Can a Classroom Be a Family?

Race, Space, and the Labour of Care in Urban Teaching

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Abstract

This article reports on findings from a case study of an eighth-grade teacher in an inner-city school in downtown Toronto, Canada. It investigates the teacher's pedagogical use of the metaphor of "family," using interview data to underscore the effects produced by such an operating logic in a classroom. Methodologically, the article puts forward a novel analytic strategy to keep in dynamic interplay the relationship between how a teacher conceptualizes her teaching practice and where she locates those ideas. By focusing in-depth on one teacher's pedagogical relations in the classroom, the article aims to better understand how teachers position the ubiquitous notion of "care" in their practice and how they enact "community" in their classrooms and in the larger schools and neighbourhoods in which they work. In this case study, the concepts and experiences of race and space are considered centrally in the examination of a racialized teacher's pedagogical practices in a diverse and socio-economically marginalized school. The study has important implications for teacher education, inviting us to more explicitly acknowledge the salience of race in our conceptions of "care" and the investment of time and emotion that is demanded when practising politically conscious caring in teaching.

Résumé

Cet article est basé sur des conclusions tirées d'une étude d'une enseignante de deuxième année (eighth grade) dans une école au centre-ville de Toronto, Canada. L'article examine l'utilisation pédagogique par cette enseignante de la métaphore de la « famille » à l'aide des résultats qui soulignent les effets produits par cette logique opératoire utilisée dans la salle de classe. Du point de vue méthodologique, l'article avance une stratégie analytique originale qui permet le « jeu » dynamique des rapports entre la façon dont une enseignante conceptualise sa pratique pédagogique et le « lieu » où elle situe ses idées. En se concentrant sur les relations pédagogiques d'une enseignante, l'article a pour but de mieux faire comprendre comment les enseignants positionnent la notion très répandue de « soin » dans leur pratique pédagogique et comment ils mettent en jeu la notion de « communauté » dans leurs salles de classe et, de façon plus large, dans les écoles et les milieux où ils travaillent. Les concepts et les expériences de race et d'espace occupant une place centrale dans l'examen des pratiques pédagogiques de l'enseignante racialisée dans un quartier marginalisé. Cette étude met en évidence des implications importantes pour la formation pédagogique des enseignants en nous invitant plus explicitement à reconnaître l'importance primordiale de la « race » ou de l'origine raciale ainsi que du concept de « soin » et de l'investissement en temps et en émotion dans l'enseignement.

Mots-clés : soin, théorie critique de la race, étude de cas, liens entre l'école et la communauté, relations sociales, école intermédiaire, pédagogie féministe noire, métaphores de l'enseignement, différences sociales, formation à l'enseignement

Acknowledgements

Context and Introduction

Why do I stay here? It's that feeling. It's that community. It's that family that really does it on those hard days when you think, "Why the heck do I work here?" That kind of keeps you focused.

–Ms. Denise Langley, Grade 8 Teacher, Rally Public School[1]

What do the ideals of "family" and "community" mean in the changing contexts of urban classrooms? How do we understand the social spaces of classrooms and make them work well for all students? How does a teacher come to develop certain conceptions or metaphors for the classroom that guide her teaching choices and decisions in the context of a contemporary urban classroom? To answer these questions, this article turns to a case study of one Grade 8 teacher, whose self-awareness became a powerful tool in helping us navigate her complex practice as a teacher. Struck by the ubiquity of the discourse of "family" in our interviews and conversations, we came to see clearly how the operating logic of "family" permeated her work. Our guiding conceptual question thus emerged: What work is the metaphor of family performing on social relations and pedagogical practices in the urban classroom?

Research from Australia, the United States, the UK, Europe, and Canada demonstrates that urban schools and students face significant socio-economic and cultural barriers to academic success (see Gallagher, 2014; Fine & Fox, 2013; Gallagher & Service, 2010; Anyon, 1997; Osler & Starkey, 2005; Thompson, 2002). Global events and immigration patterns in the last decade have dramatically changed the cultural and political landscape of classrooms in these and other developed countries. Putting Inner City Students First (PICSF)[2], the larger study upon which this article is based (Gallagher & Rivière, 2011), is a Canadian multi-case study research project connected to the Toronto District School Board's "Model Schools for Inner Cities" initiative which has attempted

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1   All names and other identifying details have been changed in order to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants and the school.

2   This research project was funded by the Council of Ontario Directors of Education. A final report of the six case studies that comprise the research was previously published in Rolheiser, Evans, & Gambhir (2011, pp. 108–123).

to redress some of the profound inequalities that currently operate in such advanced metropolises as Toronto. This school district initiative designated seven Model Schools in each of the most economically marginalized and under-serviced communities in Toronto, in order to better provide their students with the supports necessary for academic and social success. Each school received an additional $1 million to use for locally determined school initiatives. The PICSF research produced six case studies, which documented aspects of change at the pedagogical, administrative, and institutional levels. The particular case study to be discussed in this article is titled, "The Learner, the Teacher, and the Space In-between."[3]

One of the other contributions this article will make is its illustration of an innovative analytic strategy, which kept alive the dynamic relationship between major research findings (themes) and teaching environments (physical, emotional, cognitive, and pedagogical spaces). In our analyses, we have taken our understanding of space and its relevance from cultural geographer Doreen Massey, who writes that while places may have boundaries, these borders are open and porous. Spaces inform, and are informed by, the outside. In this way, spaces should find definition, not by exclusion, bordering, and ordering, but by the specific "constellation of social relations" (Massey, 1994, p. 154) within and around them. These theoretical ideas about space, as we would learn, were very consistent with the teacher's own ideas about space and social relations. We did not come to the study with this concept of space as a governing theoretical frame, but discovered it in the course of our analysis. Our analysis section, therefore, will articulate those unanticipated discoveries in more detail.

"The Learner, the Teacher, and the Space In-between" is a life history case study that benefitted from two years of empirical observation in the teacher's classroom and a series of interviews inviting the teacher to make explicit her practical knowledge and theoretical assumptions as an experienced inner-city teacher. Many of the families and students who attend the school are economically disadvantaged and the neighbourhood in which they live faces many challenges associated with poverty, unemployment/underemployment, racism, drugs, and crime. A mixed race (black Caribbean and white Canadian),

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3   I would like to thank my research assistants, Celeste Dixon, Ivan Service, and Anne Rovers, for their creative and invaluable support of this study. When I refer to "the team," it is the group of the four of us working on this case to which I am referring. The students were involved in all aspects of the research, including the coding of data and subsequent writing of narrative accounts, but the analyses presented here are my own.

eighth grade (12–13 year olds) teacher, Denise Langley's choices, descriptions, and insights reveal how she sets her pedagogical goals, draws on aspects of her personal and academic biography, engages with the lives and families of her students, and navigates her professional relationships. Among many interesting discoveries, there emerged a particular interest in the classroom as a "family community," something the teacher referenced regularly with us and with her students. Her emphasis led us to consider the empirical data which exemplified how "family" is imagined and enacted in her classroom, a theme we named "relationships and the metaphor of family." This article will focus especially on this finding, set within the context of the broader findings of the case study. The article will not directly examine the impact of this discourse about family on the students. It is instead interested in the stories teachers tell themselves and others about who they are as a teacher and how they relate to their classrooms of students.

As a white researcher, and one who previously taught in an inner-city school long enough to understand that teachers and schools can dangerously position themselves as better caregivers than students' families, particularly when they bring white middle-class values to the assessment of those families whose experiences they do not understand, I valued the opportunity to spend time with a teacher of colour, working in a similar context to the one I had worked in as a teacher, to see how her conceptions of her work in an underserved community might challenge my own earlier experiences. Of her personal schooling experiences as a student of colour, Ms. Langley explained early on:

> I had the most negative, horrible experience being a student. And I think—well, I don't think, I know—that that's what pushed me into becoming a teacher because I thought, Oh hell, there's got to be a better way to do this thing.

She had herself been a recipient of the kind of care more typically in evidence in schools with predominantly white teachers and dominant, hegemonic institutional perspectives on non-white, socio-economically disadvantaged student populations. How might her own social location, her past experiences, different conceptions of "family," and her own critical perspective nuance current understandings of "community" and "care" in socio-economically diverse schools? Denise Langley is a teacher who uses the personal, biographical details of her life to understand herself as a teacher and her sometimes precarious, always intense, and often playful relationship with her Grade 8 students, her "family." To close the article, I will draw out implications for teaching and teacher education more

broadly, so that the specificity, or zoom angle, of this case study will have relevance for, and offer insight into, the complex labour of urban teaching and contribute to the literature on more critical conceptions of "care" in teaching.

Conceptual and Theoretical Frameworks: Community, Care, Space, and Critical Race Theory

Both conceptually and theoretically, the focus of this article—the classroom conceived as a family—invites a consideration of social relations in urban classrooms, the discourses that permeate notions of community and care in teaching, as well as the expectations set by anti-racist and postcolonial theoretical frames that demand a complex study of classroom, and broader cultural and social, relations. Sokal (2003) holds the view that students live in an ecosystem, inside and outside schools, and that this system needs to be understood by teachers if they are interested in building relationships that promote learning and achievement. The best way for teachers to understand, work within, and sometimes challenge, the larger education system of which they are a part, in order to help sustain a habitable and supportive ecosystem for diverse students, is the subject of much critical thinking in education and sits both conceptually and theoretically at the centre of this examination.

A great deal of that scholarship, for a very long time, has focused on the idea of "community" in classrooms and schools, and the notion of a teacher as a community builder (see Christensen, 2008; Gallagher, 2007; Yon, 2000; McCaleb, 1994; Handel, 1999; Gibbs, 2006; Darling-Hammond, 1997; Gereluk, 2006; Cohn-Vargas & Grose, 1998; Clark ,1983; Getzels, 1978). What is less well documented is how teachers come to understand what is meant by community, how their own biographies and social locations shape those understandings, and how hegemonic ideas about community can both support and limit the potential of students. While "family" is not synonymous with "community," it is the communal nature of "family" that was most important to Ms. Langley; such understandings of community best exemplify her attempts to reimagine her classroom as an ecosystem of interrelated beings—a family.

For the purposes of this article, then, the metaphor of family is understood as a subcategory of community. A family is a particular kind of community, one denoting

familial bonds, fraternal and parental. While there is a body of research on community as a significant construct in understanding classrooms, communities can take a great many different forms. The metaphor of family as a subcategory of community, however differently and culturally specific our conceptions of family may be, conjures up ideas about the roles and relationships that constitute a family grouping. Gereluk (2006) points out that the word community, coming from the Latin root *communis*, means being "linked together by obligation" (p. 7). This notion of community is resonant with what Ms. Langley describes as a classroom family. There is something both fatalistic and optimistic about her sense of family community in the classroom: "You can fight all you like, but this is who you've got. I didn't choose you and you didn't choose me, but this is who you've got. So we are going to learn to work with each other." While the neighbourhood community might be linked together by geography, situation, or circumstance, the classroom family is "linked together by obligation." Whether the students and teacher like it or not, a community will develop and evolve. Our question then became, What kind of a community will develop if the operating metaphor considers the public realm of a classroom as a proxy for the private realm of the family? Family, as a metaphor and operating construct, was central to the pedagogical contract, or terms of relations in the room, and therefore our theoretical question became, How is the teacher consciously creating a classroom family and how does she position the students as family members? Crucially important as well, how does she understand and perform her central role in this domestic/familial work?

Here, the early work of Madeleine Grumet is relevant to a mobilizing of ideas about space and schooling. Long ago now, Grumet was conceiving of different kinds of spaces in classrooms in her reconceptualist articulations of curriculum theory and enactment of a feminist critique of schools. In her case, she imagined the school as a space relatively inhospitable to domestic or reproductive knowledges, those understandings that come from home and family, privileging instead the productive knowledges of the public sphere. The things we brought from home, our private and domestic lives, found no welcoming space in the marketplace of school with its official knowledges (Grumet, 1988). In a later work, she further makes the case for the value of our "languages of home," especially for women teachers, again lamenting the lack of conceptual space in schools for their proper inclusion, despite our deep attachments to, and nostalgia for, "the complex aesthetics of daily life" (Grumet, 1991, p. 87).

It should be noted at the outset, however, that the danger in using the metaphor of family in the context of a socio-economically disadvantaged community is the implicit suggestion that children from impoverished or racialized communities may lack biological or adoptive families that can adequately support their needs. Classrooms, therefore, can come to be seen as surrogate families that make up for what is assumed to be lacking "at home." This kind of deficit thinking is rampant in socio-economically marginalized educational contexts and so, as researchers, we were acutely attuned to this potential danger and consequently worked harder to draw out the implicit understandings operating in the teacher's use of the term. What is important to underscore is that the metaphor of family produces a powerful operating logic in a classroom that can be experienced negatively or positively by teacher and students.

Here again, taking a post-colonial research perspective is important in order to understand the teacher's impulses to galvanize her students' assets rather than underscore their perceived deficits. Though working in post-secondary educational institutions, Villalpando and Solórzano developed the concept of "cultural wealth" to refer to cultural capital that includes "resources and assets that students of colour develop and utilize in spaces of marginality within educational institutions" (cited in Huber, 2009, p. 710). Tara Yosso (2005) then extended this understanding of "cultural wealth" with her theory of "community cultural wealth." Yosso's conceptualization included six forms of capital that exist within communities of colour: (1) aspirational capital, (2) linguistic capital, (3) familial capital, (4) social capital, (5) navigational capital, and (6) resistant capital (p. 78). Her notion of familial capital is especially relevant here, as it speaks to a conception of kinship that includes extended family and communities. As we move into the analysis of data from this case study, it will be clear to the reader that the classroom, for Ms. Langley, constitutes one such community that can cultivate familial capital for multiply marginalized students.

The literature on "care" in schooling is also relevant here, and notably "care" as it has been taken up in thinking about culturally responsive pedagogy. One of the potential hazards of the approach in this article is that "caring" can be seen as (merely) the work of individual teachers. Critical race theorists have, as the following three projects exemplify, critiqued this approach for its lack of systemic understanding and its potential to re-inscribe notions of white supremacy. Rolón-Dow (2005) has, however, effectively used theories of care in conjunction with critical race theory to understand the relationship

between students of colour and their teachers, where she found a great disparity between (racialized) families and (mostly white) teachers on the meanings of "care." By studying ethnographically the experiences of Puerto Rican girls at one urban school, she found that these students believed that most teachers seek to separate their school learning from their daily interactions with their local communities and society at large. Very few teachers advocated for interactions between the two as sites of valuable learning. Her study clearly signals the salient role that race plays in mainstream school conceptions of caring. Rolón-Dow further argues that teachers must extend their pedagogical links to students beyond the classroom and into the community, and that strong relationships between teachers and communities are a cornerstone of any racially conscious student–teacher caring relationship. Our case study teacher, Ms. Langley, offers a clear example of this broader contextual thinking and what this kind of outreach could look like and mean for students.

Valenzuela (1999) invoked the concept of care in her analysis of Mexican and Mexican-American students' achievement levels at a large, ethnically diverse high school in Houston, Texas. North American schools tend to focus on a type of caring, she argues, that is "aesthetic" (p. 22); that is, these schools are more concerned with the proper arrangement of things and ideas than they are concerned with understanding the subjective reality of students. This approach to care is even embedded in the curriculum of schools, she insists, with the result being that student–teacher relationships are framed by a pedagogical instrument that privileges an instrumental approach to care over one that focuses on the lived experiences of marginalized students. Valenzuela calls this process "subtractive schooling," where it is specifically the process of schooling that has a subtractive effect on students, wearing thin their existing stock of social and personal resources, and encouraging them toward types of behaviour that reflect an ethos of indifference and lack of care.

Gay (2000) similarly emphasizes the importance of care in the classroom, arguing that individual teachers can invoke a strong sentiment of caring that can work against some of the institutional processes of subtractive schooling outlined by Valenzuela. Gay considers caring to be a pedagogical responsibility of teachers, who can invoke caring as a means to justify high expectations of their students, something Ms. Langley felt especially strongly about. These high expectations, when combined with a personal bond between teachers and students, often led students to higher levels of achievement. Importantly, for Gay, caring is a culturally responsive approach to teaching that acknowledges

the different social locations and historical contexts that play out in different patterns of behaviour of different students.

Once grasping Ms. Langley's emphasis on care, her attunement to the community cultural wealth of her students, and her heavy reliance on the notion of family as a pedagogical compass in her classroom, this research aimed to better appreciate the ways in which "family"—undoubtedly a complex concept—might serve as an enabling or a disabling metaphor for teachers like her working in diverse urban teaching contexts.

The Teacher, The Learner and the Space In-between: Case Study Questions and Methods

Rally Public School is a downtown inner-city school. The school serves a highly diverse population of just under 500 students coming from a mix of ethno-racial backgrounds, including students of Asian, African, Caribbean and European diasporas. Rally is a composite school offering programs from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 8. The school has an active Parenting Center and a LINC (Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada) Parenting Program.

–Rally Public School website

Given the history of immigration, poverty, and school "underachievement" in the public housing complex where the school is located, the following broad questions directed our early days of observation at the school: (1) What role do issues of diaspora, and immigration and settlement play in school/student success or under-performance? (2) What relationship does "inclusion" have with "achievement"? (3) Do certain pedagogical practices better recognize the interplay between identity, social activity, and achievement? (4) How do the student-driven pedagogies of drama impact on students' classroom relations and achievement outcomes? The final question comes from my own 20-year career of studying drama as a different, and often particularly effective, pedagogy in urban schools. I also came to understand that Ms. Langley acted as a drama teacher for several classes in the school, in addition to having her own Grade 8 classroom. I took some time in our research to invite her to articulate the strengths of that pedagogy from her vantage

point. Five richly informative one-hour interviews with the teacher and seven participant observation sessions of two hours each were scheduled between 2008 and 2010. One classroom discussion (one hour in length) with 26 students was also audio-recorded and transcribed. This article will focus especially on our discussions with the teacher. Ms. Langley revealed to us that her memories of her own experiences of schooling were mainly unhappy. She struggled with dyslexia at a time when schools seemed ill equipped to deal with even the most common of learning disabilities. She felt her teachers expected little of her because of her disability and her racialized status. Consequently, she now easily aligns herself with some of her students who are struggling the most because she understands intimately what a difference that could make for them.

A coding manual was developed by the team from the emerging themes and categories in the transcripts. Normally, coding involves a parsing of themes and ideas prevalent in the data and the creation of a system that helps to organize codes into broader thematic categories. While our coding work attempted to perform this important task, we also became particularly interested in where, spatially, the teacher had conceived of the idea or how her ideas were spatially demarcated. We took this approach because we started to see in the data multiple references to ideas that seemed to be assigned to different spaces either within the school or in the community. We had not anticipated that space would become significant in our analysis but it soon became clear that "here" (the classroom) was different from "out there" (the broader school or the community) in how the teacher understood her work and, importantly, in how the teacher articulated her sense of family within and beyond the walls of the classroom. These ideas about family appeared in discussions about the physical room and the metaphorical space of the curriculum, in her conceptions of the relationships created through her instruction, and in the space of her own head (what we refer to as her pedagogical insights), as she worked out and reflected upon pedagogical plans for her students. Noting the relevance of space in the teacher's thinking about her work and her environment, and further noting her perceptions of the larger community space, we decided it would be pertinent to not only code our data for its thematic content but also for its spatial relationships. We designed, therefore, a spatial matrix that would account for the "spaces in-between" interests of this study: not only *what* we found but *where* we found it (see spatial matrix below). From the matrix, we came to writing the narrative accounts of the prevalent themes in the data

so that the professional life of one teacher in one setting could have meaning for others beyond the unique specificity of her teaching world.

Discussion of Significant Findings

Table 1 below maps the four major thematic findings from the research and where (spatially speaking), in the teacher's professional life, those themes were most prevalent. This notion of space and social relations in dynamic interplay best captures our sense, post-analysis, of how themes worked in and through various school spaces. We needed, therefore, a dynamic coding system in order to recognize the relationships between space and theme at work in our research context. Such a thematic-spatial breakdown we imagined useful for other case studies of teachers in diverse schools and communities. In the first theme, *understanding school and community context*, we explored how the teacher actively used her knowledge of the local neighbourhood, the challenges and issues families face, as well as the beauty and unique quality that it possesses to inform various dimensions of her role as an educator. In the second theme, *relationships and the metaphor of family*, we looked at how the teacher incorporated the different elements of "family" as a metaphor in shaping how she interacts with parents and local residents, the development of school-wide programs, and her own pedagogical practices in the classroom. In the third theme, *teacher navigating personal and professional identity*, we explored how the teacher incorporated key elements from her own identity and history into her daily practices as an educator. In the fourth theme, *pedagogy and the role of affect*, we illustrated that there are implicit dimensions to Ms. Langley's pedagogy that reveal her concern for students' emotions, relationships, and feelings.

The focus of this article, "relationships and the metaphor of family" (discussed in the next section below) was consistently represented across all physical and conceptual spaces of our teacher's professional world, although not explicitly represented in her classroom content. We wondered, as we began spatializing the teacher's ideas, what it might mean if a teacher's most significant teaching ideas were absent from certain spaces of her work. What if, for instance, a teacher used a guiding metaphor or an operating logic in her classroom teaching that was absent from other significant areas of her professional life, like for instance, the wider school environment? What might this tell us about

political and professional incompatibilities across a teacher's professional environment? Spatializing research findings, as we have attempted here, offers a unique model for reading consistencies and disjunctures in a teacher's stated beliefs and her everyday practices in the classroom, the broader school, and the community environment. Table 1 below offers a matrix distribution of findings (themes and spaces where they are located).

Table 1. Distribution of empirical data: Matrix of themes within spatial categories

	Themes				
Spatial Categories	Understandings of school & community context	Relationships & the metaphor of family	Teacher navigating personal & professional identity	Pedagogy & the role of affect	Students' conceptions of curriculum & classroom space
Community Connections	✔	✔	✘	✔	✔
School Environment	✔	✔	✘	✔	✔
Classroom Environment	✘	✔	✔	✔	✔
Classroom Instruction	✘	✔	✔	✔	✘
Classroom Content	✔	✘	✘	✔	✘
Pedagogical Insight	✘	✔	✔	✔	✘

✔ = One or more relevant data points

✘ = No relevant data points

A Focus on Family

The following section offers an in-depth look at one of our strongest case study findings: "relationships and the metaphor of family" in a teacher's construction of her professional and pedagogical work. Explicitly or implicitly, many teachers imagine an ideal classroom as a social context similar to a family, a concept prevalent in teacher education discourses about becoming a teacher (Britzman, 2003; Noddings, 1992). Creating the sense of a

classroom family is an explicit goal in Denise Langley's room, and she holds herself and the students accountable to it. [4]

Community Connections

This spatial category examines how the notion of family in the local community is reflected within the school and classroom. Ms. Langley is the kind of teacher who consciously aims to narrow the chasm between school and home. She comments on how the close proximity of the students' homes to the school—because they all come from the surrounding social housing project—allows her access to parents, families, and even their physical living space:

> The easier way is, everybody lives right here! As I walk to my car, I see moms and parents, standing out, especially as the weather gets nice. "Hey, how you doing? Yeah your kid did good today."… The close proximity is great. And I'm not afraid to go knock on someone's door, which is the other thing. You do that enough and you get a reputation… And when you come in and, Somali custom if you come for the first time, they have to cook for you. That's their thing. It's… fabulous. Yeah, [the students] come home and I'm like at the kitchen table going, "Hey, how are you?" They're mortified. But yeah, I've been to a number of homes.

The above and the following excerpt both illustrate how the boundaries of home and school are intentionally blurred by the teacher. Above, she signals to us the proximity to, and familiarity she has with, students' home lives. In the following excerpt, she is speaking to an issue she had with a student on a field trip to a local city park where there is a working farm. Rather than a question of disobedience, the episode reflected, in her view, a lack of respect "in the family," between adult (teacher) and child (student):

> So we're at [the park], the whole division, and teachers had split up and I took a group to the farm. One of my kids—while another teacher was running a water fight—got hit with a water balloon and she was, "Uh!" All of a sudden she had to

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4   It is interesting to note that the construction of a classroom as a "family" has persistently emerged in the context of other ethnographic classroom research I have conducted in both elementary and secondary classrooms.

go home and fix her hair. And the teacher's like, "You're not going home—you have to ask Ms. Langley. You cannot leave until Ms. Langley comes back from the farm." So I come back from the farm and I'm doing the head count and I can't find this kid. So I start asking around and the teacher said, "Well, she told me she wanted to go home, but I told her to wait for you." I said, "Really?????" So I took the whole class, knew where she lived, marched down to her house. I said, "Stay here." Went knocked—the kids were like, "No!" I went and knocked on her door, door opened and walked right into her living room, I didn't even wait, just started screaming at her in the middle of her living room. I thought her parents might call the police, but her parents weren't home. Her older brother and his girlfriend were there; they just stood there like this [*dumbfounded look on her face*]. "Who do you think you are?" And I left. The whole class is standing there... And then we went back to the school. I was so mad. I was really mad that day.

This may very well read as a breach of professionalism, and undoubtedly in some contexts it would be. Rather than interpret the moral or ethical meanings of the teacher's actions, the point to be made is that the metaphor of family can provide an overriding logic that can be both positively and negatively experienced. One reading of this behaviour might appreciate the teacher's commitment to holding all students to certain standards and expectations. Another could easily interpret this as threatening rather than nurturing to personal relationships, while dangerously crossing the line of acceptable professional behaviour with a student and her family. A critical interpretation might further examine the use and abuse of power in such an unusual interaction.

What I came to understand from prolonged time with Denise Langley and personal discussions with her about her unfailing commitment to her classroom family was that all actions became personal in the operating logic of "the family." A transgression of this kind is serious, to be sure, and a breach of school field trip policy, but the teacher's response speaks most strongly to her sense of personal affront, an affront to the tacit bond of respect family members should have for one another. I never spoke with the student in question, so it is impossible to say how the teacher's reaction was received by the student. But the rest of the class were witnesses to the teacher's actions and were warned, it would seem, to not underestimate the extent to which Ms. Langley takes her responsibility as custodian. Another teacher might have reported the transgression to the office, parents

might have been called, and the student might have had to face disciplinary consequences. But when a classroom is conceived as a "family," a "parent" wouldn't report things to principals but would deal with things as family members might—with each other, directly, raw emotion on display.

Sarah Ahmed (2004) counters the social psychologists when she holds that emotion does not live in one person or the other but in the way people encounter one another, which is a complex interaction shaped by histories of contact. Emotions, according to Ahmed, are not housed inside people but are produced as effects of circulation that occur in social and cultural practice. Seen in this light, transgressions of rules can be read as effects of cultural practices and expectations that invite inter-personal rather than institutional responses. The logic of the family and the "caring" she illustrated, provided enough rationale for Ms. Langley to feel confident in her response to the misdemeanour. When a teacher's overriding pedagogical compass conceives her classroom as a family, her students as children, and her role "in loco parentis" as more literal than figurative, the community becomes by necessity more intimate, the relationships extend beyond their usual institutional parameters, and teacher and students alike find themselves working through the rather more domestic and interpersonal emotions associated with family life. Feelings of betrayal and anger associated with worry and disappointment seep into the teacher–student relationship in ways that constitute the classroom community as more familial than bureaucratic or legal.

Providing further evidence of the bond of family, according to Ms. Langley, certain predictable student behaviours illustrate how the classroom, and the school, can be read as a kind of "home" for students:

> A lot of the kids have been here since kindergarten. And for them this is home too. And, you know, one of our biggest problems right now is that at 3:10, we can't get them to leave. Because they don't go home, they just hang out and drive us crazy. And so, you know, that's part of them feeling like this is home. And this is their community. So, I'm thinking in my head, when I was a kid at 3:10 I was out the door. These kids want to come and hang out! And if I kick them out, they head next door to Angela's room. If Angela kicks them out, they go and find someone else to go into their classroom to hang out. And it's, it's a testament to

the community and the family—they just feel like they belong here. "Why are you kicking me out? What's wrong with you? This is home."

There could be many reasons why children linger in schools. Some may have nowhere else to go or may simply seek the company of others. It would be hard to know why this happens in this particular school, but it is the teacher's analysis of the behaviour that is of interest. The school is "home," or a kind of second home, and further evidence to her of their sense of belonging. Calling the school space "safe," like a "home," of course makes assumptions about both home and school, but it also evades the discussion of how these "safe" spaces interact with the ideological mechanisms of regulation. The logic of the family, instead, makes sense of this student behaviour as evidence of the space as nurturing. Stengel (2010) insists that "educators take for granted the need to protect students" (p. 523). Of course the term "in loco parentis" explains the school's legal responsibility to take on the functions and responsibilities of parents. The ubiquity of the notion of safety in educational discourse positions school as protector, and safety as the antecedent to successful learning.

While schools may occasionally question their ability to provide safe spaces for all students, families seldom do. It is generally accepted that families provide the most nurturing spaces for children, except when they do not, but these cases are considered aberrations to the cultural norm. If school is read as akin to the institution of family, it becomes easy to map onto school all the attendant cultural assumptions about the goodness of family. It also homogenizes "the family" and leaves undifferentiated the needs of different members of a school community who may feel greater or lesser degrees of safety because of their different social locations relative to dominant relations of power in the school. The work accomplished by the metaphor of family (i.e., unquestionable safety), could equally be interpreted as "an imaginary construction reliant on ritualized forms of control" as Thompson (1998, p. 524) would argue. Or if we turn to Foucault's spatial theory and his considerations of school as a "disciplined space," the unproblematic notion of school as "safe space" is further interrupted. What is clear though is how "the family" is mobilized as a concept that may have the effect of stifling challenge to authority, as the hierarchy of family is left unquestioned.

Classroom Environment

The metaphor of family intensifies as we turn our conversations toward Ms. Langley's classroom. She uses the metaphor often to express to students the culture and context of their classroom, and her own philosophy about how they should cohabit the space and productively be together, as a group. Students and teacher are together for a year, no matter the challenges and issues they face. In her view, surviving it relies on developing an understanding of one another and creating relationships with one another. Having to work each day with people of differing backgrounds, cultures, races, religions, languages, abilities, personalities, and interests presents certain challenges; conflicts are bound to arise. In fact, living with people who are different and working with those you do not understand are skills to be honed by public schools and remain, as Richard Sennett (2012) has argued, the most urgent challenges facing civil society today. Ms. Langley explains to the students, with pre-adolescent humour even, that they are to accept these inevitabilities and work through them together, because it is their responsibility as a family:

> "…we're here in this building in this classroom eight hours a day, five days a week. I see you people more than I see my own family." I said, "So we're a family. You know, we're a pseudo family, these are your brothers and sisters. You didn't choose me, just like I didn't choose my parents or my brothers and sisters. We're just here and we gotta deal with what we got." And they took that to heart. I mean Gary calls me Mom still. "Mom. Mom." They call my mother Momma Langley or Grandma. You know, and they'll refer to it, when they have little spats, and I'll say "Cut it out," they'll go, "Yeah, stop fighting with your brother." I told them, "I'm not compromising. There is going to be respect in the room because we don't have a choice. This is what it is. You know, your brother farts on your head, you still love him; he's your brother."

This sense of the family, within the classroom, echoes larger contemporary idealizations of middle school. Although these Grade 8 students are not in a separate place called a middle school, for them it is still a temporal and developmental experience and one wherein special pedagogies and relationships offer utopian hopes for a future, as they anticipate moving from early adolescence into high school. Successful navigation through the middle years becomes a marker not only of appropriate personal development but also

of family stability and social stability, with the promise of important social and cultural capital pending. Such an ideal also risks effacing important differences. Julie McLeod (2012), in her essay on middle school, offers the following caution:

> The finer calibrations of the middle promote a false sense of its stability as an a priori category, as a necessary and fixed feature of school provision. They lend force to the authority of temporal grids of development through which normative youth identities are invented and regulated, allowing more occasions for micromanagement to ensure proper conduct and prevent dysfunction. (p. 47)

Taking the metaphor to its extreme, Denise Langley also includes her own mother, a retired teacher from the Caribbean, in her classroom. We didn't realize who this "teaching aide" was for some time. She worked tirelessly but quietly in the background with the children:

> Sometimes it works, right, sometimes it doesn't. But I've done a lot of work this year with building community, with building community and having my mom here, I've seen a really big shift and a really big change.

In an earlier study, black Canadian researcher Annette Henry (1992) introduced the concepts of *community othermothers* and *classroom othermothers* as culturally resistant subjectivities for black women. The black women teachers with whom she was working continued a West African/Caribbean cultural tradition of mothering other people's children as an emancipatory practice. Though not explicitly stated by Ms. Langley, her conception of "family" seemed influenced by this long pedagogical tradition, which Henry considers a form of caring and resistance to hegemonic schooling.

The metaphor of family is powerfully mobilized to help students understand the relations that exist between them, but it is also conjured up as they attempt to negotiate the struggles and "sibling rivalries" in their relationships. Ms. Langley points out,

> It's funny, 'cause I'm an only child. And so I never had a brother or sister to bicker and fight with and you know, have that sibling rivalry with, but I do get a lot of sibling rivalry in my class—a lot. And they recognize it because they'll look at it and go—Like, another kid, I remember I had two kids kind of bickering and Jamal goes, "Stop fighting with your brother."... I have two kids right now who

are both quite bright and they are always struggling to be noticed. They want me to notice them for being so bright, they want to be the brightest, they want my attention and they want my praise.

It is clear that for Ms. Langley, even when situations risk undoing the precarious social cohesion or balance of the classroom, it is interpreted as a question of family dynamics that need to be better understood and managed. The metaphor of family here is working in tandem with developmental theory, which holds the ideas of "development" and "progress" as universal and positive goals (Seaton, 2012). To extend the analysis of the work accomplished by the family metaphor even further, Ms. Langley's plea to care for your siblings can also be read as a plea for democracy in the classroom and the fundamental understanding that we exist as a collective and must find a way to do so democratically. Baez (2012) argues that the "democratic youth" becomes emblematic of society's fantasy:

> [It is] our investment in the present; our return comes in the future. Such a youth represents a fantasy, a promise we make to the future, for which we must regulate ourselves. The youth is the target of democracy because she will later be its steward. (p. 153)

Classroom Instruction

For Ms. Langley, the connection between the metaphor of family and classroom instruction hinges on building community and negotiating space. The sense of trust that develops from creating a sense of community and family is inseparable from her conceptions of learning. Without establishing core elements of the family system within her class—this following example being from her drama curriculum—she suggests that she would not be able to provide the level of assistance she feels is necessary to help students achieve success in her class:

> I end up spreading myself very thin because I have to be covering a larger space and there is a high level of trust when we are doing drama. There has to be because when I'm working with the group at the back of the room I can't necessarily see what's going on over by these windows, so there has to be a level of trust between myself and the students that I know they are not going to throw each other

out the window or play with the photocopy machine or do something ridiculous while I can't see them because I am over here working with the group, and they respect that for the most part.

Trust is a very interesting extension of the idea of family and has occupied much space in the drama education literature (Gallagher, 2007; Nicholson, 2005) along with scholarship that considers the role of the teacher in improvised dramatic work (Dunn, 2011). In my recent study on school engagement, my empirical work strongly underscores the negotiation of trust as ongoing and not an ideal that can be achieved for all time. Each day, each project offers the opportunity to restate and renew the terms of engagement, the very trust that underlies the fabric of the social and pedagogical contract.

Further, in drama education, scholars typically pay attention to the relationship between learners and their context, between learners and the fictional context, among learners themselves, and between teacher and learners (see McNaughton, 2011). Solidly in line with conceptions of family, many traditional drama educators, McNaughton argues, embody a certain set of teacher values about the nature of teaching and learning, which include

> that a teacher should be open, flexible and approachable, but also should be fair and should ensure that there is a safe and secure working atmosphere in which learning can take place. These principles are communicated to the learners as part of the negotiation of the drama contract. (p. 129)

This move to the drama contract is a seamless one for Ms. Langley as it espouses the very "rules" of the larger game, which she sees herself and her students playing: fairness, forgiveness, and mutual accountability.

Pedagogical Insight

How does the metaphor of family help Ms. Langley to better understand her practice as a teacher? What has she learned from her use of this metaphor within her work in the classroom and school? Ms. Langley's awareness of the relationship that students have with one another and with her in her "classroom family" is informed by her knowledge of students' own family histories, as she says about one of her students: "He has one brother who is one year younger than him and so they're constantly fighting. He has a baby

sister who is, I think, one and a half, and he takes on some of the responsibility for her." She also describes her humour and how that functions in her relationships with students because they know her, they "get" her; there is a familiarity:

> And I think there's an added pressure for most of them because I've taught older brothers and sisters and I get a lot of that "Am I like my brother? Am I like my sister?" You know, "Am I better than them? Am I different than them?" I get a lot of that too so there's a different—there's an added level there. Like, "No, I like you better." And they understand my humour. This class understands my humour. I've had students that, uh, didn't necessarily understand my humour and I have to kind of [regulate] that. But this class gets my humour, so that's good too.

Though she did not explicitly identify her race or social position, another way to appreciate Ms. Langley's sense that the students "get" her can be found in the literature of culturally relevant pedagogy. Researchers that have studied the philosophies and pedagogical practices of African American teachers have found the notion of cultural relevance salient, suggesting also that such teachers understand and respond effectively to issues of race, gender, racism, and social justice (see Dixon, 2003; Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002; Foster, 1993). These researchers also underscore the notion of othermothering, as cited previously, observing that this is often manifested in the pedagogy of black women teachers through their sense of connectedness to the community and their use of kinship terms when referencing their students.

Helen Cahill (2002) argues that classroom community is characterized by caring relationships, high-expectation messages, and opportunities for meaningful participation and contribution. Across multiple interviews and observations of Ms. Langley's work, the teacher privileged each of these ideas in her classroom, and she most often accomplished this through the evocation of family, a social grouping wherein we are bound to each other, must care for and are accountable to, one another. This was the internal logic of Ms. Langley's Grade 8 "family." The substantial work accomplished by the governing metaphor of family was palpable: it made the classroom a space of affect, it blurred the lines between home and school, it drew on humour and compassion, and it heavily regulated behaviour around a norm and an ideal of the family.

Implications for Teacher Education

One of the most important lessons for teacher education to be drawn from this case study, then, is the potential to reimagine "classroom management" along the lines of family commitments. The metaphor of family provides a counter script to the ubiquitous discourse of "classroom management," and an important counterpoint to neoliberalism and its fetishizing of the individual, as there is a shared understanding among classroom members of their roles and responsibilities as a family/community, the explicit agreement that if they comport themselves in consideration of other "family members," there will be no need for more disciplinary forms of regulation and management, as Ms. Langley describes it:

> I think it affords you the space to be the kind of teacher you'd want to be, what-
> ever the challenges of the circumstances, right? A lot of this is your own sur-
> vival and your own sense of efficacy. And bringing them in to participate in that
> through humour and through some contracts you set up—you know, oral contracts
> about who we are together, I think there's probably, you know, a load off the dis-
> cipline weight that you have to carry in a challenging circumstance.

In Ms. Langley's view, the sense of her teaching as domestic work detaches it from other more authoritarian or current neoliberal perspectives on the role of the teacher. Ms. Langley achieved her authority in large part through her call to family bonds, through her consistent rule-setting and governance, and through her sense of humour. A certain playfulness and humor often diffused otherwise volatile outbursts in the room. The students knew they had some flexibility within limits but that they would be called to answer for themselves, and to one another, were they to push those limits too far. Discourses of "management" seemed less prevalent because the uber-discourse of family held people to account in ways that minimized the need for more formal and explicit disciplinary tactics.

In most formal teacher education programs, we operate implicitly, and sometimes explicitly, from metaphors of "family," "community," "care," "safe spaces," and so on. Recognizing those professional metaphors and constructs both for their strengths and their limitations is an important part of the reflexive work of becoming a teacher or being a teacher educator. Ms. Langley prized the metaphor of family, but family is a compli-cated experience for many, and what constitutes family across a broad range of diverse

cultures and class locations is contentious. Without delving into the wider and always political debates about "family" in the broader social world, we know that such a metaphor in teacher education classrooms would need to be expansive in its definitions and acknowledge a wide range of non-normative family conceptions in order to be an emancipatory metaphor in a diverse urban classroom and not simply experienced as a homogenizing and exclusionary set of constraints. Through the research process, and in particular during our interviews, we attempted to make conscious what was implicit in the mainly benevolent understandings of family that Ms. Langley brought to her teaching. She did, to her credit, also engage with the darker side of family by acknowledging and even normalizing the challenges that family members encounter; all would not go smoothly and that is to be expected "in families." Imagine classroom management along these lines: no one is stigmatized for their classroom (family) troubles. The family metaphor may allow teacher and students, after altercations, to return the next day and to start afresh, because we are "bound by obligation" and because we have a duty of care to one another. Our teacher education programs would be well served by nuancing, with understandings of race, gender, cultural and sexual difference, the ubiquitous discourse of "care" in teacher education and recommitting to the idea that caring for children is complex work, doesn't look just one way, and remains the work of both schools and homes, together.

Does the idea of "family" as a pedagogical compass get a classroom more efficiently from one idea to another, or safely through the sometimes turbulent seawaters and challenging relationships of an urban classroom? I arrive ultimately at a qualified yes. Narrow or parochial conceptions of family and community can exclude as much as include, so teachers must guard against such imperializing discourses in their professional work. While there are inherent tensions in the use of the metaphor of family, in Denise Langley's classroom, the conception of family was not seen as a replacement for home and did not attempt to superimpose normative white, middle-class values on diverse conceptions and practices of family. Further, some scholars have read the use of the metaphor of family by black women teachers as a subversion of the official school curriculum, inviting black students to challenge the status quo (see Dixon, 2003; Foster, 1993) concluding that discourses of kinship, or othermothering, are inherently political. In her multiracial context, Ms. Langley did not overtly historicize or politicize her pedagogical practices, but it seemed clear that she was operating from a notion of family that did not exclude the diverse experiences of family that would have been held by her students.

Here, also, the implications of attending to space in studies of teacher classroom practices become salient. One might, for instance, understand the impulses and practices of Ms. Langley because she has understood the spaces of classrooms, and the spaces between classrooms and children's homes, against the grain, against the "straightness" of hegemonic whiteness. The theoretical work of Sara Ahmed (2006) enjoins critical race theory and queer theory with important theorizations of space. Ahmed's ideas point to the ways in which whiteness, if taken as the "here," the starting place for the terms of relation in (urban) classrooms, divide the world thusly. She writes:

> The alignment of race and space is crucial to how they materialize as givens, as if each "extends" the other. In other words, while "the other side of the world" is associated with "racial otherness," racial others become associated with the "other side of the world." They come to *embody distance*. This embodiment of distance is what makes whiteness "proximate," as the "starting point" for orientation. Whiteness becomes what is "here," a line from which the world unfolds, which also makes what is "there" on "the other side." (p. 123)

Crucially, teachers of colour, like Ms. Langley, do not orient themselves around whiteness as a starting point. Though well-schooled in compulsory whiteness and heterosexuality, their disorientation from these norms opens the possibility of other starting places and other modes of address, other terms of relation. They understand hostile racist environments and do not, therefore, have a sanitized version of care; theirs is a care that is not colourblind. Thompson (1998) argues, in her critique of the political and cultural assumptions of whiteness in liberal notions of "care," that such theories have not adequately acknowledged the need to foster resilience to hostile racism amidst discourses of care and love, that they have not taken a racialized vantage point when theorizing the values that are relevant to students of colour. She recommends that teachers and teacher education institutions take these trends seriously, and institute measures and attitudes to reverse them, if they wish to produce an ethos of caring that is nuanced in its response to the contexts of historically marginalized students.

While Ms. Langley did not conceal her critical judgments of some of her students' living conditions, she did work hard to acknowledge and interrogate her own personal beliefs and impulses and those of the largely white, middle-class staff with whom she worked. In our interviews, she spoke candidly, expressing the troubled home lives of

some of her students, but she also did not give up on the idea that however challenging the circumstances, a school and a home needed to work together to support a child's socio-emotional and academic journey:

> It's so easy—you sit there and go "WOW, your mom said you ruined her life, and she kicked you out of the house ... agh! Can I go punch her in her face now?" You know, it's so easy to do that, but I think, remembering that no matter what that mother says, she's that kid's mother. And that kid is going to love that woman because—that's your mom and you're 12 and that's your mom. And so, for me, I've had many conversations with this one particular student about the fact that (A) You didn't ruin her life; she may say that now, but I honestly don't think that's what she means. And (B) I think she's hurt too and—you know, even if your mom doesn't, you know, whatever the circumstance is, you have to know you're lovable and I love you and you have to know you're a good kid. You're a pain in the butt, but you're a good kid.

For better and for worse, the logic of the family and the "bond of obligation" in the classroom holds us to account and serves to raise the stakes on classroom relations and possibly widen compassion for human frailty. While the idea of "family," though culturally overdetermined, may be itself morally neutral, it also readily becomes imbued with a teacher's biography and beliefs, her experiences, cultures, readings and misreadings of "home," and therefore must be critically and reflexively examined throughout a career.

Another significant lesson for teacher education to take away from this study is the way in which one might rethink the process of becoming a teacher to make more conscious and explicit the ways in which teachers, in their solitary classrooms, are a part of a larger and less "familial" system of education on which their actions can have impact. A systems approach critique of home and school (Dowling & Osborne, 1985) would suggest that schools encourage conformity in order to keep their equilibrium, and while this may be true, what was also evident about Ms. Langley's approach was that paying attention to the different social contexts of home and school, allowing difficult emotions to be expressed, and having the flexibility to reconsider actions and behaviours, was equally valued. Ms. Langley reached out to students' homes even when she was critical of them. She knew it was essential to diminish the distance between home and school, to begin

from her students' contexts rather than make assumptions about what they did or did not have.

Urban Teaching and the Labour of Care

The two most influential systems in a child's life are the home and the school. When school is conceived as another kind of nurturing family—in dialogue, but not in conflict with, home—much can be accomplished. The Model Schools for Inner Cities was an initiative that, in its conception, was aiming to do better by children and realized early on that such a goal would depend on a school's ability to open the communication between home and school and to help students feel committed to the school as a space, and to their own learning as a shared responsibility.[5]

Our work with Denise Langley has important lessons for urban teaching more generally. Denise Langley took the goals of her school board's initiative and incorporated them into her strongest guiding professional metaphor, the family. She understood herself to be a successful teacher and her metaphor worked seamlessly because she understood it across the various spaces (physical, emotional, cognitive, and pedagogical) in her professional life. As researchers, reading this metaphor consistently across all of her teaching spaces (in the community, in the school, in her classroom, in her instruction, through her curriculum, and in her own reflective processes) allowed us to see how she was both shaped by, and drew considerable strength from, its conceptual power. Such physical and psychic spaces are experienced by teachers across different schools and communities; our mapping technique of a single metaphor across diverse spaces may offer a model for reflexivity for teachers, teacher educators, and researchers wishing to examine how governing metaphors of teaching function across different social spaces to effectively enact a set of beliefs and principles.

Even though most educators understand that teaching is far from a nine-to-five job, the kind of practices and beliefs of a teacher who cultivates this kind of "conscious community" and "family" commitment is taking on a level of emotional engagement and political awareness not necessarily expected or even encouraged of teachers. Clark (1983)

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5   The school district continues to conduct research on their model schools initiative to assess whether this goal has been effectively realized.

was invoking this idea when he wrote, "The teacher becomes the 'family educator'—the 'whole family' [becomes] the learning unit and not just the child" (p. 25). In the case of racialized teachers, there is the well-studied concept of "racial uplift" (see Perkins, 1980; Ladson-Billings, 1996) that may also be at play; the responsibility racialized teachers feel to improve the lives and opportunities of their racialized students, "sharing the wisdom of experience that comes with living in a society that is often hostile to people of color" (Dixon, 2003, p. 232). Though Ms. Langley did not self-identify as a black feminist, as neither of the black women teachers in Dixon's (2003) study did, "their ideology and practice are certainly a part of that tradition. In their relationships with students and family members, their belief that teaching is a public service and a lifestyle, these teachers undeniably continue the tradition of Black feminist ideology" (p. 231).

To deepen and broaden teachers' understandings of their impact, to help new teachers see their pedagogy as something which has reach beyond the classroom and into the community, would go a long way toward changing a school culture and re-activating the notion of teachers as change agents and cultural workers. For example, Whipp (2013), in her exploratory study of teacher preparation for urban teaching, draws on the notion of caring in connection with her study on political activism and theoretical approaches of new teachers who identify with a social justice approach to teaching. She advocates for a model of caring that goes beyond both individual remedies for student deficits and structural approaches that focus on high expectations and overall student development. Instead, Whipp promotes an explicit pedagogical focus on community activism and social change, privileging the structural analysis of students' experiences and working with students to change structural barriers.

This is entirely consistent with the care labour we watched unfold in Ms. Langley's classroom. At the outset of this article, I suggested that the research was aiming to better appreciate the ways in which "family" served as an enabling or a disabling metaphor for teachers working in diverse urban teaching contexts. Sara Ahmed's 2012 text, *On Being Included*, considers the labour of diversity work in institutional settings and in so doing offers a pertinent articulation of Ms. Langley's notion of family and practice of care:

> Drawing on this radical tradition, Paulo Freire defines praxis as "reflection and action upon the world *in order* to transform it" (1970/2000: 51; emphasis added).

I want to offer a different way of thinking about the relationship between knowledge and transformation. Rather than suggesting that knowledge leads (or should lead) to transformation, I offer a reversal that in my view preserves the point or aim of the argument: transformation, as a form of practical labor, leads to knowledge. (Ahmed, 2012, p. 173)

Reconsidering the important "transformative" praxis of Paulo Freire, Ahmed (2012) articulates a powerfully reconceived process for the transformation of cultural and institutional hegemonies that offers explanatory power for the kind of teaching Ms. Langley engages in and other urban teachers might consider.

Ms. Langley is also the kind of teacher who takes to heart Sokal's (2003) call for the fourth "R" in teaching: Relationships. In the broader study of which this case is a part, teachers who were cited as creating conscious, healthy communities in their classrooms appeared also to develop relationships with several generations in their students' families and attempted to create meaningful relationships with their students outside the classroom. But this can be emotionally draining and time-consuming work, and that is something to begin speaking about openly in the training of new teachers and in the expectations we hold for teacher professional development. Esquivel (2014) acknowledges the different theorizations of care within a broader analysis of the relationship between labour done in the name of care, and the value such labour receives in society. She argues for a transformative approach to care, which involves recognizing the inequitable and gendered distribution of care labour in society, and changing this distribution by "recognizing, reducing and redistributing care" (p. 434). While Esquivel is writing about social policy broadly conceived, it is not hard to see the relevance for urban schooling; teachers require institutional support to provide historically and politically conscious forms of care to marginalized students, to recognize, reduce, and redistribute the burden of care placed on individual teachers.

Since the completion of this case study, Rally Public School was closed for major renovations and the children were housed in a neighbouring school while the work was completed. They have returned to a very different building with new "constellations of social space," as Doreen Massy has usefully described them, within the school and also within the new mixed-income housing being erected through a neighbourhood regeneration project. The relationship between the teacher, her students, their school, and the

broader community has begun a process of reinvention; fodder, perhaps, for another case study. And, Denise Langley has now had a child. Life will change, as new experiences of family, new understandings of labour, and new elements of biography work their way into her professional and pedagogical life.

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