares, is concerned, and is prepared to listen, she decides to stay and try a different strategy. Both the teacher and student want change, but the focus of the change is different for each person. For the student, it is the relief from the pressure of academic study; for the teacher, it is the student's awareness that the experiencing of problems is not unique to the student but rather a certainty of being human. While each person comes to the face-to-face conversation, they share a common concern that the present circumstances for the student need to change.

This teacher felt for the student. While the student was not seeking anything other than the resolution of her decision, the teacher's way of being-with the student reveals what matters. The teacher's "concern-full" responsibility is noticeably awakened and opened in conversation (Levinas, 1985). It is as if the teacher is drawn into relating with this student, pulled by the presence of a particular need for assistance. Levinas suggests that this emotional pull shows an authentic self seeking to do more for a person, as we are claimed by the face we are towards (Alford, 2007).

The teacher empathises with the student's pressures and problems as part of everyday life. She moves beyond her formal role and personally shares her approach to working through her issue with others who can help (Frymier & Houser, 2000; Rayle, 2006).

Taking the initiative in the conversation, the teacher shows her personal interest in the student as a person and as an individual (Marzano & Marzano, 2003; Wessler, 2003). The teacher's care is personalised to this particular student.

The teacher's concern is for the person who is carrying these pressures and unresolved problems. The teacher related to the student, a fellow being-in-the-world. In this way, the teacher showed her care for the student, a care and concern that were *towards*, and *for*, the benefit of the student (Young, 2003). The teacher's care was authentic and focused on the person beyond the student with an academic concern; a care that was in, amidst, and ahead of the present moment (Young, 1998).

This student's *stand* as a fellow being-in-the-world was important to this teacher. Indeed, Heidegger (1996) states that humanity shares an existential that lives out a particular stand as the "thrownness" of the human condition. Such a stand remains in flux relationally and moment by moment, calling for *how* we are being (Heidegger, 1996). In this stand, a person's way of being also reveals what matters as *attunement* and *comportment*, ideas that are the central focus of the next chapter. An appreciation of another's stand is not necessarily overt or a rational appraisal, but more often a way of being-together-with another in the world. Not only are this teacher and student alike in that their living involves a dynamic stand in the world, but each encounters the other's particular stand in the world in a moment they share together. In this moment the teacher's care for the student as a fellow human being reveals that they matter.

Experiences are often influenced by what might be seen by some as minor, perhaps trivial issues, yet these experiences matter. In this story, a teacher phones a student to communicate an assessment result the student had been waiting to receive.

It was quite close to Christmas and one of my assignments hadn't come back. I'd been waiting for quite a long time and the teacher phoned me at home. Carmen, I'm ringing you because I've just moderated your assignment and I can see that you've been waiting a long time. She told me what the mark was and she said it's got to go through college now and be recorded. But she said I just wanted to let you know that I've moderated your assignment and you've got this mark and you've done really well, good on you. No other teacher had ever done that. I thought that was really lovely thing for her to do. (113: S6)

Even in the "lesser" moments of our everyday relating, our being-in-relationship matters. The teacher in this story knows that the student is waiting for an assessment

result and takes the time to communicate this result to the student. The phone call also communicates the teacher's concern. This personal interest is heard and felt by the student (Marzano et al., 2003).

Everyday situations point to what matters in the moment. It mattered to this teacher that the student had not had her result. It mattered differently to the student as the student concerned herself with the message of respect and interest that teacher had personally shown in action. Even seemingly minor events of our everyday worlds matter. In this way, mattering is integral to our being-together-with another in the world. Mattering reveals how we are being-with another.

When a student realises that a teacher has remembered a prior conversation, students know they matter.

I remember having a nice discussion with Nadia about one of my children who has special needs. She remembered that the next time I spoke to her. She remembered something that I said in a prior conversation. She took it in (I13: S9)

In this story, there is reciprocity of mattering one to another (Rosenberg, 1985). While relating in conversation, the teacher makes a connection with the past and in so doing, provides the student with an important connection in the present. Each person notices the other and is drawn further into a relationship. The teacher's and student's experience of this relationship accumulates as it is lived. The relationship carries historicity within shared humanity. This teacher and student are part of each other's ongoing being-in-the-world (Nancy, 2000).

On one hand, this is a simple moment of recalling a previous conversation. On the other hand, the teacher connects with the student in a very meaningful way (Hoffman & Levak, 2003). In this moment, the student is a "particular" person, mattering to the teacher as an individual (Wessler, 2003). In this seemingly small act of remembering a teacher reveals to a student that they matter as a person, a fellow being-in-the-world.

In the final story of this section, "When relationships matter", a teacher recalls relating with a student who had learnt that she was not about to graduate:

This morning I was at the ceremony for the class of 2004. But what was special about the occasion was Janice. I could share her pain and her discomfort. She came brimming with tears, coming to share her story. It was so special. I could see her across the other side of the room and I

could see that she was coming over to me. As she was walking over to me, her tears were just filling up. Part of Janice's tears was that she had learnt that she hadn't passed the course. That's why she was very emotional. It wasn't an easy thing to articulate. In that moment, something happens and you feel a sense of connectedness. (I3: S2)

When this student finds circumstances overwhelming, she singles out a particular teacher. This student in this story had failed an academic course and amongst the many student-teacher relationships, a particular teacher-student relationship *mattered* to this student.

The teacher's arrival is noticed by the student. Moreover, the teacher's arrival matters to this student as someone to whom she might relate in this situation. The student moves to be-with a teacher with whom they felt connected. Very soon they would be engaged in conversation.

The student's actions change the way this teacher behaves at this celebration. Rather than enjoying final farewells with graduating students, this teacher spends time with a student who matters more than the celebration. Drawn by the urgency of the student's immediate need, the teacher enables a student to open her pain of not graduating. Singled out, the teacher connects with the student within a traumatic experience as the teacher gives herself over to the student (Alford, 2007). Over and above the celebrations, the teacher is found caring for, and being-with, a student in need of care. The teacher is fully present. Where the teacher-student relationship matters to both, a connected and reciprocal relating is experienced.

The stories in this section open the notion that the teacher-student relationship matters, albeit in different ways. The everydayness of our being-together-in-the-world is laden with mattering that is felt and heard in relationship. The mattering can be shown by an individual's conversation, in the reciprocity of a relational conversation, and in the stand people make with each other in relationship.

The teacher-student relationship rests in the backdrop of teaching and learning. While the relationship can matter more noticeably and is an influence on teaching and learning, the relationship is typically taken for granted in an educational process whose primary focus is on the intentional process of teaching and learning. On occasions, teachers and students pause to savour the nature of their relating, remembering moments

when “others” they have been with in particular moments spring to mind. Similarly, when teachers pause, or are provoked, to consider recent teaching experiences with a group of students, they can find themselves lamenting the way they worked with the students. Their concern can include the way they related to the students. In hindsight, teachers who have had an impact are remembered and appreciated.

*When our “between” matters to you, you show it
You seem to ignore the label of my role,
seeing me as a person, a fellow being.
As you do, I notice our “like-ness”, not our difference,
We are of the same kind,
like-with beings together in the world.*

(D Giles, 11/07/2007)

When the relationship is a matter of indifference

When students sense indifference from the teacher, this matters to the student.

I did have one teacher who worked in a totally different way. The teacher didn't seem as into it and onto it as my other lecturers were. It always seemed a bit too laid back. I did tend to get high marks, but I never really knew necessarily if I was on the right track or anything like that because things were very vague. She was very friendly, very welcoming and she was a lovely person but it never went beyond that. Some days, she might be late to arrive. I can remember her not turning up at all once. (I16: S5)

The teacher's way of relating with the students in this story creates confusion for this student. The student wonders about the authenticity of the teacher's initial welcome. When the teacher seems “too laid back”, the student “never really” knows if she is on the right track. The teacher's pattern of relating was vague and indecisive. The student is together with the teacher in the same space but not really engaged and connected. The teacher and her way of relating are of concern to the student. The attention the student gives to noticing the teacher-student relationship influences the learning experiences for the student.

Young (2003) suggests that our care “depends on the character we give to the happenings which is our lives” (p. 59). This teacher's actions were noticed by the character of the care that they communicated. The student felt that the message from the teacher changed from openness to indifference, demonstrating an inconsistent way

of being-with the students. Had the teacher been turned towards the student, expressing openness towards the student, the student might not have been so tentative and reserved about the openness of their relating (Buber, 1996; Young, 1998). In the interim, the student wonders what is mattering for this teacher. The teacher's late arrivals to class and not turning up on occasions suggests that, on many occasions, the relationship with the students does not matter.

Perhaps what mattered was that this teacher was different to the student. In this way, what appeared to be indifference from the teacher might have manifested itself when the teacher was more focused on concerns outside the classroom. It is the sustained indifference of this teacher that is a matter of serious concern and a lack of care for this student. Contrary to feeling a sense of responsibility in the face of the student, the teacher seems to masquerade in the role of teacher (Levinas, 1985). Indeed the teacher's unexplained absence from class heightens the student's awareness of the lack within the relationship. In this story, the teacher's way-of-being in the teacher-student relationship matters, and needs addressing before the student can fully presence themselves in relational experiences with this teacher.

The relationship appears to be a matter of indifference. Perhaps, something beyond the learning is of greater concern than the students and their learning. Experiences like this can engender a lack of safety in the relationship such that the individual wonders about their place with the other person. If the relationship matters to the students, there are occasions when students become distracted from the learning experiences and focus more fully on the way the teacher is relating and why this might be so. Student teachers appear to be less forgiving of lecturers who relate in this way. There is an expectation that those teaching in pre-service teacher education programmes are exemplars of best practice. As such, the thought that a student teacher's preparation as a beginning teacher is anything other than a primary concern to the lecturer is not acceptable to student teachers. Recent ideological trends have led to lecturers teaching larger classes, focusing on research outputs, and feeling pressured to upgrade their qualifications. This raises the possibility that some lecturers lessen their priority of their relationship with students.

*When our "between" is indifferent to you, you show it
Who am I to you?
Why will you not sustain your attention on me?
I wonder about my place and the safety of our space
for the time being,
I must be attentive to messages beyond indifference.*

(D Giles, 11/07/2007)

When the relationship does not appear to matter

There are occasions when the teacher-student relationship does not appear to matter. In these situations, there seems to be a lack of care and an attempt to subordinate the other.

The teacher in the next story appears to be such a teacher:

My maths teacher was very abrupt and thought that his way was right - the only way. He came in and said this is what you have got to be able to do. If you can't do this, then you are going to fail. Later in this class he said, don't you ever let me see you doing maths that way in my classroom. This is how you do it. You wouldn't even try and attempt it. Arrrrggghhhh!

He got worse. He actually yelled at some people and I was thinking, am I like back in school? He would totally humiliate people. A couple of people challenged him because he was so rude. He would never back down or apologise and say sorry. He would just get really blown up about it. It was disgusting. It was crazy. It was like school. He was yelling at us. And I thought, hello, we're adults. I still don't know why he was yelling at us.

It was horrible. I was thinking, how can this guy be in this institution? Who's let him in? He wasn't there for us in any way. He didn't care about us at all. Some classes we had were in the morning, what a bad way to start the day. Actually a couple of times, we showed up and he didn't. (I4: S6)

The student in this story experiences a teacher who appears to care little about their relationship. What matters to this teacher is his own importance, his own agenda, and his control over the class. This is not a safe environment for students (Wessler, 2003). The student questions the teacher's way of relating, inaudibly shouting her embodied frustration. Why must this teacher be this way? Why must the experience of relating with this teacher be so difficult? The student's response to the teacher reveals how the teacher was mattering.

The character of the teacher's care could be described as negligence (Heidegger, 1996). This teacher's doing reveals the focus of their care as something other than the student. The primary focus of the teacher's care was their own activity without regard for how they were relating. The absence of care is most noticeable when vulnerable students needed help; there was no intention to provide this assistance.

While the teacher was in the presence of the student, the teacher was not there for the student. Their relationship with the students did not matter to this teacher. The teacher was with the student but this was not a being-with that was in the interests of the student's "becoming" as a person or as a future classroom teacher. This teacher was not open to the student's being or their voice (Elliott et al., 2004). Such a negligent and inauthentic care extends a conditional acceptance of the student upon their acceptance of the teacher's information in the course (Young, 1998). Other teachers act toward the student's releasement in learning and "resist the pull to be the teller of information" (Hultgren, 1992, p. 237). This teacher did not teach in a way that would let students learn, rather the teacher bullied and humiliated the students towards compliance. The student seemed to have little or no ability to defend themselves (Whitted et al., 2008) and in the absence of a meaningful and reciprocal relationship this student loses hope in the relationship (Rayle, 2006).

The student is also concerned with the teacher's right to be-with the students at all. After all, this was a teacher education programme and staffed by experienced teachers whose way of being as a teacher with students should be exemplary. The student expected to experience the teacher's concern-full care. Similarly, the teacher's manner of having the students accept his information meant that the student felt distant from the teacher and somewhat "lost" in an experience where the meaning and "way" was difficult to fathom. Young (2003) suggests that "human beings are so constituted that they begin to feel extremely uncomfortable if they find themselves more than a little distance from social norms" (p. 112). This was the case for this student.

This teacher is *with* the student but not *for* the student; *present* in the teacher-student space but not *towards* the student (Buber, 1996). The teacher's way of relating was less of a being-to-being relating and more of an objectified I-it relating (Buber, 1996). Buber (1996) describes I-it relationships as occurring when one person in the relationship is considered by the other as an object. This type of relationship can be

seen in the way the teacher holds the student in the role of *student* and does not welcome any appearance of the student “as a person, as an individual”. Morgaine (1992) suggests that teachers should “gradually ... see ... students as individuals as well as future teachers” (p. 187). In contrast, the student in this story is seen as an object, dependent upon the teacher’s actions for success in the learning experiences.

The teacher, furthermore, does not appear concerned about the relational space. Hultgren (1992) suggests that “the response-ability that we have as teacher educators is to create such a space ... so that ... students realize the power of their own insights and the beauty of their own voices” (p. 237). Student’s voices are an essential part of the teacher-student relationship.

The student and teacher are always in relationship. While the student or teacher might appear to “break” this relationship, this is in fact not possible. The ontological nature of the teacher-student relationship means that the relationship is always-already an integral part of both the teacher’s and the student’s everyday worlds (Gadamer, 1994; Heidegger, 1996; Nancy, 2000). When the teacher-student relationship does not matter to the teacher, the character of this experience is of concern to the student.

There are other times when students sense that a teacher is over occupied, if not preoccupied, with the lesson content. This can occur when teachers appear to be moving too quickly through content, stay in a mode of telling information to students, or when teachers close down any opportunity for dialogue. Students can feel that a teacher is bullying, or cajoling them towards expected behaviours. Behaving differently, or indeed contesting the nature of the way the teacher is relating, involves risk on the part of the students. If these situations occur more regularly, the student may experience a change in the teacher’s way of relating with them. It is as if the relationship does not matter to the “other” person. This experience attunes the student to the nature of their relationship with the teacher. Student-teachers wonder what is mattering to the teacher. Surely the equipping of beginning teachers is a matter of greater importance than just the training of particular behavioural traits in the student teacher? For the student, the teacher’s behaviour raises concern about the teacher. How are they seeing the student’s learning? What is the nature of effective teaching? Why is this lecturer teaching in pre-service teacher education?

*When our "between" doesn't matter to you, you show it
I am held within a label to you,
an "object" in your way
You make me separate from you
Beings that must be broken relationally
As such, I must hide for a safer day and for safer travellers.*

(D Giles, 11/07/2007)

When relationships are imbued with "dis-ease"

The stories in this section show teacher-student relationships to be a concern. In these relationships, one or all of the participants feel vulnerable and ill at ease. Levinas (1969) suggests that such violence might not occur in the form of injury but in making people play roles in which they no longer recognize themselves. In these moments, individuals intrude upon the otherness of the other (Alford, 2007).

The teacher in the next story becomes increasingly concerned with a student and personally weary of this particular relationship.

I think my relationship with Janine is a bit more guarded. Janine struggled with the course. She got quite behind on a lot of assignments.

One afternoon, Janine had an epileptic seizure in my class. The other students were so supportive. Nobody was scared. Nobody was embarrassed. One of the girls said, I don't know what to do, what do I do? And, another girl said, this is what you do. When she came out of the seizure, everybody rallied around and said, are you alright? I had known of her condition and she had told me that her only fear was that she might have a seizure in front of everybody. She was very embarrassed by it.

Towards the end of the year she wasn't handing assignments in. She missed a lot of classes to the point where I made contact with her and got her to come and see me. She had felt really uncomfortable because of what had happened to her.

I granted her extensions for her assignments and then she started missing again. I was concerned and then greatly concerned when one of the students from the class came to me and said, Janine is skiting to everybody that she doesn't have to have her assignments in, she's got an extension. She was away from your class the other day supposedly at the doctors having her medication but she wasn't, she was at the beach drinking with her mates. I thanked this student for sharing with me. I got Janine to come and talk to me again. I got a second colleague in so that it wasn't a one to one buddy sort of thing and we addressed her quite formally. (15: S4)

Initially the face needs of this student claimed the teacher's attention. Not only had the student struggled academically but she had had an epileptic seizure in a class. The student's face carried an ethical demand; help me (Joldersma, 2006; Marcus, 2007). The teacher interacted with the student to establish strategies that might aid her learning. The teacher's care reveals her concern for the student.

The teacher in this story becomes concerned with the way a student relates to her. The student's way of relating has brought an uncertainty into their relating. What has mattered for the teacher up until this experience has been the student's best interests but the feeling of being betrayed has undermined the teacher's confidence and safety with the student. The teacher has been granted another view of what this student is saying behind her back. She has lost her trust in the relationship.

The lack of honesty from the student challenges the relationship from the teacher's perspective (Inwood, 1997). The student does not seem to want to reciprocate a caring concern for the teacher. The uncertainty in relating with a particular student means that this teacher is anxious and guarded; she is concerned about the nature of the relationship. It is the teacher who seeks to create some protection and distance for herself in this relationship. The "other" is now a source of danger and personal threat (Hargreaves, 2001) and there is fear in this relationship. As a consequence, the teacher moves to find a safer place in the relationship where she can be more guarded personally (Collins & Selina, 2006).

Recent relational experiences have led this teacher to reconsider her way of relating with the student to the point where she asks a colleague to join her for such meetings. Previously the way the teacher and student related was taken for granted; this has changed.

Relational experiences can also carry "dis-ease" about the closeness of the relationship. This teacher experienced this with a particular student:

Karen was a student who used to be so uptight. She felt the 'system' had wronged her because she already had experiences and skills and knew how to manage children. She was good at her practice and yet she had to go through this retraining course. In the process, we had to encourage her to go through some personal counselling.

The following year, Karen requested to be in my class again. She actually wrote this in a letter. She said I understand her, I am there for her; I understood her problems and her issues. During this period of time, Karen would take a lot of my time. She was like that. I needed to step back because I was getting too involved with her. (18: S5)

In this story a teacher recalls a student who was completing her academic study under duress. The need to retrain was interpreted as an injustice by the student, given the extent of the student's prior knowledge and experience. In addition, the student is also encouraged to attend some personal counseling. A mutual deepening of the teacher-student relationship occurred as both people remained open to the other but the deepening of the teacher-student relationship reaches a point where the teacher becomes uncomfortable.

The teacher considers the student to have taken a lot of her time, creating an uneasy intensity to their relationship and lessening the opportunity for other students to relate to her. Not only has the student taken a lot of time, but the student wants to continue in a similar manner in the next semester, requesting the teacher again for another course. The student knows the generosity of this teacher in giving her time, but in the request to take this student again the teacher realizes she has been too giving, her involvement has become too close. When they feel overwhelmed by the demands of caring, teachers "try to insulate themselves against burnout by creating boundaries or buffer zones" (Hargreaves, 2001, p. 1065). Inside this particular teacher-student relationship, a teacher seeks to lessen the personal nature of the relating, widening the space with this student.

Up until this point, there appeared to be little attention given to the deepening of the teacher-student relationship – this changed with the thought of taking this student on again. The nature of the relationship was now being questioned by the teacher. How deep should the teacher-student relationship be and/or become? The openness of the teacher was intentionally lessening as a result of feeling the intrusion of another (Alford, 2007).

The relationship matters differently to the teacher and the student. The student is keen to continue their relating, the teacher less so. It is the teacher who senses that the relationship is too close. The openness of the relationship appears to have a compulsion

and exclusivity that has the teacher feeling isolated and trapped by the student. Joldersma's (2006) offers a teacher's perspective on this type of relationship, saying "[it] keeps me from living easy in my autonomy" (p. 66). The nature of a particular teacher-student relationship is mattering to this teacher.

Some relationships between a teacher and a student can be traumatic. Teachers can feel as if certain students are abusing the trust within their relationship. Concerned by the lack of honesty, teachers wonder about how they relate with the students. They feel as if they have to watch the students, seeking answers as to how they should relate and their own safety in such relating. The wonderings bring an anxiety as to the nature of their relating with another. Somehow the boundaries of comfort and safety are challenged raising an alert in situations where students' way-of-being can feel too familiar or even intrusive.

Concluding thoughts

The stories in this chapter address what we appear to have taken for granted; firstly that we are always in relationship, and secondly, that relationships matter. The primordial nature of being human is one of being-with-others in a relational co-existence that is essential to the world we share with others. Other people are always being-there-with us in their presence and absence.

Teachers and students enter the teacher-student relationship with a multiplicity of relationships with other people who are part of their everyday being-in-the-world. Once a student has enrolled in a particular course, the teacher and student are "always" in relationship; ontologically, they cannot exist in any other way. Most often, the ontological nature of this relationship is taken for granted in an educational process where the primary focus is the learning intentions. In addition, it would appear that the learning outcomes and the relational experiences are "in play"; ideas that will be developed more fully in chapter 8.

Regardless of *how* teachers and students experience their relationship, the relationship matters. The influence of the teacher-student relationship does not finish, it always exists. Relational experiences accumulate within each person's historicity and, in so doing, influence each person's becoming and how they view the world. In this way, the nature of the relational connectedness between the teacher and student is always in flux.

When the relationship matters, the relational experiences appear to be taken for granted as the teaching and learning happens for the teacher and student. When the teacher-student relationship is a matter of indifference, teachers and students sense that the immediate teaching-learning experience is not important to the other. As a consequence, learning is diminished. When the teacher-student relationship does not appear to matter and the relational endeavour is not valued, teachers and students can be found attuning to the nature of their relating. Some of these experiences occur when students sense that a teacher is overly concerned about the lesson content, when there is no invitation to contribute to a lesson, and when the pace of the lesson shows the content to be more important than relational experiences which let learning happen. Surely the quality of the teaching staff within pre-service teacher education programmes speaks of the quality expected by graduates? These students judge for themselves that some teachers are not good enough for they do not respect students or engender learning.

Current ideological pressures in education have led to changes in the tertiary sector that include a commodified curriculum, the shortening of semesters, an increased surveillance of lecturer's workload and outputs, the consideration of students as clients purchasing their learning, amongst other pressures (Barnett, 2003; Thrupp, 1999; Thrupp & Willmott, 2003). A concern of the current tertiary context is the heightened possibility that the teacher-student relationship will not matter as teaching-learning experiences are constrained by compliance systems and pressures which seek to capture evidence-based and observable outcomes of students learning in the most cost-effective and expedient manner. What is overlooked here, is that relationships matter, and the influence of the teacher-student relationship does not end. I argue that it is time for those who take responsibility for the teaching-learning encounter to recognise and address the impact of relationship.

The following chapter, "Our comportment speaks", considers the influence of a person's way of being-in relating and how this influences the voice of those relating.

Chapter 7: Comportment

As humans, our way of being-in-the-world is “as comportment” (Heidegger, 2001). Comportment is our “mode of being” and relates to *how* we are in the world. We are always “comporting to” something, be this to other beings or to our self (Dreyfus, 1991; Heidegger, 2001). This something relates to what concerns me in a moment and as such is never fixed or immutable (Heidegger, 2001). Comportment then, “is the ‘way’ I stand in my relationship to what concerns me in each case, the manner one responds ...” (Heidegger, 2001, p. 185). Such concern is described by Heidegger (2001) as Dasein’s absorption in that towards which one comports, “being absorbed in the relation to what is present, and being absorbed in what concerns me just now. It is a letting oneself be engaged with what concerns me” (p. 161).

Our comportment to what concerns us is also “as attunement”. Attunement is a basic character of Dasein in that, humans “in their beings, comport themselves towards their being” (Dreyfus, 1991, p. 14). In this way, our way-of-being embodies an understanding of what it is to be (Dreyfus, 1991). Every comportment is always already in a certain attunement. Moreover if one is within a particular attunement, “a human being whom one encounters also shows himself according to this attunement” (Heidegger, 2001, p. 165). Attunement belongs to comportment with each “Dasein standing in the potentiality to comport itself in a manner” (Heidegger, 2001, p. 163).

Human comportment unfolds as “Dasein’s activity manifests a ‘stand’ it is taking on what it is to be Dasein ... and already maintains itself, in each case, in a certain interpretedness of its being” (Dreyfus, 1991, p. 14). In this way, Dasein shows its ownness, mineness. “For Heidegger, Dasein’s mineness is the public stand it takes on itself ... by way of its comportment. What makes my comportment ‘my’ comportment is that it exhibits a particular stand on what it is to be Dasein ... That is what is most essential about me” (Dreyfus, 1991, p. 26).

Despite comportment being our public stand, we cannot see our own comportment. Yet what is essential about me, my particular stand, is accessible to others (Dreyfus, 1991). The nature of our comportment is sensed and open for others. In this way our comportment shows the *how* of Dasein. The accessibility of another’s comporting

occurs within the ontological experience of relating. The openness and accessibility of one's comportment is relationally and reciprocally engaged with other's comporting. Comportment, then, points to Dasein's particular stand in a pre-language and pre-audible voice.

Teachers' and students' comportment is sensed by others as showing *how they are*. While this comportment has a temporality, the comportment also has the familiarity of a particular stand that shows what is most integral to the person. This familiarity is experienced relationally in how the teacher and student comport. The stories in the first section of this chapter illustrate how *who we are* as teacher or student is comported and accessible to another. In the second section, the stories show how teachers' comportment inspires their students. For some student-teachers, a former teacher's comportment lies behind their aspiration to pursue teaching as a vocation. Stories about two such teachers are considered in the third section. The final section describes teachers whose comportment the students dread. The teacher's way-of-being seems to attune students to something other than the learning intentions.

Comportment as "how we are"

The teacher in the following story is "always" in a particular way.

We had a really relaxed class. Our lecturer would come in and sit on a chair in front of us and just be relaxed. Whenever our assignments were due, he'd sort of say, need a couple more days? He cared about what we were all doing.

He was more somebody who showed by example through his teaching methods and who he was as a person. It made you reflect on what it was to be a teacher. He'd talk about his experiences [and people he knew] and give little anecdotes that were fairly unrelated to what we were learning that day but it was just neat in the way that he was a real person and it was a neat relationship. It wasn't a teacher telling us stuff to learn. It was more just an atmosphere.

He had a very good sense of humour and he'd ramble on stories that he'd tell the class. He'd be in his element. It wouldn't matter if everyone was sitting there just looking blankly at him. You learnt different things from it rather than just the things to get through for assignments.

There were a number of different personalities and a couple of really strong personalities in the class. He'd always listen and give complete respect, never showing any kind of "this person is saying something a bit odd". He'd always give the same respect.

His replies to assignments would say, yeah that's a really good idea and it made you feel that you were on an equal path with him. He was a person I respected for his opinion and ways of teaching (I2: S1).

From the outset, the teacher in this story shows *who he is* as a person and *how he is* in relation to the students. The teacher's comportment is accessible and felt by the student. His way-of-being has a familiarity and constancy of concern, so much so, that the student describes the "always" nature of the teacher's comportment as being caring, listening, and respectful. The constant tone of the teacher's comportment speaks to the student of an acceptance and relational openness (Buber, 2002; Dreyfus, 1991). The teacher's comportment towards the students might be summarised in Heidegger's words, "I sojourn with you in the same being-here" (2001, p. 112). This teacher comports towards the students and a reciprocity of relating. The particulars of *how* the teacher relates with the students is a matter that "comes and becomes" in the experience of being-with the students. Sensing the teacher's comportment, the student is drawn towards this teacher. Such an ontological knowing is embodied and felt (Gadamer, 1994).

The teacher has a genuine concern for the students and for letting the educative process unfold. The student recalls with fondness, classroom experiences that were filled with stories, teaching ideas for the future, and interactions that were underpinned by a mutual respect. In addition, the sincerity of the teacher's open and caring way influences the student and causes them to "reflect on what it [is] to be a teacher". During these times, the students sustain a listening ear out of respect for the teacher. In sharing himself, the teacher provokes the students to reflect upon their own way of being. These learning experiences are not about the teacher or the "stuff to learn. It was more just an atmosphere". As a consequence, the teacher's way of being opens understandings for the student that are beyond what is officially prescribed.

The student suggests that the atmosphere just seems to happen. Gadamer (1994) uses the analogy of a festival to express the going-along-with another in relating. Grondin (2001) discusses Gadamer's use of this word, suggesting that:

[The] festival is characterised by a certain temporality into which we are enticed. It occurs at a given time and all who participate in the festival are elevated to a festive state, and in the best case, are transformed into a festive mood. (p. 46)

Caught up in the atmosphere of this class, the student is drawn towards an ongoing reciprocity of relating with the teacher that appears to be taken for granted.

The teacher is not trying to be in a teacher's way of being but appears to be "who he was as a person", "a real person". In so doing the teacher reveals his "own-most", his most essential, way-of-being (Dreyfus, 1991; Gadamer, 1996). In so being, the teacher is teaching out of *who he is* (Palmer, 1998).

In the next story, a student describes a very knowledgeable teacher who does not appear to have a breadth of experience in the subject she is teaching. The student senses a lack of experience in the way the teacher comports towards their teaching.

There was one lecturer whose style of teaching I didn't particularly like. I don't know that they had worked in a school. I think they had their academic qualification but I don't know how much experience they actually had. Things can be OK in theory but in practice, that's not always how it happens. She really knew her academic information. She knew the theories. She knew the right answers; the academic side of things but I felt that somewhere there was something missing in her practical knowledge. I don't know how I knew that but it was just something. She's the sort of person that you wished you had her head on your shoulder when you were trying to write your assignments because she knew the right things to say.

She did come and visit me when I was on a practicum in a school. She was very positive and she was very specific with her praise, but some of the comments she made, I felt, were made from a perspective of someone not having been on the floor teaching herself, not quite knowing how it is to be there. Lecturers need to have the experience on the floor teaching, how can you teach when you haven't done it yourself? (I13: S10)

The teacher in this story has the right responses in academic interactions but appears to lack personal experience of the topic she is teaching. The teacher's comportment makes an impression upon the student's being (Buber, 2002). The student feels that "somewhere there was something missing in her practical knowledge" as if the teacher did not have a practical and experiential knowledge from having worked with children. This student is unsure how she knows this "but it was just something". Something in the way the teacher comports, speaks to the student of someone "not quite knowing how it is to be there" with children. Had the teacher been experienced, her comments and interactions would have been different, and shown in the way she comported.

The teacher's comportment influences the way this student stands in her relationship with the teacher moment by moment (Heidegger, 2001). The student expects the teacher to teach out of who they are (Palmer, 1998), from "experience on the floor teaching". This teacher does not appear to have experiences that this student deems to be critical to the teaching role she is in. The student feels as if the teacher is unable to relate experientially. The teacher's previous experiences are not known to the student. It is in the way the teacher is with the student that the student feels a "knowing" about who this teacher is. *Who* this teacher is comes across to the student on different occasions; such is the nature and influence of the teacher's comportment (Dreyfus, 1991).

In this story the student attunes to this teacher's way of being as she might sense who this teacher is as a teacher of children. After all, this is a teacher education programme and this student has an expectation that her teachers will be able to draw on their practical experiences with children. The student attunes to the particular stand shown in the teacher's comportment in the absence of actually knowing details about the teacher's experiences. The student considers the teacher's comportment towards teaching to be lacking.

Who this teacher is and *how she is* with the student is integral to the teaching-learning experiences. The student in this story senses something in the way of the teacher's comportment that raises questions for the student about the teacher's appreciation of the realities of working with children. Unless the student can trust that a teacher's knowing comes from, and is rooted in, experience then confidence in the teacher's practical wisdom is undermined. Interestingly, this perceived lack of experience is in a context of actual teaching; it is just the nature of the students that is different.

In summary, a teacher's comportment is sensed by others as showing *how they are* and *who they are*. A teacher's way of being is embodied and accessible to others. The way the teacher *is* is communicated and read by others.

Teachers whose comportment inspires the students they teach

Teachers who communicate respect inspire their students

Comportment just *is*. For some teachers *how they are* inspires the students they teach. The story that follows recounts a student's experiences with a lecturer in a subject she "grew to love".

Health was a subject I took. I had had nothing to do with health before in my studies. I went along not knowing anything about health. There was a lot of learning at the start of the subject in terms of what health was. She gave us that information in a way that was well structured. The teacher was a very intelligent and very warm person. Her demeanour and the way she talked about things were warm. You could tell that she cared about all the students' learning. I felt I knew her in terms of the person she was and understood where she was coming from.

Health became a great subject. I really grew to love it. Without someone like this teacher, it could have easily been a subject that I dismissed. She was a person who taught the subject really well. For example she showed us examples of exercises you could do with students as well. She modelled the sensitivity of teaching the subject. She elevated it into being quite a serious subject for me, in my eyes. (I2:S2)

Initially taken for no particular reason, health "became a great subject". Central to the change in this student's engagement with the subject is the comportment of a particular teacher. Without this teacher, and her way of comporting with the students, this student says, "it could have easily been a subject I dismissed". In the process of being-with this teacher, the student "grew to love" this subject, becoming quite serious about health.

This teacher's comportment is not seen in a single encounter between the teacher and the student; rather the teacher's comportment has a consistency over the duration of the course that speaks of sensitivity, warmth and care. These experiences lead the student to feel accepted by the teacher's essential being (Buber, 2002). The teacher's way-of-being is integral to *who this teacher is*, from the structuring of the course material through to the warmth of her demeanour (Dreyfus, 1991; Heidegger, 2001).

The student suggests that the teacher "modelled the sensitivity of teaching the subject". The way this teacher's comportment carries a consistency of being suggests that the student's use of the term *modelling* refers to *how the teacher was* most often, rather than an inauthentic modelling by an actor in a theatrical play. Teaching is not an "act" for

this teacher. This student knows this to be so as they feel they have come to understand the teacher in ““terms of the person she was”; that is, *who* this teacher is.

The student grew in respect for the teacher, sustaining an engagement with the teacher that brings about a serious change “in [her] eyes”. The student acknowledges the teacher’s comportment within the teacher-student relationship as influential in how her own way-of-being changes over time (Hultgren, 1992). In short, the student “becomes” inspired in a subject that is new to her amidst relational experiences with a teacher whose comportment makes a way for the student’s change. In so doing, the student begins to embody characteristics of the teacher’s own comportment; the student comports an inspired stance towards the subject like their teacher (Connor, 1992).

The teacher, in the story that follows, comports in a way that shows a deep respect for the student and the possibility of reciprocal interactions with the student. As a consequence, the teacher engages with the students.

One teacher asked us for ideas and listened to us. She was interested in us. She wasn’t interested in just telling us; she wanted to get our thoughts. She wasn’t teaching anything significantly different, but she just put it into a way that was useful. It made such a big difference.

We had our class in the music room. We had no desks or any tables. There were heaps of us; too many for the seats in the class. For a lot of the lecturers, we were treated like we were kids in a class. They said we’re all colleagues but a lot of them didn’t treat us like that. Whereas this teacher managed to teach us without actually making us feel like we were children. It made a big difference (I12: S6).

This student describes a teacher who expects reciprocity in their relating with the student. The teacher comports an openness that calls for engagement as “she wanted to get [the student’s] thoughts”. The teacher’s comporting “as listening” is described by Heidegger (1996) as Dasein’s existential way of being-open as being-with for others”.

The teachers’ way of being communicates an attunement towards the students regardless of the limitations of the physical environment. It is the people *within* the space that the teacher is attuned to, rather than the problems of the space. For the teacher, the important space is the “relational space” with the students (Buber, 2002). The space between the different persons is not problematic and holds potential possibilities for relating (Heidegger, 1968).

The teacher's stand towards the student is regularly experienced as this is *how this teacher was* (Dreyfus, 1991; Heidegger, 2001). Learning, for this teacher, involves a need to engage with another and share ideas in dialogue. In this way, this teacher shares the role of teacher, actively listening to *how the students are* relationally (Hultgren, 1992). The expression of each person's voice in the reciprocity of dialogue releases the potentiality of learning for both the student and the teacher. These students feel as if they are an integral part of their teacher's learning, existing in the same being-here (Heidegger, 1963, 2001).

This teacher-student relationship has a mutuality and reciprocity. Hultgren (1992) suggests that this way of relating is more akin to partnering. She writes: "When students are with you, you leave the ... role of teacher and become a partner with students. Teaching is not something we do to students; it is ... an experience in which we are side by side, simultaneously teacher and learner" (Hultgren, 1992, p. 222). This teacher's way-of-being is unlike the comportment of this student's other teachers. This student believes she is being treated as an adult and it makes "such a difference".

Teacher education programmes are also adult education programmes in that the students enroll after their compulsory schooling, as adults. I wonder whether some teacher educators engage with students in a way that attempts to model the classroom practices of younger children, overlooking the fact that their students are adults and student teachers involved in adult education. This teacher's comportment communicates a respect for the student and their contribution. In the process the teacher's way-of-being releases this student to learning about the *what* and *how* of teaching and learning (Heidegger, 1968).

"How teachers are" influences students

The teacher in the next story comports an energy that is noticed by the student.

I had a really good lecturer in my 3rd year. He was a bit of a bigwig in his subject but the thing that made him really good was that he was passionate about his subject and it rubbed off on me. He was just so enthusiastic. He loved what he was teaching. His classes were really enjoyable because he was alive. He was into what he was doing. I just know he loves his subject. It was like his whole life. Every day he is so fresh.

I'm sure we all have our bad days but he wouldn't let that impact on how he was for you in that lecture. He was reliable. You knew he'd be there. You knew he'd be him, full of energy about his subject for you. With some lecturers you would know if they're having a bad day; you would know all about it. But he's just always the same. Very consistent. (I4: S1)

This teacher's passion, enthusiasm and energy inspire this student. This is a teacher that "was for you", "full of energy ... for you"; a teacher who is with his students for their interests. In the example above there is constancy in the tone of the teacher's way of relating with the students. The student is in no doubt that this teacher is comporting *to-wards* them and *for* them.

The consistency in the teacher's comportment is described by the student as showing "reliability" in the teacher's presence and in his way-of-being. This student "knew he'd be there" and "knew he'd be him, full of energy". *How this teacher is* has consistency. He comports an always-the-same commitment to the students and this subject. He wants to be there for his students and be there in a 'way' that is "fresh" every day. Indeed every lesson seems to have a sense of "life" for both the teacher and the student.

This is not just a subject for this teacher, it is 'his' subject, as if it's "his whole life". He is "into" what he does because he 'is' what he does. He is able to be himself in this subject and with these students. In this way, the teacher teaches out of who he is, an embodiment of being-in-teaching with others (Palmer, 1998). Palmer (1998) considers this a sign of being a teacher who is fully present to his students. Similarly, Galloway (2002) suggests that relationally interacting "is always an embodied experience" (p. 2).

The consistent nature of the teacher's way-of-being there for the students rubbed off on this student. There is reciprocity of influence in how the teacher and student are being with the other. As such, *how* the student comports towards the teacher is being influenced by the nature of the teacher's comportment.

In the following story, a student recalls the passion in a teacher's comportment.

I liked a particular teacher because we were sort of similar in a way. The thing that attracted me to this particular lecturer was just his outright passion; he was so passionate that you could just see it come across him. Just the way he spoke, his actions. When we are passionate about something, we're just all in there, you're in the moment. I always look forward to his classes – always. It was one of those classes that I knew I just couldn't miss. I knew I had to be there. (I10: S1)

This teacher communicates an embodied passion that appears to capture the totality of the teacher's being. The teacher's passion "[came] across" to the student and is felt in the teacher's words and actions. The passion comes *across from* the teacher and *across to* the student. This student recognises characteristics of his own way-of-being in the teacher's manner. "When we are passionate about something, we're just all in there". The *we* relates to a similarity in *how* each person comports to the other. Like the teacher, this student wants to be "in the moment" together, open to the relational experiences that are integral to the learning process.

The excitement of interacting with this teacher is visible in the student's enthusiasm for subsequent classes. This student "always looked forward to class", and just "had to be there" with this teacher. The experience is engaging, drawing the student towards the teacher relationally. The student's way of being is towards the teacher and their relating, such is the influence of this teacher's passion on their relationship with the student. For this teacher-student relationship "a lot of days are good".

Teachers' "being-in-teaching" can be inspirational

In the following story, the student recalls a teacher whose way-of-being was very relaxed, opening the nature of the relational environment.

One teacher I had had a very relaxed demeanour right from the word go. It was a relaxed, almost offhand manner in being able to discuss things which was very helpful. She was easy to talk to. She was just very informal which I found quite helpful. She was able to draw information from me quite easily as I wasn't on the edge of my seat. This teacher allowed me to speak quite openly and freely.

She'd begin her lectures and say, "Oh now I was going to do something but I've actually changed my mind, so we're just going to do something else now". For some reason, perhaps the people in the group or some comment that she'd been given before the beginning of the lecture, meant she'd change mid-stream. She was doing it for a reason. I have been to some lectures where everything is very organized, everything runs to schedule and they're probably very good at what they know, but that doesn't always allow for the students to relax completely. (I13: S5)

The teacher in this story is always relaxed. "Right from the word go" and throughout the course, the teacher's way of being is consistently relaxed. The teacher's comportment relaxes the way the student is with this teacher. As if taking on, or becoming like the teacher, this student relaxes in the learning experiences. Previously,

relational experiences with other teachers had students sitting “on the edge of [their] seat”. This is not how it is with this teacher.

At times, this teacher is found reviewing the decisions for a lesson. Even the way this teacher communicates her thinking about the lesson confirms the sincerity of the teacher’s concern for the student. This student does not see a disorganised teacher but rather a teacher who engages with the intended learning process.

The teacher and student are not casually relating or relating in an ad hoc manner, rather the mode of each person’s comportment is, or becomes, relaxed, enabling a relaxing and relational dialogue. The teacher’s comportment opens dialogue between the teacher and the student. It is “easy to talk” and “speak quite openly and freely” with this teacher. The teacher seems to sustain the informality of the dialogue, prolonging the space wherein students could speak openly and freely about topics that concern them. Hultgren (1992) suggests that “the response-ability that we have as teacher educators is to create such a space for being-in-teaching ... that those we teach can ... realise the power of their own insights and the beauty of their own voices” (p 237). During times together, the teacher draws information from the students in the course of the dialogue “which was ... helpful” to the student. *How this teacher is* enables a way of relating that releases this student to learning (Heidegger, 1968).

The final story in this section is about a teacher whose way-of-being is engaging and genuine.

Before class, he’d usually be at his desk doing stuff or walking in and out of his office. But in the session, he was a real animated character. He was never sitting down, always standing up. He would always start the class with reading a section out of one of his favourite novels. He was a really good storyteller. He’d be up there acting it out and then he’d stop just at the most interesting bit, close the book and then he’d be like, so you have to read it. It was like arrrrrgggghhhh! Just at the best bit, he’d just close it and he’d just rush onto the next thing. So good. Just a real character.

I have lots of good ideas from him. He’d scribble all over the board and talk really fast. He would sell you everything he was talking about. You could tell he really knew his stuff. He wasn’t faking it. He was the language guy! He knew everything. I enjoyed him. He made it so interesting. (I4: S3)

The lesson starts with a reading. Not any book though. This book is the teacher’s choice. He has read it before on other occasions and knows where the story heads.

While animated in his reading, the teacher conceals his knowledge of the impending climax within the story. This moment arrives, it always does. The teacher stops reading and closes the book. There is no wondering as to whether this student is caught up in the reading of the story. Their audible “arrrrgggghhhh” is evidence of this.

While the routine of reading a book aloud becomes known as an “arrrrgggghhhh” experience, the squeals also show the teacher’s concern for the students in the preparation of this lesson. The teacher’s animated comportment shows that of a genuine educator (Buber, 2002; Heidegger, 1968). Buber (2002) suggests that the genuine educator’s “concern is always the person as a whole, both in the actuality in which he [sic] lives before you now and in his possibilities, what he can become” (p. 123). This teacher is sensitively intentional and meticulously animated.

From this student’s perspective, this teacher knows his stuff, shows it and lives it. Always interacting with the students and engaging their entire being, this teacher is *in* the experience of teaching. This teacher is being *who he is* and enjoying the experience of being-with these students. In this way, this teacher is “being-in-teaching” (Hultgren, 1992). As the teacher is engaged, so the student is engaged and interested in each eventful moment of relating with the teacher.

In summary, a teacher’s comportment can inspire their students. *How the teacher is* has a reciprocal influence on *how students are* with the teacher. In numerous stories, a teacher’s comportment communicates a respect for students as fellow learners, opening the learning process for a mutuality of contribution and concern.

Teachers who inspire others towards a teaching career

Some teachers’ comportment profoundly influences decisions to embark on a teaching career. Two such stories follow.

Mr. Stone was a drama teacher who didn’t influence my academic learning as much as my desire to participate and include myself. I was at a Christmas parade one weekend when I saw Mr. Stone dressed up as a clown. I’ve not forgotten this moment when I saw that he was doing what he taught. He is a teacher who I could see enjoyed what he was doing, enjoys his life. It was very powerful. It wasn’t just a job for him. I imagine he looked forward to the day. It made the class important. Everything we did was important and was part of our learning. He would never make us feel like we were students.

I never forgot it and it made me want to go on. It's still one of the main things that sticks with me as I go on to be a teacher. I want my students to have that experience with me. To this day, I still think it's really important that as I teach English, I am also being creative in my own life (I7: S2)

The student in this story recognises that this teacher is influencing her own comportment towards teaching. The teacher appears to embody his being-as-a-teacher similarly to his being-in-the-world (Palmer, 1998). Whether he is in the class or in an informal setting, this teacher comports an authenticity that is consistent across these encounters. The teacher's entire way of being seems to be present to the student; such is the impression that this teacher's comportment communicates to the student. Indeed, this teacher's comportment "made [this student] want to go on" towards a teaching career. In this way, relational experiences with students are as much for the teacher's benefit as they are for the students (Ream & Ream, 2005).

Teachers can also deter students from pursuing a career in teaching.

Ms Evert was my English teacher. It was obvious to me that she did not like coming to school. She just had a very sullen face; never had a peppy day. It was really sad. She didn't care about her students. She didn't seem to like her subject. She was always going through the motions. I hope she's not still there. It made me not want to teach. She made me go home and think, I'm never going to teach because it just looked so depressing. (I7: S3)

In this story a student encounters a teacher whose comportment leaves her wondering about the teacher and her own aspirations for teaching. The teacher's comportment is "obvious", and is seen and felt negatively by the student. The understandings that this student experiences are not "seen here as limited to cognitive content" (Dall'Alba, 2004, p. 680) but incorporates an embodied understanding and an attunement towards the teacher's way-of-being.

Nothing is communicated from the teacher that might suggest a relational openness. Buber suggests that "all real living is meeting" (Friedman 2002, p. 65) yet this teacher does not want to meet. This teacher's way of being deters the student's desire to pursue a teaching career; such was the "felt" experience of relating with the teacher. The teacher's comportment influences how this student sees herself "as a teacher".

In summary, how a teacher comports can undermine a student's aspiration to become a teacher. If the teacher's comportment shows that being a teacher brings little pleasure, then why would a novice wish to pursue such a goal?

Teachers whose comportment students dread

The stories that have been described so far in this chapter have revealed how a teacher's comportment is visible to others and impacts the learning experience. The stories in this section show how a teacher's comportment can have students dread the thought of further encounters with a teacher. One student's story is as follows:

I had a lecturer in my first year who treated me like a kid. The way she spoke to me, the way she asked another student to stop talking; I mean it was probably even more derogatory than the way I asked my kids to stop talking. I wouldn't even talk to the kids in my class like that, because they're too old for that. She spoke right down to me. She was scary. I wasn't the only one that was scared of her. She was scary. I never had a scary teacher when I was at school but I learnt what one was like. She noticed absolutely everything.

I got a letter from the department saying how well I had done an assignment in her course. I don't remember her ever saying, oh that was well done. (112: S7)

This student feels belittled by a teacher whose behaviour is "scary". This is a new experience for this student, because she has never had a teacher whose behaviour was scary before. The way this teacher comports shifts the student's focus onto *how* this teacher is being-in-relationship with her.

This teacher communicates messages about the nature of their relationship with students and the "place" that this student has within this relationship. By speaking to the student as an object required to behave in a certain way, this teacher lets the students know that they are not equals. In fact, this student feels less than a child, spoken down to and without any affirmation. The teacher expects the student to comply with her directives.

This student is enduring the passion-less and frustrating position of being an object to the teacher. She is an "it" to this teacher, and her relationship with the teacher is that of an I-it. This was not their doing. The student will not remain open to the teacher. Instead this teacher and their relationship with this student moves from the potentiality of an I-thou relationship to an I-it; this time, the teacher becoming an "it". In this way, the student behaves like her teacher, reducing the teacher from a person to an object.

This teacher does not consider the student's best interests. The teacher does notice *how* some students leave the room but does not notice how a particular student is "being" in the lesson. This teacher's way of being engenders, in this student, a fear and concern about the nature of the relational environment. This teacher is a person who is to be avoided.

Absent from the teacher's comportment is an acceptance of this student as a "particular" person with a particular interest (Buber, 2002). In contrast to those teachers who "gradually ... see [their] students as individuals as well as future teachers" (Morgaine, 1992, p. 187), this teacher seeks to silence the expression of the student's way of being. The teacher does not want to listen to the student, indicative of a comportment that is not being-open as being-with the student (Heidegger, 1963). Relationally turning from the teacher, the student's voice is largely silenced. This silence however, "is still a form of communication" (Kavanagh & Knowlden, 2004, p. 54), in that the absence of voice is heard and communicated. The silence suggests that the student's essential being is moving from an openness of relationship with the teacher. Rather than finding voice, the student is silenced by this teacher's comportment. This story shows the student's inner dialogue. Palmer (1998) suggests that some teachers fear a "live" relational encounter with their students. These teachers are pre-occupied with self-preservation and silence the voice of their students.

This experience occurs within a pre-service teacher education programme. Not only is this teacher's behaviour of concern but the experience is a concern from the point of view that a teacher like this could be in a teacher education programme. How can such teachers be employed in programmes that seek to prepare beginning teachers? It is also a concern that this teacher might be involved with other student teachers over the course of their tenure in the educational organisation.

The teacher in the next story is not interested in the students.

I was one of many students in the class that was bored but he didn't notice. I didn't get that much from him. I was bored and it was obvious that others were too. I don't know how he was oblivious to this, but he was.

In one lesson, the session was to have finished at 2.30pm and he had gone well past it. People were starting to leave, because he just wasn't stopping. You know how you sit there and wait for lecturers to wind up?

He just wasn't stopping. He just kept going. When some one left, he went, isn't it rude those people leaving? We said it's ¼ to 3. For me, it was the last class of the day and I had to get to my job. I had to leave because I looked after kids after school. But he expected me to just sit there and stay. I just think he'd got so interested in what he was saying himself that he hadn't even noticed that the time had gone past. He wasn't interested in whether I was interested.

I got sick of it. By the end of the semester there was one class where I was playing charades in class with others and he didn't notice. We were sitting down but we were playing charades in class. I thought we were being really discreet but then suddenly someone across the room yelled out an answer to us, and then someone else yelled out an answer. He never noticed and didn't stop. (I12: S4)

This teacher's comportment does not show an interest in any reciprocity of relating with the students. Indeed, the teacher appears to be oblivious to the students. The teacher, continuing with his activity, does not invite the students to participate in the lesson. This student wonders why they should be with this teacher at all. Their presence does not seem to influence the teacher's way-of-being or his openness to relational exchanges. Provided the students remain in class, the teacher does not seem to notice *how* they are, *who* they are, whether they are interested, and whether the students are involved in the learning experience.

This student turns from the possibility of relating with the teacher, avoiding face-to-face encounters, preferring instead the relational interactions with other students in the class. This student notices that other students are not interested in the teacher or the subject. This is obvious to the student; much less so for the teacher. This teacher does not appear to notice, his interest and attention focused elsewhere. When students voice a contribution to a game of charades from across the teaching space, the seriousness of this relational environment is shown. Buber (2002) suggests that the student's withdrawal from the teacher is a withdrawal of an acceptance of this teacher in their particularity. The teacher's way of being has removed this possibility, the students responding to a comportment that is consistently uninterested and boring.

Just as a teacher can inspire, so they can de-motivate:

The teacher I am thinking about is fairly dull. I kept thinking, maybe she's sick of teaching or something. At the beginning of class, she'd be up the front shuffling papers and people would file in. She wouldn't talk to anybody. She'd just say, Okay, this is what we are doing today. There were a couple of activities but it wasn't fun. The class would finish as

people got restless. It would be quite abrupt, like, that's it for today. Towards the end of the year, people stopped turning up to class. (I2: S3)

This student cannot understand *how* this teacher is relationally. There is a growing restlessness with the teacher's way-of-being. This teacher's apparent lack of interest extends to the student and the teacher-student relationship. Perhaps, for this teacher, teaching is something that is "done to" students at a relational distance (Hultgren, 1992). For this student however, these experiences do not communicate an acceptance and openness. The teacher's way of being appears to influence the student's commitment to the teacher and their course. If, as Palmer (1997) suggests, teachers teach out of *who* they are, then *who* is this teacher and why is she so hard to know? *How this teacher is* calls out the question: *How* is her life? What else is happening that influences her comportment? How long has she been teaching? Could burnout be a factor in her depressive mood? Palmer (1998) suggests that when teachers are closed to their students, the teaching-learning space is potentially an abusive one; one that has a lack of respect and an uncertainty about the teacher-student relationship.

The student becomes bored by this teacher as the learning experiences do not engage the student, nor are they "fun". Indeed, staying in the class with this teacher becomes a challenge as the restlessness grows. This teacher's comportment consistently demotivates the student. By the end of the year, some students will not be present at class, absenting themselves from any interaction with the teacher for perhaps they will recognise "learning" does not happen when they attend a teaching-learning encounter dominated by such comportment.

The next story shows the influence of a teacher's comportment on a student in a subject that was of particular interest to her:

I've always loved books, loved reading, and really loved children's literature, and I had a lecturer who taught me that it could be boring. I guess it's the worst thing he's done. He taught me that books can be boring. I was just bored, absolutely bored. Language has always been my thing really. He killed it, absolutely, dead! He stood there and he talked and even his voice was a monotone that didn't change. It felt like I was just there because I had to be. I left at the end of that year and thought, how am I ever going to teach reading? (I12: S3)

This student encounters a teacher who is teaching in a subject area which the student is passionate about. To her surprise, the teacher "kill[s]" something that is precious to her

and in the process violates her passion. In addition, the course requires her to be in attendance and observe the “absolute” death of her passion. She cannot avoid the inevitable.

The student is not invited to relate in a way which might enable her to share her interest in the subject (Hultgren, 1992). In contrast and without the student’s voice, the teacher proceeds to systematically take the “life” out of the subject. Rather than inspire this student, the teacher’s comportment strips the student of her passion for the subject.

In summary, some students dread the experience of being with particular teachers. The comportment of these teachers shows a lack of respect for the student and embodies a message that students are the recipients of the teacher’s actions rather than the participants in a learning process. Silenced, spoken down to, not noticed, bored and violated, students avoid relational encounters with such teachers. I argue that the primordial nature of comportment and the influence of our way-of-being have been taken for granted.

As I contemplated this chapter, I constructed the following poem as a way of capturing my thinking on an essential aspect of the teacher-student relationship, comportment.

“How” we are, “Who” we are
Our comportment speaks to another,
providing glimpses of our being,
They find us in moments,
calling for relating.

Our being-in-the-world is “as comportment”,
the “how” communicated through the body,
each “how” is sensed and felt,
influencing relating.

Good teachers comport “to”-wards their students,
to the “person” in relationship,
turning towards, they relate,
impressing the relating.

My comportment changes our relating,
opening, closing my way-of-being,

*the way I stand is seen and heard,
changing our relating.*

*We are found attuning to the comportment of an-other,
our voices showing the experiencing of relating,
at times speaking, at times silenced,
always voice in relating.*

*Comporting an unspoken accessible way-of-being
other's ways-of-being are called out and opened,
togetherness evitable, the "how" changeable
found in relating.*

(D Giles, 26/01/07)

Concluding comments

The purpose of this chapter has been to consider stories that show the influence of comportment on the teacher-student relationship. Comportment shows *how* we are being-in-the-world. Our way-of-being is shown in *who we are* and *how we are*. Importantly, our comportment is communication through the body in its whole sense, felt by others. In this way, the nature of our comportment is accessible to others. Everyday experiences of relating are communication that is primordial to how we are. Such communication calls out the reciprocity and influence of relating with others. *How we are* then is always-and-already influencing the communicative nature of our comporting. Our comportment relates to the particular way we stand in relationship to what concerns us in each moment (Heidegger, 2001). As we live our stand in a moment, our way of comporting “speaks to” others.

Teachers are always comporting *who* and *how* they are to their students. *Who we are* is integral to *how we are* as teachers. Palmer (1998) reminds those of us who teach, that we do so out of our beings, that is, who we are. Hamachek (1999) says it differently but makes the same point, “consciously, we teach what we know; unconsciously, we teach who we are” (p. 209).

Teachers’ ways-of-being vary. Some teachers’ comportment inspires their students, engaging them in reciprocity of open and dynamic relating. There are other teachers whose comportment means that students dread relational experiences, with these

teachers preferring instead to avoid the teacher. What can be done about boring, disinterested and unsupportive teachers? How can those responsible for teacher education ensure that pre-service students engage with inspiring teacher educators? How might teacher education programmes show a concern for the qualitative nature of teachers' comportment given the communicative nature and influence of such comportment? I argue that such questions are critical to the nature of relationships in teacher education.

The following chapter considered stories that show the teacher-student relationship to be dynamic and in flux, such that the nature of relating is akin to being in play.

Chapter 8: In the play

Being-in relationship is being engaged in the “play” of relating. This play is constantly occurring as we are “always already practically engaged in the context of life” (v17). Similarly, the play has a to-and-fro movement that is without certainty for the players (Arnason, 1988; Dunne, 1997; Galloway, 2002; Hare, 2005; Macintyre Latta & Hostetler, 2003; Paterson & Zderad, 1975). Indeed, Gadamer (1994) suggests that the play “represents an order in which the to-and-fro motion of play follows of itself” (p. 104). As such, the play does not depend upon those who play it, but on the movement of the play itself (Gadamer, 1994). The embodied experience of play is one “that overcomes us and ... where our whole being is at stake” (Grondin, 2001, p. 44). The players lose themselves in play, as if immersed in the experience. In this way, the play has an influence “over the consciousness of the players” (Dunne, 1997, p. 136). Further, Dunne (1997) suggests that individuals lose their personal autonomy as they “become a medium in and through which” (p. 136) the play of ‘relating’ moves. The play has a seriousness in terms of how we are being in the world relationally.

Each person’s way-of-being continuously emerges within the movement of play (Dunne, 1997, 1997; Macintyre Latta et al., 2003). This embodied process of “being-in-the-play” involves a dynamic reciprocity as each person is a ‘becoming’ that opens in the movement of the situation (Arnason, 1988; Blumenfeld-Jones, 1997; Dunne, 1997; Macintyre Latta et al., 2003; Miller, 1996; Paterson et al., 1975; Satina & Hultgren, 2001). In addition, each player and his or her becoming influences the movement of the play itself (Dunne, 1997, 1997; Paterson et al., 1975).

The creative process of being in the play draws upon the person’s practical knowledge for the immediate and particular situation. Gadamer (1994) uses the term *phronesis* to describe our practical knowledge and how it is directed towards the immediate and concrete situation. Our practical knowledge must “grasp the ‘circumstances’ in their infinite variety” (Gadamer, 1994, p.21). In this way, *phronesis* is intimate to our present experience and indeed the fundamental form of everyday experience (Dunne, 1997, 1997; Macintyre Latta et al., 2003). Aristotle’s (1999) description of *phronesis* as practical knowledge stands in contrast with theoretical (*episteme*) and productive (*techne*) knowledge. In this way, *phronesis* is not instrumental, “it is its own end”

(Lefstein, 2005, p. 342). Dunne (1997) recognises the ever present phronesis in the play stating, “[practical knowledge] ... is not a knowledge of ethical ideas as such, but rather a resourcefulness of mind that is called into play in, and responds uniquely to, the situation in which these ideas are to be realized” (p. 272).

The relationship between a teacher and a student is always in play. The play’s movement has the teacher and student continuously engaged in the immediate and concrete situation (Macintyre Latta et al., 2003). Immersed in dynamic and unpredictable relating, the teacher and student move and become in each situation. Previously learned theoretical and productive knowledge about relating gives way to a direction that is found in the phronesis of the situation (Dunne, 1997). The phronesis in and of the moment influences the teacher-student relationship in ways that the techne of the moment might only imagine (Dunne, 1997; Macintyre Latta et al., 2003). While the techne of relating might be useful to the situation, it is the lived experience of relating that has the unpredictability.

This chapter discusses how teachers and students experience being-in-the-play of relating. The initial focus of this chapter will be the play, and include the movement and experience of being in the play. In the second section, the chapter will focus on the phronesis of being-in the relational play. It should be noted that the organisation of this chapter is an arbitrary sequencing of the stories around the ideas of play and phronesis. This should not suggest that these ideas are experienced separately; rather, experiences of the play show the presence or absence of phronesis.

“Being-in-the-play”

The first two stories in this section focus on particular moments of relating when a person is surprised. If van Manen (2002) is correct, that “the big things are always in the small ones” (p. 46), then these stories begin to open the uncertainty that is being in relationship. The student in the following story is surprised by her interactions with a teacher.

At the end of the semester I was looking for my exam mark up on the wall and they were not in any order. I couldn't find my name, so I had to go and see the teacher and I said, hey my mark's not up there. And he said, oh there must have been a mistake and that was fine. He was impressed because I had done pretty well and then he said something about me having a baby. And I said I don't have any kids. He had mixed me up with someone else in the class. He knew our names, but she was about

five years older than me. She had a son. She wasn't one of my friends, so it wasn't like we sat together a lot. He had completely mixed me up with this other person. He knew our names, but he didn't know who we were. (I13: S5)

The student in this story seeks out her teacher to find out her final grade for a course. This information was available for other students but this student's name was left off the list. Wanting this information, this student approaches her teacher. In this unplanned meeting, the teacher provides the result and notes that the student "had done pretty well". This was good news for the student as she had passed the course.

After commenting on the student's result, the teacher took the opportunity to relate to the student more personally and asks about the student's baby. The question "opens a surprise" for both the teacher and the student – what baby? The student is surprised by the question and the apparent confusion on the teacher's part. In her surprise, the student ponders what the teacher's question means. Did the question show that the teacher did not know this student as a unique individual? Could it have been that student numbers and other academic and administrative pressures on the teacher were influential in the teacher's lack of understanding?

The student interprets the teacher's question to mean that "he didn't know who we were". The play opens up a path of understanding in which the student stops to think about how well this teacher knows her as an individual. The insight leaves her feeling disappointed. Yet, without this encounter she might never have seen this lack in the relationship.

Dunne (1997) suggests that the surprises experienced by players in-the-play show the very fluid reality of the play. In this moment of relating, the movement moves from one of celebration to a sense of confusion and disappointment. While there can be an expectation that the unexpected will occur, this teacher and student seek to find a way through the challenge of this surprise (Hostetler, Macintyre Latta & Sarroub (2007). This is a new moment in their relating, something that was unplanned. Surprise has interrupted "the customary course of events" (Field & Latta, 2001, p. 889).

In the following story, a teacher recalls an unpredictable event that occurs wherein she savours the possibility that the student might be growing towards teaching.

When Peter started his course, he was asking for an extension every time there was an assignment due. And then this happened. He had a death in the family and the grandparents had to come from overseas to the funeral, but were too old to travel on their own. So Peter comes bounding into my office and says, there's been this death. I am the only one in my family that is not working so I have been elected to go over and fetch the grandparents and bring them back. I have to go on Friday.

And I thought, here it comes. Now he's going to ask for an extension because he had two assignments due. And he said, I've got both my assignments ready to hand in early and I want to know if I can do my presentation to you because I am not going to be in tomorrow to do it with the class.

And I just thought, you know, we're getting there with Peter. What a transition from sitting at the back doing nothing to being in the group. I think he's going to be a successful teacher. I was a bit worried at the beginning. (I2: S5)

The teacher in this story begins by assuming a familiar pattern of relating. The familiarity is felt in how the student is and how their relating moves in their being-together. The teacher speaks her anticipations: "Now he's going ...", "And I thought ..." and "here it comes ...". Experiences like this only heighten the teacher's concern over the student's lack of readiness for teaching.

Contrary to what the teacher expected, the student says, "I've got both my assignments ready".. The student was "ready", prepared, organised and acting responsibly. What a surprise! This is indeed a very different moment. These events had not been foreseen. Having thought that the familiar was unfolding, the teacher finds herself in an unpredictable moment. To the teacher's surprise, the student presents completed assignments ahead of time. Suddenly, this moment of relating is recognised as very different from previous patterns of relating. Moreover, this student is relating differently during an emotionally taxing time due to the loss of a family member.

As Dunne (1997) and Latte & Hostetler (2003) suggest, teachers can often be surprised by the unpredictability of the relational play. Teachers can take for granted that every relationship is unpredictable; opening and closing to possibilities as it is "lived out" in play (Lawler, 2005). The teacher in this story can see and hear a change in the way a particular student is relating. Such a change is met with relief, as the teacher acknowledges that she had been "a bit worried" about this student. This unpredictable and pleasant surprise has the teacher pondering, perhaps "we are getting there" with this

student. Perhaps this unpredictable moment is evidence of a change in how the student *is* towards teaching; in the moment she shows a greater readiness towards the teaching vocation.

Having discussed stories in relation to the surprise and unpredictability of the play, the following story shows the embodied deliberation of being-in-the-play of relating.

I can remember a particular student who I observed on teaching practice in a school. He just couldn't get the class going. He couldn't even get into his introduction. I was sitting at the back, struggling with what to do. Do I stand up and take over? If I do that to him, what will happen to him as a teacher? After the lesson, he said that he just couldn't do it; I can't teach. I said, why won't you just raise your voice to get the students to settle down? He just couldn't do it. In the end, he actually left the course. (I8: S9)

The teacher is anxious about the situation that is unfolding between a student teacher, the children in the class, her own relationship to the student teacher and what is taking place. She wonders if she should intervene and how this might impact on the student and their confidence in the future? Equally important, the teacher wonders about the direction of the lesson. How long can she afford to think about this student and the lesson before such intervention would be necessary? Unlike her theoretical knowledge, in the movement of the relational play, the particulars of the situation she is experiencing “give way to paradox” (Phelan, 2001, p. 49). For this teacher, the lived and living experience of being-in-relationship contains particulars that are held in tension. For instance, what might be the consequences of intervening in the lesson from the student’s point of view, the children’s point of view, and from her own point of view? Alternatively, should she leap into the situation or should she wait? The teacher’s deliberations consider different possibilities.

The teacher’s deliberation relates to how she might *be* in this relational play with the student. The questions suggest sensitivities towards the student’s best interests and an appreciation of the fragility of this relational play. This play is fragile in having a call on the participants’ way-of-being and an influence on their becoming (Macintyre Latta, 2004). After all, this teacher is present for the purpose of evaluating the student’s teaching performance. Field and Latta (2001) suggest that such deliberations might involve “re-tracing the lived contours of [an] experience” (p. 888). The retracing involves the teacher reaching within and beyond the situation for a sense of how to be and become in the relating. Presently, this teacher is unclear as there are no specific

rules that can be applied to the situation (van Manen, 2002). Ideas that might have been developed here such as pedagogical thoughtfulness, tact and phronesis will be explored in the second section of this chapter. The purpose of these interpretative comments is to open understanding of the dynamic nature of the teacher's embodied deliberations as she lives within this relational play.

The embodied nature of the teacher's deliberations is shown in her anxiety. The teacher cannot stop this relational play, nor can she rewind the experience to adjust the nature of the play's unfolding. Relating is an embodied experience with a reciprocity that is integral to the moment (Field & Latta, 2001). Moreover this complex relational situation has a fluid nature that remains in flux for the teacher throughout the experience (Carr, 2000; Sidorkin, 2002). van Manen & Li (2002) suggest that "the practice of classroom teaching possesses this constant flux of actions and interactions, interventions and interruptions that reach forward and backwards in time" (p. 217). In a similar way, the teacher's deliberations are never static. Indeed, Heidegger (1987) would suggest that "everything is in flux. Accordingly there is no being. Everything 'is' becoming" (p. 97). This teacher's becoming and understanding occurs in and through the experience of relating with this student.

In the next story, a teacher describes a student whose contribution to a classroom discussion is very different from the way the conversation had been unfolding.

I was teaching one morning around underachievement in schools. How, as training teachers, can they meet the needs of some students with regard to assessment? In the course of the discussion, we were talking about going that little bit extra to form a relationship with the student and giving a little bit of your extra time to those that weren't doing OK. Was there something outside of the classroom or the structured lesson that you could do that would help them achieve more? We got onto the aspect of pastoral care.

One particular student said, well that sounds really nice and very idealistic but why am I going to give an extra hour or three hours a week to that student if I'm not getting paid for it? It was like calculating why I do the job. He instantly blew me away. Where are you coming from on this?

Before I had time to react to it, one of the other students openly challenged him and she said, if you've got that attitude, if you're just in it to fill in hours and take home wages, why do you want to be a teacher? Isn't teaching about helping people, of going that extra distance, of making a difference? And he said, yeah, as long as I'm getting paid for it. He was absolutely serious. He was straight up. Where's this guy coming from on that? He's no longer a face among the students. (I6: S2)

Amid a conversation exploring the support that might be offered to students who are struggling with their learning, this particular student expresses a concern for his salary in providing such support. Other students had been offering their thoughts to the discussion but what caught this teacher's attention was the student's apparent self-interest at a time when the support for under-achieving students was being explored. Moreover the student acknowledges the difference of their thoughts, contrasting his remarks with the perceived idealism of the conversation so far. This particular moment influences the movement of how this teacher and student relate. This teacher is on edge, attuning herself to the relational play that is unfolding between the teacher, the student, and the other students in the class.

The teacher finds herself feeling "blown away", thrown by the student's comments. The teacher struggles to understand where this student is coming from; perhaps *who* is this one who speaks? Thrown by the student's comments, the teacher searches for meaning that might be opened by her questions. Hostetler et al.(2007) suggest that perhaps "a first step for teachers in pursuit of meaning is to acknowledge their thrownness, which recognises the need to understand meaning as a search, an inquiry" (p. 234). The teacher's thrownness is a reminder that we are literally situated in the midst of a world of interplays beyond our control (Heidegger, 1996). Dunne (1997) suggests that thrownness is like the surprise of being caught in the accident which is the moment (Dunne, 1997). As the moment lingers, another student engages with this particular student. The teacher is not ready and able to relate differently; she is still searching for meaning in the play.

The teacher senses being lost in her inability to act in the moment. While lost in the uncertainty of the moment, another student steps in to challenge the student in terms of their expressed intentions. This teacher might choose to remove herself from the experience but instead she finds herself caught, if not "trapped", in the relational play. Field and Latta (2001) concur that "staying close to life in the classroom, not 'taking the fast way out the back door of flux' ... is difficult and at times impossible to do" (p. 891). The option of being outside of this moment is not available because the situation has already caught them. The teacher's experience of relating with the student is one of wrestling for a "way-to-be" amid the uncertainty of a very present and fluid reality

(Hare, 2005; Levin, 1985; Paterson et al., 1975; Riley-Taylor, 2002; Satina et al., 2001). Such wrestling seeks a way-to-be in the moment (Dunne, 1997, 1997).

The student's comments are not only heard but felt as being different. The teacher's uncertainty is embodied and revealed in her conversation with this experience. Her being lost relationally is felt in her whole being, such is the nature of this particularly concern-full experience that sweeps the teacher along with this student in a uncertain manner. Grondin (2001) suggests that some relational experiences overcome the participants and involve their whole being. The teacher in this story is certainly immersed in a bodily experience of relating that is of concern to her. The seriousness of this relationship is being played out within the teacher and between the teacher and the student (Dunne, 1997).

This story shows the seriousness and the frailty of the relationship between a teacher and a student. The seriousness is seen in the delicate opening and closing of relationship within a classroom dialogue (Dunne, 1997). Brought together for an educational endeavour, the teacher-student relationship moves and 'becomes' in the play. The relationship's becoming influences each person's openness to the other, which in turn, is integral to the future becoming of the relationship. This becoming is experienced in moments that change the nature and movement of the relating between a teacher and student.

The relationship that teachers have with their students changes moment by moment. For some teachers and students, such moments are pleasant and open a different way of relating with the other person. On other occasions, the sudden change in a moment can be traumatic and bring an uncertainty that throws one or both of those relating. Being in such experiences is an embodied moment, filled with anxiety and carrying the participants in the play, that is the teacher-student relationship.

The following poem speaks of an essence of relationship that lives between those in the play. In this way, the poem draws attention to the relationship that is between those in the play and the extent to which the play of relating is greater than the individuals involved.

Fire

*What makes a fire burn
is space between the logs,
a breathing space.
Too much of a good thing,
too many logs
packed in too tight
can douse the flames
almost as surely
as a pail of water would.*

*So building fires
requires attention
to the spaces in between
as much as to the wood.*

*When we are able to build
open spaces
in the same way
we have learned
to pile on the logs,
then we can come to see how
it is fuel, and absence of the fuel
together, that makes fire possible.*

*We need only to lay a log
lightly from time to time.
A fire
grows
simply because the space is there,
with openings
in which the flame
that knows just how it wants to burn
can find its way.*

(Brown, 2000)

In any moment, relationships gather and move, changing the nature of the “open spaces”. Some attune to the open spaces as the openness changes shape in the play that is relating.

The phronesis of play

In this section, the stories show various aspects of phronesis that are primordial to being in the play of relating. Within these stories, the phronesis is shown in terms of its resoluteness, techne, tact, pedagogical thoughtfulness, moral knowing, and attunement amongst other aspects.

In the first story of this section a teacher encounters some students whose comments and complaints concerned her and threaten the safety of other students in the class.

There were some students making rather racist comments in class. They got quite hot and anti-Maori. I suggested that they think about what they were saying. Two young women tried to suggest where they were coming from. They were getting mad at the same time. There were Maori in the group. I was feeling for those people and trying to protect them but not really knowing quite what to do.

I wasn't going to let people put other people down in that space. The only thing that really is important for me is that we respect one another. I said to the group that I was really disappointed. And I said, I really want to learn and I recognise that I haven't been listening to some of the perspectives as much as I could have, so I want to do that. That's why I am here because I do care about the dignity of every human being. There was quietness. I didn't know how it was accepted. We went on to this other activity. They were in groups and had to share something. It wasn't anything to do with things Maori. I came and sat in on a group that had one of the students who had made some of the racist comments earlier. I said something to them that obviously touched her and she started to cry and went out of the room. After class I asked her if we could just have a moment. She felt clear with me. (I3: S5)

This teacher is anxious about the comments some students are making in the course of a class dialogue. Her concern oscillates between wanting to challenge those speaking while trying to protect some other students who might have been distressed by what was being said. As the conversation continues, the student's comments became more heated and hurtful for other students in the class. In addition to feeling concerned for the students in the class, the teacher recalls being uncertain about how she ought to handle the situation. Not knowing quite what to do but acting on her appreciation of the entirety of the moment, the teacher becomes aware of a need to protect the safety of the classroom environment. She resolutely states, "I wasn't going to let people put other people down in that space". The movement of this play has the teacher becoming resolute in her primary concerns (Smith, 2007).

The teacher moves to shut down the dialogue in the interests of all the students, openly expresses her disappointment about the situation they were experiencing and shares in the responsibility for having been a part of how the dialogue had become. While shutting down the dialogue, the teacher opens the nature of her concerns for others to see and hear. The teacher calls for everyone to listen to each other respectfully. This is not an accusatory speech or a “shaming” of individuals, rather the teacher is appealing to the humanity of how they were relating to one another. Rather than blame, this teacher calls for a different way. The course of this relational play is influenced by the phronesis in the moment and raises an awareness and concern over their current ways of relating in this class.

Addressing the students and sharing the responsibility opens the space for teacher and students alike to consider the situation in a moment of silence and beyond. The teacher’s actions were not rehearsed, neither were they a part of the lesson plan. The teacher’s response in the moment was attentive to her concern and a matter of resolute improvisation. Polkinghorne (2005) refers to phronesis as a practical wisdom that “varies with situations, is receptive to particulars, and has a quality of improvisation” (p. 115). The phronesis in this moment has the teacher in a resolute position with an intuitive sense of how they would proceed with the learning experience (Brogan, 2005). It is only in the practice of being in-the-play that the practical wisdom (phronesis) reveals itself.

The practical wisdom the teacher opens in this moment with the class is not the result of intellectual cleverness (Gallagher, 1992), shrewdness (Gadamer, 1994), or the application of some theoretical understandings, but rather the phronesis takes on meaning in the concrete situation (Caputo, 1987). Carr (2000) suggests that phronesis shapes and guides through action that takes “its bearings from the particularities of the relational complexities coming together. The bearings like in constantly questioning what we see and think about the world as it opens up” (p. 101). Importantly, practical wisdom (phronesis) is not “ready” in advance of experiencing; rather the movement of the play opens and closes the possibility of such knowing.

The teacher’s concern for the dignity of every human being and the student’s safety in the classroom, regardless of their culture, shows a moral knowing. Indeed moral knowing and acting are intricately related and essential to a person’s actions. Such a

moral way of being is primordial to how a person is being-in-the-world. More than acting on a particular situation, a teacher's moral decisions and actions show whether they are "doing the right thing in a particular situation, [that is] seeing what is right within a situation and grasping it" (Gadamer, 1994, p. 317). In this way, Birmingham (2004) suggests that as a virtue, "phronesis is essentially moral" (p. 314). In this story, the teacher's actions call the students to a concern that is within and beyond the present moment; of essence to the teaching vocation.

The teacher in the following story feels continually confronted by a student who did not want to be a part of her course. The student's interactions begin to irritate the teacher.

I had one student that didn't want to do my course from day one. She got sick, can't come tomorrow. You know you're going to be sick tomorrow? The next week, I'm sorry I have to go early because I've got a doctor's appointment and so on right throughout the course of the year. She was probably one of the few students that I got quite agitated with.

In my course, they have a formative assessment whereby they get a practice run at their oral presentation and then the following week, after feedback, they get a chance to fix up what they need to fix up and the following week they do their summative assessment. On the formative assessment day, she turned up and said she couldn't attend the class; she had to go away and do something. So I told her: "You are aware that this is your practice run. If you don't do this, then next week you will actually have to do it first up and know it's pass or fail". "Hey that's alright, that's cool". "Are you sure?" "Yes". So off she went.

She turned up on the day of the summative assessment and said: "Can I do mine next week?" I said: "No you can't". "I'm not ready today". And I said, "Well I'm sorry that you are not ready, but you have to do it today". She said, "Can I do my formative today and do my final next week?" I said, "No, I'm sorry you can't". And she said, "But I didn't get a chance to do my practice run". I said, "You've had lots of opportunity, you didn't accept any of it". She said, "Well I won't do it". I said, "Well that's fine and that's your choice, but you realize that there are consequences of not doing it". She said, "What, will I fail?" I said, "You won't pass this paper". She said, "Well I don't care, it's only a stinking old course anyway".

That hurt. I wanted to get on my hobby horse and give her a lecture about respect and all the rest of it, but you've got to pick your battles. I still have to maintain that professionalism, because I'm the tutor and I'm responsible for all the students in my care.

I said to her, "Well that's OK, that's your opinion, you're entitled to that". She said "I'm going to go and talk to someone" and she stormed off in tears. When she went away, one of the other girls said to me, "She

knew, we all knew". I don't know who she went and spoke to. She came back half an hour later and she said, "I'll do it".

She was finally honest with me when she fronted up to do the assignment. Right at the very end. When she was out of choices. That was the first time she was honest, when she fronted up. After she had done it, she said, "I was so sure that you would fail me". I said, "You met the criteria". She said "But I thought because of you know, sort of what I said, that you would fail me anyway". I said, "No, it doesn't work like that". I complimented her and I said, "You did well". She said she was really surprised that she actually could do it. (I6: S5)

This teacher knew that the student was not committed to this course. The student's excuses become less subtle but spoken as a record that contact between the teacher and student had been made. The teacher reluctantly accepted the student's wish to be absent. The pattern of relating and the stream of excuses used began to agitate the teacher.

This pattern of relating continues until such time as the assessments for the course are organized. In the familiar exchange of excuses and acceptances, the teacher reminds the student of the consequences of her decisions. In the process, this student asks if the scheduling for her assessment can be at a different time. The teacher's resolute refusal opens a new set of excuses and hurtful comments about the course; something unexpected and unfair. The teacher sustains her intention of interacting with the student in, what would appear to the student as, a reasoned response. The teacher's way of relating with the student does not belie her agitation with the student.

The teacher's interactions with the student show nous. The teacher's nous in these moments is characteristic of phronesis (Brogan, 2005). Gadamer (1989) suggests that nous is the opposite of blindness. The teacher in this story is not blind to the student's intentions, indeed the teacher appears to play along with the avoidance game such that this put the responsibility for learning on the student. Seeing what the student was doing, the teacher's thoughtful and considered response opens up the opportunity for such students to re-consider their commitment to their own learning and the intention of teaching as a vocation.

Arendt (1958) makes the distinction between actions and fabrication. In this story, the student's excuses and the teacher's interactions appear as a fabrication. The student's

excuses are fabrications of their real intentions. Similarly, the student's intentions are very clear to the teacher, who works expediently towards such ends. The fabrication this teacher experiences "disguises, and sometimes obliterates meaningfulness" (Hostetler et al., 2007, p. 241) in relating with this student. In this way, the fabrication closes the opportunity for the teacher and student to relate meaningfully. While this teacher engages with this student, the teacher's nous grasps the entirety of the student's intent. The teacher acknowledges the process of interacting with the student finally ends with a greater honesty in how she relates to the teacher. As Birmingham (2003) notes, phronesis recognises and validates the personal elements of teaching. In holding her own values steady amidst the turbulence of this encounter, the teacher is able to "gift" this student with an opportunity to see for herself that she really can teach.

In the following story, a teacher takes the initiative to confront a student in her class, actions that are confrontational in nature.

I can think of one student who was reading magazines while I was lecturing. I spoke to her. "I really have this feeling that you are bored or something. I'm finding it really hard to make a difference". "Oh, you are very knowledgeable but we know all this stuff". And I said, "I really want to make a difference, that's all I want to do. Like you want to make a difference for children, I want to make a difference for students; that's how come I am here. And I find it very hard to contribute to you. I'm kind of stuck". "You can't. And anyway I'm passing everything so what does it matter?" "Well actually that's not true".

She came back to me the next day said, "I think you are right, it is hard to contribute to me and it is hard for me to receive feedback". I didn't trust her words. My suspicion is that she's always been able to fool people. (I15: S4)

The teacher takes the initiative to speak with a student whose conduct concerns her. In a similar way, the teacher's entry into the conversation is not rehearsed but it is intentional. The teacher acts in the moment, aware of the "full" situation, the risk and the possibility of confrontation (Field & Latta, 2001; Polt, 2005). There are no pre-meditated tactics, methods or plan. There is no time to consider theoretical possibilities of what might be the best solution. The teacher recognises that the moment to interact has arrived. She leaps into the dialogue as a resolute expression of her concern. The teacher's phronesis holds an understanding of "the real state of affairs" (Gadamer, 1989, p. 321) with this student.

The teacher's message is consistent and unwavering, "I want to make a difference". In response to the student's comments, the teacher persists through the responses to reinforce her message. The level of the teacher's concern is evident. Indeed the teacher's actions are consistent with her spoken words; she interacts with students relationally in order to make a difference. Despite the student's responses, the teacher presses on with this message.

In their next meeting, the student acknowledges that the teacher was right to raise her concerns. Normally, the words the student was speaking would have brought a degree of satisfaction. However, this teacher senses a lack of authenticity in the words the student was speaking. The teacher had the nous to recognise that this student was fabricating her comments to manipulate the teacher relationally (Arendt, 1958). The teacher could sense this, saying that she could not "trust her words".

Being in the play of relating with a student means being in a "realm of legitimate uncertainty and ambiguity that requires an ethical responsiveness or practical wisdom" (Phelan, 2001, p. 41). The teacher's concern focuses on the student and who they are becoming. The phronesis of this teacher's actions seeks to restore the *who* in the moment rather than the *what* of the lesson content. The learning experience is an engaging process rather than a "thing" that students acquire and accumulate (Field & Latta, 2001). The teacher's practical wisdom is not simply an intellectual act but a relational interplay of being and becoming.

In the next story, a student teacher watches a particular boy in a lesson and moves to interact with the child.

My Associate Teacher said, hey, you've got these kids in your group and they are sort of high maintenance. So I was watching one particular boy and I quietly pulled him outside. I said, can you give me a hand to pull this desk out? When we were outside I said to him, hey is the work too hard for you? And he just sort of looked at me with his big eyes. That's alright boy, you can tell me, is the work too hard for you? And he just stood there and shook his head. And I said, you just go and sit down again, I'll change it for you. So that's why, it's too hard for him. The eyes give it away – they do. You can see it in kids. It's amazing actually how much the eyes actually tell you. (III: S12)

In this story, a student teacher is watching the students he is working with after it is suggested that these students are "high maintenance". As he watches a particular boy,

he senses that the boy does not understand. van Manen (2007) describes such knowing as pathic knowledge, a knowledge which feels atmosphere, reads faces, and feels the mood of different situations.

In a “tact-full” manner, this teacher invites the student to leave the room and, in the absence of the other students in the class, asks the student whether he understands his work. The teacher has created this private moment within the movement of the lesson so that the child might help him understand what he is sensing. The teacher’s thoughtful manner opens up the opportunity for this child to confirm that the lesson activities are too difficult, albeit speaking inaudibly with his eyes. “To exercise tact”, says van Manen (1991), “means to see a situation calling for sensitivity, to understand the meaning of what is seen, to sense the significance of the situation, and to actually do something right” (p. 46). In this story, the student notices a unique occurrence and is aware that he does not understand what he is sensing. The significance of the felt experience in this moment is such that the teacher acts to open dialogue with the student. Birmingham (2004) suggests that seeing, understanding, sensing and doing are actions that appear to flow from a teacher’s pedagogical tact in the phronesis of the moment.

This teacher’s actions transform an unproductive situation into a critical learning experience for the teacher and the student (Cangelosi, 2004). This boy has been noticed. He has experienced being seen by the teacher (van Manen, 2002). Moreover the student’s experience is one of being seen by the teacher. In this way, “real seeing ... uses more than eyes” (van Manen, 2002, p. 31). Seeing this student as unique, and initiating a dialogue wherein the student held the knowing, moves this teacher and student thoughtfully on in their relationship.

The teacher did not know what would transpire with the student. He was acting in a moment on a pathic sense that the student might have more understanding of the moment than he had. van Manen & Li (2002) suggest that tactful teachers seem “to know just how to approach a student who potentially could be negative and disruptive” (p. 7). In the practical wisdom that arrives with the moment, this teacher acts to understand a child and thereby release the child from the pressures he was experiencing with the planned lesson. The teacher’s sensitivity and attunement to this situation changes the nature of play between himself and this student (van Manen, 2002). “True

pedagogy requires an attentive attunement to one's whole being to the child's experience of the world" (van Manen, 2002, p. 49). This teacher's actions reveal that *who* he is teaching is integral to *what* he is teaching.

In the final story, a lecturer and student teacher interact in a relationship that involves children and their expression.

Tania was someone who knew it all. She'd been out there working in the field for six years and knew everything there was to know. I went out to assess her teaching practice and was concerned. I could hear a lot of her voice and not a lot of the children's. I started talking to her about this and she said to me, well, what am I supposed to talk to them about? Well what can you talk about with children? What did you do this morning? What did they do when they got up this morning? Wouldn't that be a starting point? She said, I don't know whether I can do that.

So I just sat with the children and started talking to them about driving up to their town on that day and what I'd seen on the road driving up there that day. I saw this really really cute sheep. It was so little and so fluffy and I just wanted to get out and hold it. Then someone said, I've got a bear at home and he's soft. She could see by what I was doing. Then I said to her, now you go and sit with them, you share something with them. They were all over her. She couldn't get a word in edge ways. She was almost in tears because she was staggered at how much they were telling her. She hadn't realised.

She's a totally different person from the person on the first day. It had such an effect on her that it changed her as a person. Incredibly powerful. (118: S5)

In this story, a lecturer finds that talking *with* a student about her concerns over the student's way-of-being with children is met with questions and uncertainty from the student. Responding to the moment, the lecturer sits with the children and engages them in such a way that a reciprocity of relating is opened. She did not come to this experience expecting to be engaging with the children first-hand. It was the student teacher that they had come to relate to. In a particular moment, the lecturer's actions show the student *what* she had been explaining about *how* one might relate to children.

Rather than explaining how the student might be with the children, this teacher (the lecturer) is seen in this way of relating. This is not a show in the sense of a performance by the teacher. The sincerity of the teacher's relating with the children opens a very different dialogue. These children were "playing" freely in dialogue with the teacher. This teacher had not been talking the theory of relating with children, rather the way of

being with children that opens their voice. The theoretical understandings were suspended as the teacher opened a moment with the children that enabled the student to see and feel very different interactions. This teacher leapt in, uncertain of what might transpire but with an improvisation that is in the student's best interests. An exclusive focus on the techne of this moment might "squeeze out the self in teaching as the 'who' is sidelined and silenced by the 'what'" (Field & Latta, 2001, p. 886). The wisdom in the teacher's actions change how this teacher and student experience the play of their relating. While grasping the situation, the teacher's humility in this experience opens the possibility for this student of relating differently with the children (Field & Latta, 2001; Gadamer, 1989).

Brogan (2005) suggests that phronesis is a revealing. The teacher's actions in this story reveal a difference in the way of relating with children. Moreover, the teacher interactions with the children reveal to this student an absence in their way of playing with the children in dialogue. This situation is not hopeless for the student as she can now see how the teacher was interacting differently, a new potentiality of relating has been opened for her to experience (Ashworth, 2004).

Accepting the opportunity to be with the children in a different way, this student is overwhelmed and moved in the experience. Abandoned to the play of being with the children, the student experiences a way of relating they had previously not known. Field and Latta (2001) suggest that some experiences re-member us, causing us to be a different person in a different place. Theoretical words were not required as an experiential knowing had opened the student's understanding to relating in uncertainty and possibility.

Heidegger (1992) suggests that to teach is to let learn. In this story, the teacher's phronesis opens the possibility of the student's learning. The potentiality of the moment rests with the student to be in the uncertainty of the play that is the teacher-student relationship. Palmer (1998) suggests that many teachers are either not aware or are fearful of a "live" encounter with their students. That is, they are so pre-occupied with self preservation that they silence the voice of their students while sustaining control of the learning experience and the teacher-student relationship. In contrast, this story shows the ushering in of the student teacher and children to-the-play of relating. For the teacher, this was about a student teacher needing to be caught up in the

experience of relating with the children in a way that is unscripted and had a mystery of the as-yet-unthought (Heidegger, 1968). Like the teacher, this student teacher opens towards being drawn in and caught in the play. Both teacher and student teacher experience the unrehearsed to-and-fro movement of being in-the-play of relating (Gadamer, 1994).

Concluding thoughts

This chapter has focused on the play that is the relationship between a teacher and a student. Such a play exists as the relationship between teacher and student. The players in this play take for granted the moments and movement of the play and its hold over their way of being. In a similar way, the unpredictability and uncertainty of the play is seen in the phronesis that is opened in the moment in response to the play. Such practical wisdom, or indeed the absence of such, is not engendered as a cognitive act but rather a person's sensitised attunement to the movement of the play. A teacher's phronesis can be seen in their pedagogical tact, nous, resoluteness and their embodied sense of a way-to-be in the moment. Some teachers reveal an availability to another's learning that appears to abandon best theoretical understandings and their application. These teachers have a perception of the moment that influences how they are. This sensed knowing is not conceptual but perceptual.

It would appear that a teacher's phronesis best equips them for the play that is the teacher-student relationship. These teachers are sensitive to the paradoxical moments within their practice and embody a confidence to learn the way in the way. The unexpected is expected as the predictability of life is a given. While these teachers have learned theoretical understandings, the play of relating is particular and in the moment, an occasion that cannot be rehearsed. These comments should not suggest that being in the play of relating is a random chaotic experience (albeit casual observation of many teaching experiences might suggest this) but rather intentioned, alert, and thoughtfully reflective, these teachers show a phronesis and pedagogical tact that is attentive to the fullness of the moment.

Pre-service and beginning teachers need to grow their phronesis for being in relationship. The teacher-student relationship calls for such phronesis. Such understandings and practical wisdom are slowly nurtured in the experience of being in relationship with others. Phronesis does not involve the "mechanical application of

preestablished rules to a 'world already in place'. Phronesis is precisely the virtue that one can fall back on within a ... situation which is uncertain" (Gallagher, 2008, p. 8). The development of phronesis is not the development of method or technique (techne). Neither is phronesis a formula to be applied in advance of experience. In this way, there are no rules for the application of the rules. This is why technique is insufficient for teaching and learning. Phronesis involves the living in the experiential process of teaching and learning, a unique context that has understanding within and from the experience as it is lived.

Pre-service teacher education programmes that accentuate academic and theoretical understandings deduced from lived experience may not contribute to the growth of phronesis. Gadamer (1989) distinguishes techne from phronesis stating that "we learn a techne and can also forget it. But we do not learn moral knowledge [phronesis], nor can we forget it" (p. 317). Indeed some educators (van Manen, 2007; van Manen & Li, 2002) suggest that a discourse is needed that opens the students experiences towards the possibilities of phronesis. These educators advocate for hermeneutic inquiry of experience that sensitise student teachers to the particulars and nuances of their lived experience as this opens pathic understandings. Such phenomenological and hermeneutical practice afford moments of seeing meaning (van Manen, 2007, p. 11).

Preservice teachers need to acquire an appreciation and awareness of teaching as a thoughtful endeavour. van Manen (2002) suggests that "someone who is generally thoughtful is more likely to demonstrate tact in a particular circumstance than a person who is relatively thoughtless" (p. 43). What is suggested here is not the technical appraisal of reflective practice but rather the engagement of students with their own stories and those of others such that careful reflection on past experiences enable reflective capacities. Field and Latta (2001) suggest that the task of teacher educators is to create such spaces that students can open ontological understandings and become more sensitive to the possibilities inherent in experience. Becoming an experienced teacher involves becoming perceptive and discerning to the expected and unexpected that is the pedagogical moment within the relational play.

It would appear that the task of teacher education is to sensitise preservice teachers towards their own practice as lived. Such understandings must be developed alongside

theoretical understandings. Learning to be a teacher requires a sensitising, a discerning, and a change in perception towards lived moments of relationship.

More than the development of theoretical understandings, practical understandings and the development of competencies for application in classroom situations, the pedagogy of teacher educators needs to let students learn towards phronesis. Transmission models of learning and calculative thought are counter-productive to developing sensitivities and sensibilities of phronesis. A critically important question remains: how do student teacher's relational experiences with their lecturers enable their growth as teachers who act in the relational play that immediately presents itself as ambiguous, uncertain, and living?

Chapter 9: Conclusion

To look at any thing

*To look at any thing,
if you would know that thing,
you must look at it long:
To look at this green and say,
“I have seen spring in these
woods” will not do – you must
be the thing you see:
You must enter in
to the small silences between
the leaves,
you must take your time
and touch the very peace
they issue from.*

(Moffit, 2003, as cited in Intrator & Scribner, 2003, p. 124)

In this thesis I have “looked long” at the relational experiences in teacher education to find the small silences between the leaves that reveal the profound importance of how relating happens. Arriving at essential meanings of the teacher-student relationship has been a deeply personal experience; as both teacher and doctoral student I have “been the thing”. I have discovered the meanings are often not in the words that we speak. Instead they are woven within and between the words and behaviour we use, as if prior to language and beyond reductionist thinking. While this phenomenon exists in our everyday experience of education, the ontological meanings of the teacher-student relationship are presently outside the predominant educational discourse. While we know that relating is essential to the experience of education, I argue that such understanding is presently taken for granted.

In this final chapter of the thesis I articulate the thesis of the thesis and consider how it resonates with other research findings. I offer recommendations for teacher education. This discussion continues with limitations, and the opportunities for further research. I return to the first chapter, and show how my own understandings and appreciation of relational experiences have been re-shaped through this journey. I conclude by once more offering words to address my research question.

Let me try to synthesise the insights from this thesis with an example from my own life experience, drawn from an interaction with one teacher that occurred over thirty years ago. This story focuses on a meeting that occurs between the teacher, whom I deeply respected, and myself as we arrive for another class together.

I was in an afternoon class with a lecturer I respected. He just seemed to be alive in his teaching, interacting with us as if he was personally interested with us. I worked hard in this class, at times feeling like I was working for him as much as for myself. One particular afternoon, we were joking around a bit more than normal. I was winding up some of my classmates, just clowning around. Out of the blue, the teacher said to me, put your head down and get on with it. You've been slack today. I was shocked. Is he putting me in my place? What right does he think he has? I'm doing well in this paper! I didn't say anything else in class for the rest of the session. I was annoyed. My teacher continued to move around the class. I left class that day annoyed at the teacher.

This paper had another class the next day. I wasn't looking forward to it. I was at the back of a bunch of students entering the room, just out of sight from the teacher, when I heard his voice. He was saying, where's Giles? Is he still upset with me? I froze. How did he know? Could he see me? What do I do? Before I could do anything, I am walking through the door and find myself face to face with the teacher. Giddy Len, it's nice to see you I said. I didn't mean it. But he had this kind of puzzled look on his face. After a moment, he said, wow, you really are mature. I felt terrible – here was a teacher I cared about. And he was right to put me in my place - I was not working yesterday in class. And now, as he waits for me to come to class, here I am lying to him. If only he hadn't said anything. (II: S2)

This teacher knew me to the extent that he could “read” me. In the midst of his many teacher-student relationships and responsibilities, this teacher sensitively reads a particular individual in their presence; me. In so doing, this teacher’s way-of-being comported an embodied and holistic interest in one individual amongst many during the busyness at the start of a class. This interaction showed me the teacher’s caring and humanistic concern. My academic results and pattern of attendance were probably important matters, but in this experience, I was cared for as a person, an individual who mattered to this teacher. This experience was influential on my decision to embark on a teaching career.

This teacher’s actions caught my attention and threw me. I was suddenly uncertain as to how I should relate with this teacher as I had not been in an experience like this before. Caught in this unfolding and unscripted experience, I am found in a relational experience that is never static or able to be suspended for consideration. Rather,

relationships with teachers remain in play. Alphonse (1999) suggests that the relational play between a teacher and student has a dynamic, to and fro, reciprocity that is lived moment by moment (Alphonse, 1999). In these moments, teachers live their phronesis as they attune to the particularities of each moment. This teacher's ability to read and provoke me showed an appreciation of the delicacy of the relational context.

Over time, I have considered this teacher's connection with me and his lasting influence. I have found that my relationship with this teacher is not a relationship that I can choose to leave as this relationship exists in this teacher's presence and in his absence. While the nature of my relational connectedness with this teacher is variable; a basic relational bond exists that is *a priori*. Moreover, I am not only mindful of this experience, but the experience continues to occupy my thinking about the essential nature of the teacher-student relationship. It is as if my relationship with this teacher has me in a changing and relational historicity (Bingham & Sidorkin, 2004). My thinking draws me to the relational experience and the nature of this teacher's comportment as this was turned towards me. As Hostetler, Macintyre Latta & Sarroub (2007) suggest, "in action people reveal who they are" (p. 235).

How was it that this teacher could *read* me in the midst of the activity of teaching and learning? Was this something learned, trained, or a skill? Was this an experience where the teacher's phronesis arose in the moment of meeting? This personally powerful and moving experience turned my attention to the nature of the relational connection that is the essence of education. How are other teachers (lecturers) and student teachers in relationship? What is the meaning of the teacher-student relationship?

This story has highlighted the interactions I had with a particular teacher. It should be noted that these interactions occurred in a class where there are always lots of possibilities for relating with different people in this context. While this experience is told in terms of my interaction with the teacher, the timing of my movement into the room, my attentiveness to what the teacher was saying, the teacher's particular words, and the particular way of meeting occurred in the company of the many other student-student and teacher-student relationships. In a similar ways, the stories in this thesis have a similar essence. While we hear the story from an individual, it is told with reference to the activities and relating of others present in the experience. I would argue

that the essence of relating holds true regardless of the number of people present in the particular space.

Thesis of the thesis

Relationships are essential to the experience of education whether they are recognised or not. When the relationship between a teacher and a student is good we seldom attend to the relationship. While the relationship matters to the experience, the relationship lies out of sight and is largely taken for granted. Indeed there does not appear to be any thinking or wondering about the relationship or the ability of the teacher and student to relate.

On other occasions, the assumption that relationships matter is called into question. In these times, the teacher-student relationship is a worry to the student and stressful for the teacher. In a similar way, an indifferent relationship causes dis-ease. In these moments, the concern over the relationship foregrounds the teaching-learning experience for those involved.

With the possibility of incorrectly assuming that the relationship is mattering, it is critically important that teacher educators, and teachers alike, become more attentive to how their relationship is with their students individually and collectively. Teacher educators need to have the ability to relate to their students, as well as the attunement to see how these relationships are mattering.

Links to other research

There are links between the findings of this phenomenological research and the *concernful practices* that were revealed phenomenologically in the work of Diekelman (2001, 2002), Diekelman and Ironside (1998), Ironside (2005), amongst others. The concernful practices that were identified include, Gathering: Bringing in and calling forth; Creating places: Keeping open a future of possibilities; Assembling: Constructing and cultivating; Staying: Knowing and connecting; Caring: Engendering community; Interpreting: Unlearning and becoming; Presencing: Attending and being open; Preserving: Reading, writing, thinking, and dialogue; Questioning: Meaning and making visible (Diekelmann, 2001). The concernful practices are in the language of 'doing with', showing that a teacher cannot simply plan and act but rather is always in relationship with students. Being attuned to the relationship and consciously putting

strategies in place to nurture and grow the relationship is at the heart of Diekelmann and Ironside's concerned practices and strongly resonates with the findings of this thesis. Where they articulated the activities that underpin effective relationship, my work places more emphasis on the 'person', be that a teacher or students, and the play between.

In addition, there is a link between the ontological findings of this research and the work of Dall'Alba and Barnacle (2007) in tertiary education. Dall'Alba and Barnacle facilitate an educational programme for tertiary teaching staff that are new to teaching and learning in a university context. Their expressed intent is to engage the participants towards a greater attunement with the ontological nature of being-in-teaching. Similarly, the work of Macintyre Latta centers on the dynamic process of becoming within teaching and learning. van Manen's research has links to this research in terms of the hermeneutic phenomenological method and the collection of experiential stories within the context of secondary teacher education. van Manen's most recent writing (van Manen, 2007; van Manen, 2006) considers teacher's comportment through a concern for the pathic sensibilities of pre-service teachers.

A final example from tertiary and teacher education is the research and work of Parker Palmer. Palmer's (1998) writing opens the relational connectedness that exists between teachers and students. His notion that we teach out of *who we are* has links to the influence of a teacher's way-of-being or comportment in the teaching-learning experience. While these intentions are similar to the present research, the context of this inquiry has focused specifically on the relational nature of the educational experience in teacher education.

Recommendations

Relationships are essential to a positive teaching-learning experience such that:

- Teacher educators need to be showing how relationships matter in their practice.
Teacher educators need to show a deepening sensitivity to their relational experiences with students. Such sensitivity models how the teacher educator is being-in-teaching

Opportunities invariably present themselves with students where a shared experience can be opened afresh and reconsidered for its meaning. Such a

dialogue moves towards ontological meanings rather than pre-determined meanings and shows the complex, complicated, connected and uncertain nature of relational experiences. It is the responsibility of teacher educators across the teacher education programme to model such practice and take opportunities to reconsider the relational nature of particular experiences. It is critically important that such practice is not considered the domain and specialism of one particular department or course. Such thinking would constrain the dialogue to a technocratic consideration of experience rather than the meaning of particular lived experiences.

- Teacher educators need to be held accountable for how they relate to students.

Stories from the small number of students who participated in this study revealed teachers who were uncaring, disrespectful, abusive and demotivating. Some stories told how students sought to avoid relational interactions with these teachers. The challenge for educational managers is to first identify teachers who consistently offer a poor standard of education, and then to take appropriate steps to either help them attain an appropriate manner of relating, or support them in finding alternative employment.

- Teacher educators need to critically engage in conversations about the comportment of teachers.

Conversations about comportment invariably focus on teaching practice. Comportment is a topic of conversation that is pertinent to the practice of teacher educators, student teachers, beginning teachers and teachers more generally. Staff that teach in teacher education programmes need to consider the nature of acceptable comportment both in terms of how they will be judged themselves and what they expect of students.

A regular staff forum could be instigated on a topic such as comportment. The forum would need to occur when there were no classes and appointments scheduled. The key elements to the success of this conversation would be the deepening dialogue that results from spending time in a sensitive, non-threatening and facilitated conversation. A teacher's comportment is intricately linked to the nature and expression of the organisational culture within the institution. As such, I would argue that a contemplative of such matters requires

the full involvement and participation of all staff involved in the organisation including the educational leaders, teaching staff, and where appropriate, the administrative staff.

Finding greater agreement and authenticity with respect to the comportment of faculty is of critical importance. Is it acceptable for a teacher to bore students, to belittle them, to not show up for class, to be disinterested? If not, what can be done to resolve such behaviours?

- Teacher education programmes need a strong focus on the priority of relationships and the opportunity for students to reflect on their own relational sensibilities.

Teacher education programmes seek to equip and enable beginning teachers for a teaching vocation that is relational and involves *who* the teacher is, and *how* he or she relates with others. This outcome is more than a body of knowledge or a set of competencies; rather, the primary concern of a teacher education programme ought to be the formation of people whose professional role will be that of a teacher (Birmingham, 2004). The content and pedagogy of teacher education programmes needs to deepen pre-service teachers' sensitivity and attunement to the relational experiences in which they find themselves. To this end, teacher education programmes need to engage students in contemplative and phenomenologically reflective experiences.

This intention also acknowledges that becoming experienced is about understanding how to deal with the unexpected, the indeterminable. In this way, teaching practice involves the deepening appreciation of the uncertain and unexpected moments of relating (Field & Latta, 2001, p. 891). I argue that teachers who have phronesis are better equipped for the relational uncertainty of teaching and learning.

Teacher education programmes centred on phronesis create spaces that incite deliberative and contemplative thinking that allow students to “see” meanings in relational moments (Field & Latta, 2001; Hostetler et al, 2007). These educational opportunities enable pre-service teachers to hold an open-mindedness and avoid the extremes of impulsiveness and rigidity as, according to Birmingham (2004) they:

Learn how and when to trust certain feelings, and they develop habits of attitude and feeling that enable them to reliably make good judgements without being aware of following a procedure. (p. 321)

For van Manen (2007), phenomenological reflection through reading and writing can open possibilities for the re-seeing of meaning within lived relational experiences. The intention is to open phenomenological aspects of teaching and learning through a language which is oriented to the experiential nature of being-in-teaching (van Manen & Li, 2002). Experiential stories are not only the site of inquiry but also provide the “opportunity for reflecting on practice” (van Manen, 2007, p. 20). Field and Latta (2001) describe this process as “re-tracing the lived contours of experience” (p. 888) as this opens the multiple layers of meaning within an experience. Such activity “makes demands on us that find expression in our practices” (van Manen, 2007, p. 22).

Recently, I was working with my second year pre-service teachers who had just returned from a teaching practicum. The session was given over to reflecting on this experience. Influenced by this research, I started the class by asking the students to write two stories from their practicum experience with a child or children, one story to describe a most *exhilarating* experience and the other to describe a most *challenging* experience. They were then asked to interpret the meaning shown within these stories, individually, in small groups and then collectively as a class. The class concluded with students animated in their excitement about their learning. The student’s stories opened up valuable insights about the way that relationships were mattering on a day-to-day basis.

- Teacher educators need to explore the tensions of when a relationship crosses professional boundaries.

Lived experiences of the teacher-student relationship occur outside the techniques and rules designed to control such an experience. The relational experience occurs in the dynamic interaction between the individuals involved. This relational context has an uncertainty and risk that may cross professional boundaries. Given the need for accountable and responsible practice on the part of the teacher educator on one hand, and the reality of an unscripted play of

relating on the other, the tension associated with a lack of relational safety needs to be explored.

For teachers who find themselves in a relationship with a student where they feel vulnerable there needs to be someone they can go to for guidance and support. Similarly, students need a clear, safe process to discuss a relationship with a teacher that feels unsafe.

In uncovering both the strength of teacher-student relationships that work well and the dangers of those that do not, these recommendations call for an attentiveness to the ontology of relationship. This is sensitive ground where there are no simple answers as there are no simple explanations for how the teacher-student relationship is experienced.

Opportunities for further research

In this section I propose a number of research inquiries that arise from this phenomenological study.

- ***Inspiring and respected teachers.*** This research has identified some teachers and teacher educators whose way-of-being shows that the teacher-student relationship matters. Very often, these teachers are described as inspiring and respected. Further phenomenological inquiry could consider stories about such teachers as this enables understanding of the influence of an inspiring / respected teacher. Such research would reveal further insights related to comportment.
- ***Phronesis.*** This research has noted the importance of the phronesis that arises as teachers become experienced. Research questions might include the following: How is a beginning teacher's phronesis shown in relational experiences? How does a beginning teacher's phronesis change over their first year of teaching, after two years, five years and ten years? Or how does the phronesis of a beginning teacher develop? This research inquiry could be in the form of a longitudinal case study (Crotty, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).
- ***The life "within" relating.*** This research has found that the teacher-student relationship is made up of a teacher, student and their relating. Importantly, the relationship is more than the individuals involved. Stories of the experience of relationship show the movement of a relational play that appears to have a life of

its own. What is the nature of those moments described as being moments of life that capture one's entire being and its possibilities?

- ***Student's feedback on teacher's relational sensibilities.*** This research has shown that the meaning of the teacher-student relationship includes a teacher's comportment or way-of-being. Most often however, evaluative feedback on teacher educators is organised as a survey with a heavy reliance on Likert-scale questions. Further research could revisit the teacher-student relationship through an evaluative lens. More specifically, a research project could explore the construction of an evaluative tool where students provide feedback on teacher's relational attributes. The research question might be: How can students provide feedback on their teacher's relational sensibilities? This research could be conducted as collaborative action research.
- ***In-service teacher education.*** Opportunities exist for the research and design of in-service courses for practising teachers and teacher educators that open and enable a reconsideration of the relational essence of education. The inquiry would involve the research, design and implementation of various curriculums intended to assist practicing teachers and teacher educators to reconsider their own practice. A professional development model that utilises an action research approach would be appropriate for this type of inquiry.
- ***Relational models of teacher education.*** Research is needed to re-appropriate teacher education programmes to a relational model for teacher education. Such a re-appropriation would seek to realign the programme's aspirations towards ontological imperatives with regards to the phenomenological nature of the teacher-student relationship. In the process, the research would need to revisit assessment and compliance documentation, graduate profiles and statements of competence. The research approach would involve debate and dialogue amongst the participants as they wrestle with the hegemonic practices associated with teacher education. Some research has been initiated which has sought to explore a greater phenomenological and ontological priority within education. van Manen (2007), and more recently van Manen and Li (2002), have engaged secondary pre-service students in phenomenological reflective practice towards a greater sensitivity to their pedagogical practice. Dall'Alba and Barnacle (2007) are presently integrating ontological concerns in the professional

development of teachers new to a university context. Field and Latta (2001) and Hostetler et al (2007) have been re-thinking and re-practicing an ontological priority in aesthetic education of in-service teachers. The possibilities of ongoing research are many.

Limitations of this research

There are a range of limitations in this research that relate to the phenomenological method, the research design, and the range of participants.

Phenomenological method

This research has been positioned as interpretive research and has sought to open various interpretations of the meaning of the teacher-student relationship. It can not be the final word on the phenomenon given the nature of interpretative work and the multiple interpretations that exist within and across different people. The phenomenological process is imbued with moments of contemplation and intuition that are an essential part of analysis. van Manen (1990) describes such moments as moments of seeing meaning. The decisions made about essential meanings stand against other research approaches that might identify the emergent themes at a point of data saturation where additional information about the theme is not forthcoming with additional task analysis. Similarly, a further concern with phenomenological research is the tendency to prematurely name themes in such a way that the naming closes off thinking about the particular feature of the phenomenon. In this way, the intuitive and contemplative nature of phenomenological research can be prone to interesting ideas that reveal more of the researcher's interest than they do the essence of the everyday experiences of the phenomenon. Through regular critique by supervisors and others involved in dialogue I have worked to recognise identified blind spots but this is never completely possible because of the infinite and ever evolving nature of human understanding.

Similarly, this phenomenological research has given priority to the participants' lived experience, and by so doing, its methodology limits perspectives that might be gained from feminist and / or critical critique. Similarly, the research approach limits the gathering of ideological and wider contextual influences. One such critique might be that this study has not had explicit concern for the power imbalance that exists in the teacher-student relationship.

Research design

This phenomenological research is a small study that involves seventeen participants and a total of nearly a hundred and twenty stories. The number of participants and stories is a very small subset of the many participants and stories that are available for such research. Similarly, this research has been conducted at a particular point in time whereby the data collection and analysis occurred between 2004 and 2008. It is anticipated that other findings might have arisen had these parameters been different.

Participants

The participants for this research were lecturers and student teachers from five universities in the upper North Island of New Zealand. As the participants were referred to me using the snowballing effect, the spread of participants were from the upper North Island. In this sense, the research might be deemed to have a regional rather than national focus.

There were nine lecturers and eight student teachers who participated in this study; of the 17 participants, 14 were female. There were only four ethnicities identified by the participants among a much broader range that exists in New Zealand society. It is understandable that the ages of the lecturers are higher than those of the student teachers. An opportunity might have been lost through the absence of younger academic staff and older student teachers.

The influence of this phenomenological research

The introduction to this thesis opened up details of this research journey and my pre-assumptions concerning relationships in education. The research experience has been an exhilarating and deeply humanising experience for me. I cannot understate the powerful influence that this research has had on my way-of-being personally and as a teacher educator.

While I have found the importance to me of the teacher-student relationship has remained unchanged, my understanding of the *meaning* of the teacher-student relationship and the impact that this has on educational practice has been significantly transformed. The rationale for my ongoing commitment to relational education is more readily underpinned by the ontological understandings that emerged through my engagement with this study.

Pre-assumptions

This research experience has influenced my pre-assumptions. On one hand, I now understand that the teacher-student relationship exists as a consequence of our shared humanity. The teacher-student relationship invariably starts prior to the first class and continues well beyond the formal educational interactions of a particular course.

I had believed that the teacher-student relationship was of greater concern to teachers than students yet the findings show that both the teacher and the student are attentive to the teacher-student relationship and its movement. Each person's awareness and attunement are intricately involved in the lived reciprocity and mutuality that is a particular relationship.

The ontological and phenomenological findings in this research have challenged some taken for granted assumptions that derived from behaviourist and cognitivist approaches to education. For me, the teacher-student relationship is not a causal or linear relationship but rather one that is "lived" ontologically as a "playful" relational movement that holds a sense of wonder, mystery, surprise and risk.

I now understand that the teacher-student relationship is experienced *with* a teacher and a student rather than *from* a teacher *to* a student. While this might be the appearance of relating ontically, this is not the case ontologically. The teacher-student relationship is more than the sum of the teacher, student and their relationship.

In the past, I readily advocated for holistic concern because this identified the student's head, heart and hands. I now consider the teacher-student relationship as an embodied and holistic being-together-in-the-world. In this way, a student is not the integration of a number of parts but a person who exists entirely and bodily alongside and inextricably related to others.

I had previously believed that the best educational practice occurred in teacher education programmes. This has been challenged by stories of experiences that revealed uncertainty and lack of safety in this relationship. The teacher-student relationship remains essential despite the priority for academic outcomes in an increasingly technicist context (Thrupp, 1999; Thrupp & Wilmott, 2003). This research has shown that, regardless of the teacher's priorities, the experience of the

teacher-student relationship cannot be planned but is “authored” in the presently unfolding relational experience.

Concluding comments

Educational experiences are primordially relational. Understanding the primordial nature of relationships is essential to the educational experience. In this way, relationships are a given in an experience which is felt and read by those involved, whether they are consciously aware of this or not. Well-intentioned educational courses advocating critical and humanistic theories suggest that relationships matter. Indeed, many learning communities share a common educational ideology that purports a serious concern for relationships. This research suggests that when the teacher-student relationship matters, this can be seen and felt in each person’s way-of-being.

Teachers and teacher educator’s dispositions and sensibilities towards relationships are of critical importance to the educational endeavour. Inspiring teachers, having such dispositions and sensibilities, leap into relational experiences and avail themselves of the relational moment and its movement. Alert to the relationship as it claims and becomes them, such teachers inspire others with *how they are* in-relationship. These teachers become increasingly experienced in reading the relationship and living a phronesis for the moment.

Reclaiming the priority and centrality of the teacher-student relationship in education involves a renewed awareness and attunement to our being and becoming in the relationships that constitute the educational experience. Foregrounding relationships in education has the potential for humanising educational praxis in the face of powerful and dominant educational discourses and practices that have taken the teacher-student relationship for granted for the sake of the system that ought to serve it.

Therefore, I call teachers and educational leaders alike to a greater attunement towards the essence of the educational experience: relationships. Relationships speak *us*; so what is being said? At a time when education suffers from the “pain of disconnection” (Palmer, 1998, p. 90) individually and systemically, this is not a time for more disembodied academic words. Rather, our educational context and recent educational history needs courageous teachers, and teacher educators, who will evoke and engender the relational nature of education *in practice*.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Ethics Approval



MEMORANDUM

Academic Services

To: Liz Smythe
From: **Madeline Banda**
Date: 6 October 2004
Subject: 04/155 Exploring relational experiences in teacher education

Dear Liz

Thank you for providing clarification and/or amendment of your ethics application as requested by AUTEK.

Your application was approved for a period of two years until 6 October 2006.

You are required to submit the following to AUTEK:

- A brief annual progress report indicating compliance with the ethical approval given.
- A brief statement on the status of the project at the end of the period of approval or on completion of the project, whichever comes sooner.
- A request for renewal of approval if the project has not been completed by the end of the period of approval.

Please note that the Committee grants ethical approval only. If management approval from an institution/organisation is required, it is your responsibility to obtain this.

The Committee wishes you well with your research.

Please include the application number and study title in all correspondence and telephone queries.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Madeline Banda', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Madeline Banda
Executive Secretary
AUTEK

Cc: 0318327 David Giles dgiles@aut.ac.nz

Appendix 2: Letter to participants

David Giles
School of Education Te Kura Mātauranga
Auckland University of Technology
Private Bag 92006
Auckland

Wk 09 917 9999 x 7344
Mb 021 354 448
Email dgiles@aut.ac.nz

[date]

Dear [participant]

Greetings again. I trust this letter finds you well and engaging with life to its fullest! Before I ask you to consider some thoughts, I want to express my deep appreciation for the opportunity you gave me to interview you for my doctoral studies. The transcripts have provided me with substantial material which I am presently interacting with. The methodology that I am using requires me to work with each transcript before moving on to the next person's transcript. You can imagine - this is a lengthy process.

My purpose for writing is two fold.

Firstly, I have attached the stories that I have drawn from our interview for your reading. Please note that, for anonymity purposes, I have changed the names of all those mentioned in the interview, including your own. Would you mind reading these stories with the view to (a) confirming the information and (b) allowing me permission to formally work with these stories in an interpretive way.

- *If you are in agreement, would you mind initialling each story as a sign of your permission.*
- *Alternatively, if you wish to edit any story, please make your notes on the particular story.*
- *If you have grave concerns over a story, can you note this on the particular story so that I can contact you and discuss this.*

I would ask that you return the stories in the stamped addressed envelopes provided.

Secondly, I have a need for which I am asking your assistance. I have a need for further participants in my study. If you are able, would you consider others I might approach to participate in this research. If you are able to provide me with some names and contact numbers, I would be keen to approach these folk, explain the purpose of the research and invite them to participate.

The participants for this research must be either (a) a student teacher would has, or is, experiencing a teacher education programme, or (b) a lecturer in a teacher education programme. I would prefer that these participants are located in the top half of the North Island for travel reasons.

Again, thank you for your consideration of these matters. Please feel free to contact me over any matter listed above.

Alternatively, should my communication with you or expectations cause you concern, please don't hesitate calling my primary supervisor, Dr Liz Smythe (extn 7196) at AUT.

Sincere thanks.

David Giles

Participant Information Sheet

Date Information Sheet Produced: 07 July 2004

Project Title Exploring relational experiences in Teacher Education

Researcher *David Giles*
Senior Lecturer, AUT

Kia ora, welcome.

Are you a lecturer or student within a teacher education programme?
Are you interested in contributing to our understanding of the relational exchange between students and staff within teacher education programmes?

If you have said “yes” and “yes”, I would like you to consider participating in a research project which intends to explore phenomena associated with the experiences we recall about the nature of our teaching & learning experiences. This research project is part of a doctoral degree.

What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of the research is to document stories associated with relational experiences within teacher education programmes. Experiences of the interchanges between teaching staff and students will be sought for analysis. That is, your experiences will be analysed for underlying meanings.

How are people chosen to be asked to be part of the study?

Ten (10) lecturers and ten (10) students within teacher education programmes across AUT, University of Auckland, University of Waikato and Auckland College of Education will be chosen for the study.

What happens in the study?

Your part in the study is an opportunity to recount experiences that relate to relational aspects of your teaching and learning in teacher education programmes. As you recount these stories and in order to capture the fullest description of your story, a tape recorder will record your contribution while I will make notes of supplementary questions that arise from your dialogue.

Stories from the various participants will be recorded and analysed in a process known as hermeneutics. The purpose of a hermeneutical analysis is to uncover the meanings within the texts.

What are the discomforts and risks?

At times, you may choose to recount teaching and learning experiences that, for you, did not have a positive outcome for you. In the process, this may be distressing for a time.

Alternatively, you might find the tape recorder somewhat intrusive initially. I apologise for this in advance. My interest in the research is such that the focus on my attention will be on you and your stories. I trust then that we can work together to lessen the impact of the tape recorder.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

Be assured that I am grateful for your willingness to share your stories. If, in the process, you wish to take a break, then you only need to indicate. Alternatively, you may choose to stop the process, thereby enacting your right to discontinue.

What are the benefits?

My hope would be that this research might uncover phenomena underpinning relational exchanges between teaching staff and students that reveal relational education in action. That is, our stories might give understanding to the way and depth to which staff and students engage in the process of learning.

How will my privacy be protected?

- The information you contribute will be transcribed and shown to you in the first instance.
- After this, only the researcher and research supervisors will view the transcripts in their capacity of overseeing the analysis of the data.
- On completion of the research, the data will be stored securely for a period of six years, after which the written documents will be shredded and audio tapes wiped.
- Your anonymity is assured in that your name and personal details will not be used in this research report.

How do I join the study?

Your participation in this project is complete upon (1) reading this Participant Information Sheet, (2) having any further questions you might have clarified, (3) deliberating on the cost to you personally and (4) signing the "Consent to Participation in Research" form.

What are the costs of participating in the project?

The cost of participating in this research project is your time. I require around 2 hours of your time at a time that is mutually beneficial.

Opportunity to consider invitation

You may wish to deliberate on your involvement in this research. In the event that this path is followed, then I would ask that you contact me regarding your decision to participate. The contact details are on the bottom of this sheet.

Opportunity to receive feedback on results of research

If you wish, I would welcome the opportunity to discuss the results of the research. When the research is complete, I would be keen to present the findings through conference presentations and publications.

Participant Concerns

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor. Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary, AUTECH, Madeline Banda, madeline.banda@aut.ac.nz, 917 9999 ext 8044.

Researcher Contact Details: David Giles
Senior Lecturer

Work Phone 09 917 9999 x 7344
Mobile 021 35 444 8
Email dgiles@aut.ac.nz

Project Supervisors Contact Details:

Liz Smythe
Work Phone
Email LSMYTHE@aut.ac.nz

**Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on
the 6th October 2004.**

AUTEC Reference number is 04/155

Appendix 4: Informed consent

Consent to Participation in Research

This form is to be completed in conjunction with, and after reference to, the AUTEK Guidelines (Revised January 2003).

Title of Project: **Exploring relational experiences in Teacher Education**

Project Supervisor: **Liz Smythe**

Researcher: **David Giles**

- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project (Information Sheet dated 07 July 04)
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- I understand that the interview will be audio-taped and transcribed.
- I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will be destroyed.
- I agree to take part in this research.
- I wish to receive a copy of the report from the research.

Participant signature:

Participant name:

Participant Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....

Date:

**Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on
 6 October 2004
 AUTEK Reference number is 04/155**

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.

Appendix 5: Research question / Interview questions

RESEARCH QUESTION

What is the meaning of the teacher-student relationship?

FOR TEACHERS

I am interested in experiences which show the teacher-student relationship within the teaching-learning experience in the context of teacher education.

Tell me about how you relate to students – give me some examples

Tell me about a time when you felt you really made a difference to a student's learning experiences.

Tell me about a time when you found it difficult to relate to a student.

FOR STUDENTS

I am interested in experiences which show the teacher-student relationship within the teaching-learning experience in the context of teacher education.

Tell me about a really good teacher you have had.

Tell me about a relationship with a teacher that seemed to influence your learning, for better or worse.

Tell me about a time when you found it difficult to relate to a teacher

Appendix 6: Extract from the transcript of an interview with Mary, followed by a crafted story

[] comments has been inserted. Strikethrough is deleted in the crafted story.

Making a difference: Peter

~~We'll talk about Peter.~~ When [Peter] ~~he~~ started [his course] ~~off~~ here, he was asking for an extension every time there was an assignment due. And then this happened. ~~He's now nearing the end of his second year.~~ And, they had a death in the family, and the grandparents had to come from [overseas] ~~Tonga~~ to the funeral, but were too old to travel on their own.

So Peter comes bounding into my office as he does, ~~quite often, which is good.~~ And he says ~~to me~~, ohhh, there's been this death. And I said, I am so sorry to hear that, what does it mean for you? And he said, well I am the only one in my family that is not working so I have been elected to go across ~~to Tonga~~ and fetch the grandparents and bring them back. And I have to go on Friday. ~~And it was the Friday~~ and I thought, here it comes, now he's going to ask for an extension because he had two assignments due for me. One ~~for reading and one for~~ gifted and talented, ~~for which on that Friday, which he was now not going to be there for, they were also going to do~~ [was to be] a presentation [to his] ~~as part of their~~ tutorial group.

And he sa[id] ~~ys to me~~, I've got both my assignments ready to hand in early and I want to know if I can ~~just~~ do my presentation to you because I am not going to be in ~~class~~ tomorrow to do it with the class. And I just thought, you know, we're getting there with Peter.

What a transition from sitting at the back doing nothing, ~~he's now happy~~ to sit[ting] anywhere and be[ing] in any group. He's taken on the work ethic and I think he's going to be a successful teacher as a result. ~~Whereas, I was a bit worried I must say~~ at the beginning.

I think its all those things and I've also taught him a lot [and] ~~I've taught him English, and Maths 1 and Maths 2 and Health and PE and now reading so I've had him heaps.~~ So I think that's been a good platform to establish a relationship. And I think that, gradually as [he got] ~~they get to know me, [he knew] they know~~ I will turn myself inside out for [him] ~~them; that I am there for [him] them.~~ That's why I am here. Course I am here for me and my salary and all that but I am here for them. And I really believe what I said 2 M today that my satisfaction comes from [him] ~~them~~ being successful. ~~so I think [he] they really[s] know that[.] hopefully it brings out some of [his] ~~their~~ peculiar qualities.~~

My hope would be that he would stand strong and firm in himself ~~having decided to make those. I might see myself as a safety net in things I've demanded of him.~~

The crafted story

When Peter started his course here, he was asking for an extension every time there was an assignment due. And then this happened.

They had a death in the family and the grandparents had to come from overseas to the funeral, but were too old to travel on their own.

So Peter comes bounding into my office as he does and says, ohhh there's been this death. I said, I am so sorry to hear that, what does it mean for you? He said, well I am the only one in my family that is not working so I have been elected to go over and fetch the grandparents and bring them back. I have to go on Friday.

And I thought, here it comes. Now he's going to ask for an extension because he had two assignments due for me. One was to be a presentation to his tutorial group.

He said, I've got both my assignments ready to hand in early and I want to know if I can do my presentation to you because I am not going to be in tomorrow to do it with the class.

And I just thought, you know, we're getting there with Peter.

What a transition from sitting at the back doing nothing to sitting anywhere and being in any group. He's taken on the work ethic and I think he's going to be a successful teacher as a result. I was a bit worried at the beginning.

I've taught him a lot and that's been a good platform to establish a relationship. Gradually as he got to know me, he knew I will turn myself inside out for him. I am there for him. That's why I am here. I am here for him. My satisfaction comes from him being successful. I think he really knows that and hopefully it brings out some of his peculiar qualities. My hope would be that he would stand strong and firm in himself.

Appendix 7: Story Titles

Story titles from an interview with Suzanne

- Secondary student teacher wants to be paid
- Janice
- Janine
- An agitating student
- Making a difference

Story titles from an interview with Nadia

- Starting out as a teacher
- I didn't enjoy teaching
- In-service teaching: Involvement
- Starting out as a new lecturer
- Karen
- Betty
- The student from up north
- Marco
- Living with getting it wrong
- All in a moment
- Students surprise me

Appendix 8: A story from two participants and their descriptive statements

“Living with getting it wrong”

Story

I can remember the class very clearly, about 3 weeks ago, on the last day before the semester break. Out of the blue, one student said, we really enjoy your classes. It was funny that on that day I was teaching beyond 4 pm but I didn't feel it and knew that things were right.

The next day with the same class on the last day of term, I felt I was too rigid with them. I had a lot to teach. I was feeling pressurised and I was not flexible. They were not interested because it was the last day of term. I didn't know why I was inflexible. I told them, now look here, I've got things I've got to teach you, I've got to finish. They were a bit uptight. After a while, I drew them back into a discussion. I carried on and taught to 4 pm. I dragged on to 4 pm. In spite of this, they still said, have a good break.

When I left the class, I looked around the campus and there was no one around. I should have just said, I know there are times when I can trust you to go home and look through these readings as we are already in holiday mode. I should have just accepted that this was the last day, accommodate that, and say, I trust you.

I was very troubled and I went and shared this with a colleague. I went home and went out for dinner. Throughout the whole dinner I was thinking about this class. It spoiled my holiday.

Description

In this story the teacher recalls teaching the same group of students on two different occasions with very different experiences. The impact of the teaching-learning experiences had a long-term influence on the teacher.

“Clicking with an-other”

Story

Nadia was a teacher I clicked with. We related well together. She was a very good teacher. I didn't really know her before the course started. I only sort of had her in the last year so I didn't really know her before that.

I think when I was studying in the final year I was starting to get unmotivated. I had had enough and I reached a couple of problems, mainly in my research assignment. Things I didn't understand. It was my last assignment. Right at the end. That was my very last one. She was never too busy or never short of time to help me out. She always took her time out to go that extra mile for me.

She put everything in a positive way. I asked for help and she just guided me. But she kept pushing me because she knew that I had potential to do it, just to basically get on with it. I think she's got quite high expectations of her students, which I think is great. And I think, she doesn't give up on people easily. If she knows you've got potential, she'll push you. She probably believed in me more than I believed in myself. I think that she just gave me the tools that I needed to carry on, motivation.

I saw Nadia after the research assignment at graduation. I brought a bunch of flowers to say thanks very much for all your help. I suppose it was quite sad saying goodbye to her too because she had been a big part of my life. She had really helped me a lot and I was going to miss her. I graduated 3 years ago and I haven't really kept in touch with her since. I suppose life's been busy.

She's not just a teacher. I can't really explain it, I can't really explain it. Nancy was really open to me. Very straight to the point. Very straight up. I don't really know how I knew it to be quite honest. Whether it was the way she talked. She was very confident, came across as being a very confident person and I like that and I trusted her judgement. I just think she's very fair, but at the same time she's just as well. She'll tell you how it is but she will push you to basically exceed your limits. She wasn't just a teacher to me. I think there was a bit of a friendship there too. I think it developed into that just through a depth of sharing.

Description

This student and teacher encounter each other in the third year of the student's pre-service teacher education programme at a time when the student has one large research project to complete. In the process of guiding the student, the teacher is seen as someone with whom the student clicks. This teacher was there to help a student who she believed in.

Appendix 9: A story, description and initial interpretation of a crafted story

“Clicking with an-other”

Story

Nadia was a teacher I clicked with. We related well together. She was a very good teacher. I didn't really know her before the course started. I only sort of had her in the last year so I didn't really know her before that.

I think when I was studying in the final year I was starting to get unmotivated. I had had enough and I reached a couple of problems, mainly in my research assignment. Things I didn't understand. It was my last assignment. Right at the end. That was my very last one. She was never too busy or never short of time to help me out. She always took her time out to go that extra mile for me.

She put everything in a positive way. I asked for help and she just guided me. But she kept pushing me because she knew that I had potential to do it, just to basically get on with it. I think she's got quite high expectations of her students, which I think is great. And I think, she doesn't give up on people easily. If she knows you've got potential, she'll push you. She probably believed in me more than I believed in myself. I think that she just gave me the tools that I needed to carry on, motivation.

I saw Nadia after the research assignment at graduation. I brought a bunch of flowers to say thanks very much for all your help. I suppose it was quite sad saying goodbye to her too because she had been a big part of my life. She had really helped me a lot and I was going to miss her. I graduated 3 years ago and I haven't really kept in touch with her since. I suppose life's been busy.

She's not just a teacher. I can't really explain it, I can't really explain it. Nadia was really open to me. Very straight to the point. Very straight up. I don't really know how I knew it to be quite honest. Whether it was the way she talked. She was very confident, came across as being a very confident person and I like that and I trusted her judgement. I just think she's very fair, but at the same time she's just as well. She'll tell you how it is but she will push you to basically exceed your limits. She wasn't just a teacher to me. I think there was a bit of a friendship there too. I think it developed into that just through a depth of sharing.

Description

This student and teacher encounter each other in the third year of the student's pre-service teacher education programme at a time when the student has one large research project to complete. In the process of guiding the student, the teacher is seen as someone with whom the student clicks. This teacher was there to help a student who she believed in.

Interpretation

The click

In this story, the student describes a teacher who was not "just" a teacher. This teacher was more; they were "really" open and a person with whom the student "clicked". While the student lives after, and beyond the "click", the occurrence of the click, and its meaning, is a mystery to the student. The teacher-student's click just happened, an occurrence that was not fully comprehended, but accepted in an embodied way. The student doesn't know how to describe the click or how it came to be. She recognises it as happening and speaks openly about the occurrence that she can't explain.

While the click occurred early in the teacher-student relationship, there are on-going moments when the two beings continue to click. In this way, the coming together of the teacher and student is a re-occurring experience that is shared together. In being-with the teacher, the student knew that the teacher was being-with her. They had both entered their unique relational space in a way that found openness on the part of the other.

The nature of the click is also seen in the lived experiences that follow the click. The teacher and student had clicked "into place". Like parts of a puzzle that have found their place and orientation to other parts, so the teacher and student have found an ease in being-with the other. Their openness is reciprocated, as is their mutual respect. Without consciously trying, the teacher and student find the other in a way that seems effortless and understood more fully with hindsight.

The teacher and student had clicked "in a place". The student is uncertain about the beginning of the teacher-student relationship other than recognising closeness in the relationship. Had a particular moment occurred for the teacher and the student that is only seen on a later occasion?

Evidencing the “click”

In this story, the student is nearing the end of a taxing academic journey and is confronted by a final assessment hurdle that appears almost too big to handle. With her sights on the assessment task, the student wonders about her own abilities and in particular, her ability to complete the final task. The student’s eyes have turned from the completion of the programme to the complexities of a difficult task and, in the process, she loses motivation. The student struggles to have the necessary energy and focus to finish the academic journey.

In this moment, the student encounters a teacher who is there to “help” her by guiding her through the expectations of the assessment task, making it reachable in the process. The teacher is sensitive to the assessment task and its requirements. Similarly the teacher is sensitive to the student’s present state of being and her expectations. Bridging the gap between the student “presently” and the student upon completion, this teacher opens herself to the student for the student’s needs. The teacher’s openness is shown in the availability of her time, as and when, this is needed. The student opens to the teacher’s openness, and finds a teacher who never seemed too busy, was never short of time, and was able to give the advice and guidance this student required for the completion of a difficult task.

For the student, the teacher’s help was positive in its expression, heartening the student in terms of her willingness to complete the task. The teacher must have known that the student, not only needed the guidance for the task, but the encouragement to sustain her efforts to the end. The teacher’s positive expression was also seen as being about the teacher’s knowing that the student had the ability to complete the necessary task. For the student, the teacher’s way was a relief, given the challenges she faced.

Having completed the assignment and her programme, the student is found preparing herself for an out-of-class, and beyond-the-assignment, meeting with the teacher at graduation. On this occasion it would be the student who would give evidence to the click. Armed with a bunch of flowers and knowing the place the teacher had in her life, the student prepares herself for a goodbye. Life with less time with the teacher who clicked’, the teacher who had time, the one who encouraged and affirmed. This was a time of celebration for the student’s achievements but was also a sadder moment

remembering the richness of the experiences in a special teacher-student click, which held a relational openness that, was deeply satisfying.

Appendix 10: Two examples of the notions for a participant

Notions from Molly's stories

Learning as "the relational way"

Learning is like a way that is taken relationally. As a way, learning is taken by teacher and student. For teacher and student, the way involves their individual voices and their collective dialogue, as each voices their being to the other, and thereby puts themselves in the way of the other. The other being can choose how they turn to the being "in their way". Their turning will influence their way of being-with the other.

Voice and dialogue cannot be forced as they relate to the opening and openness of the teacher and student. The opening has an inside handle, the prerogative of the owner; the being. Some teachers seek to force the voice and dialogue, only to learn again their true powerlessness in forcing entry into the student's being. Students will respond to the teacher's initiatives, choosing in the process the extent of their openness.

Pressure by the teacher inhibits the student's being to be shown. Instead, and often for reasons of safety, the student will hide until the pressure is lessened. The student's voice has a different sound when it can choose to speak and dialogue.

When the teacher and student understand each other as "equally able" to turn to the other, and equally responsible for such turning, then the teacher-learner relationship can contain an anticipation and pleasure that emerges from a relational reciprocity and mutuality.

When this understanding of being equally able is not present, then teacher or student can assume greater self importance and can put pressure of the speed of opening and the need for voice and dialogue, overlooking and missing the essence of the other being in the process.

In teacher education, teacher and student might be seen as equals in that they are in the same profession. Where this is recognised and where an equally able way of being is

present, then the teaching-learning experiences enable each person's voice to be heard in the dialogue that brings together learning.

Teacher and student move tentatively in the way of opening to the other, listening for messages from the other's being. The other's voice communicates messages of their being. While initially appearances of the other's essential being are given, with time and a mutual reciprocity, the phenomenon of the person-al self is disclosed slowly. It is as if teacher and student are feeling for the way with the other. In sensing the mood that is voiced in the silence of the space and place, the being of the other is felt for, as if listening into a living silence for a voice from within the other being.

As teacher and student meet initially, it is as if they are present to a clearing (Heidegger, 1962). There are no familiar paths or routines as teacher and student have not been on the way together as yet. The clearing dissipates as routine and non-thinking ways of being with each other are lived.

Teachers must choose "how" they bring themselves to the learner. Will they bring the appearance of a teacher as they see that being? Might they bring their "self" as a person on the same way-of-being and further becoming the being with the name of "teacher"?

Coming as "equally able", the teacher invites the students to a space where they can presence themselves in dialogue. In this way, the students are called into a "dwelling time", where embodied beings are present to each other and sensing the openness of the other people. To bring the self of the teacher to the student is to make time for the student to be, as they chose to be "in the way".

When a teacher comes to a student calling them as an "it", the pattern of the future way-of-being with each other has been set. All too often, the student will follow the teacher's lead and return in kind to the teacher's being the status of an it. The I-it relationships influence the voice and dialogue between teacher and student. In this way, the student becomes like their teacher. The teacher may prefer their I-it relationship with their subject content, finding the dynamic of this relationship easier to handle than the unknown teacher-student relationship. During these times, the student's voice is not silent, albeit it is not heard by the teacher.

There are times when a teacher brings his or her self to the students, finding that some of the students understand the call as a way of being equally able. The same presenting is heard by other students differently, particularly as they must manage what they are hearing from the teacher and what they are hearing themselves say, their inner voice. There may be times, for instance, when the call of the teacher towards relationships is not heard, given the other calls the student is responding to in his or her life.

Learning involves voicing, as interpretation requires voice. Teacher and student must voice to learn and sometime times, these voices can join in dialogue. To be human is to interpret. To be human is to speak and have voice. How the teacher and student voice shows their relationship.

Notions from Sally's stories

The place of the voice in relationship.

The teacher and student need to be able to hear one another's voice, as the voice gives a showing of the being of the speaker. The teacher and student cannot speak without giving a showing of being.

Where the student's voice is unheard, the teacher-student relationship does not have substantive openness of the part of the beings present to the teaching-learning experiences. When the teacher (or student) does hear the other's voice, the voice is afforded the respect of a gift; the gift of "being-speech".

In silence, many students wait for the teacher's intentional opening of a space for their voice to be heard. With the opening and space is an opportunity to enter into the relational space with other beings associated with the teaching-learning experiences. As if handing the student the opportunity to show themselves, or an appearance of themselves, the teacher's space raises the possibility of greater "being-ness-together". The voice, the relationship's openness, and the turning of teacher and student to or from each other, are all related.

The voice gives understanding of the being of the speaker; a knowing that influences further responses between teacher and student. In some cases, this knowing influences the support given by the teacher to the student. In other cases, the knowing cumulates to a mutually satisfying relationship beyond the formal academic relationship. In this way, the relationship moves beyond institutional or teacher-student expected relationships, towards relationship that has reciprocity with both participants ensuring the care and life of the relationship as a living entity in addition to their own individuality.

The teacher-student relationship has a life and an identity. It too, wishes to voice itself. The teacher and student can voice their being but unless this is done in the context of turning towards and opening to the other, this may not be heard. Both teacher and student then, listen for the voice of the other and the voice of the relationship as they interact by voice with these others.

In another way, I wonder if one's attuning to an-other, and an-other's relationship with oneself, creates the possibility that they might know the other, and their relationship with the other, more so than their knowing of their own being. This would be possible for both teacher and student. Could it be then, that a teacher for instance might have knowing of the student and the teacher-student relationship, while the teacher as an individual in the experience of teaching is best understood by the student and their teacher-student relationship? In this case, the "others" in the threesome of a teacher-student relationship (teacher, student, teacher-student relationship) might best understand the other two rather than their own way-of-being in relationship. In this way, teacher and student need the other and their relationship to learn of their own being in the context in which they find themselves.

Appendix 11: An example of a poem which captures the notions in a participant's stories

Teacher to student

*I am coming to you confident young learner,
we have been together before;
As if continuing our last dialogue, we move on
toward possibilities within learning.*

*Do you want to write your own story?
It's your right as a learner;
Or would you prefer that we co-author?
Teacher and student, open together.*

*I won't always ask you the question above
I don't always feel that I can;
With you, I know our closeness is deepening
the safety within which gives me hope ahead*

*As we move together
closer-ness our goal;
You need to know you are always free to choose,
the option of independence from me.*

*I am different from you in that I must stay on course
to see you develop with your own unique voice;
As you do, you will stand taller
welcoming interaction with whomever is teacher.*

*Sadly our times together cannot be limitless,
but their impact indeed so;
Be assured that your words are carried forward within me
I too, am influenced by your being.*

*When we get it all wrong between us
we may think we need to hide;
but why not, in these times, let's remember our history -
openness brought us closer, the opposite pain.*

*A day is coming my friend
when you must show the world your own person;
Able and ready to make key decisions
your voice being your own and not that of a ventriloquist.*

*For you to find yourself in your future,
you must face life head on;
This is the time when your learning is seen,
your attitude comes first, it tells where you've been*

*I'll long to here news of your travels in life
but better still for me;
Will be the sight and sound of your person
returning to dialogue one more time.*

*Don't be alarmed if I treat other learners differently,
It only shows the difference relationally;
Some of them will hurt me in a way, I wish you not to know
I must manage this – I am teacher.*

*Why some avoid me or my subject,
I guess their preferences are different to mine;
Fortunately, wonderful times occur more often
birthed in the richness of those who choose differently.*

*I must bid you farewell learner,
you are ready to move on;
Remember to openness bring openness
to the other, bring hope!*

(D Giles, 19/04/2005)

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