
**DISCIPLINARY COMMUNITIES**

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Entering my elementary school’s office, my eyes are pulled to the first aid cupboard which contains, among other materials, a box of latex gloves that staff are to wear when dealing with injuries that involve bodily fluids. The proliferation of surgical gloves since the escalation of the AIDS ‘crisis’ causes me to ponder the ways in which we adjust to the larger issues that gain the attention of North American society. Many Canadians have become increasingly accustomed – even desensitized – to the violence restricted to particular neighbourhoods in our larger cities. As a whole we neglect the often-marginalized communities that are politically unequipped to fight for their children and compete for the scarce resources allocated for public schooling. As a teacher, the contradiction I face daily is the contrast of a teaching day full of planning for academic activities while living with the turbulence so evident in many of the children of an inner-city elementary school. Annually the weeks leading up to Christmas tend to be a time of media blitzing of our collective goodwill, and at this time I ponder the ways my students are inundated with images of peace and happiness as they take in their favourite television. Those who often live with them, greatly influencing these children, are adults who live on the edge of society.

**Some Re...cognition**

Caregivers in our neighbourhood constantly see the environments they might supposedly reproduce for their children: the beautiful homes, the extravagant gifts and all around festiveness are beyond reach except via popular advertising. The reality is that some adults abandon their families before the year-end build-up forces them to face what they cannot provide. If they return to their families at some point in the New Year, little of the discontent has worn off. Amidst the emotion and sadness in homes, teachers continue to offer rays of hope to children. Educators acknowledge it is important for students to have a place to feel consistently welcome. The community school opens its doors to children and families. We
recognize contradictions around us – image how children view the dizzying array of adult idiosyncrasies - but refuse to let distress stop our plans to include every child in a learning environment. One form of ‘contradiction’ is “against speech, or stifles logic” to the extent that the speaker cannot recognize an inconsistency. Teachers confront contradictions that they witness in themselves, their students, and within the school system. Paradoxically, these challenges to the day as planned make the process of education a more human, less institutional experience. In many ways, the gloves come off in gentle approaches as we listen to who our students are and are becoming, and the methods by which our listening complements this maturation.

The faculty of (CONTRA) DICTION

Does the same tone of hope apply to our post-secondary institutions? As a graduate student I see pressures abound within our personal and professional attempts to justify the rhetoric we support and the decisions we make. Perhaps the gravest contradiction for me is that the Faculties of Education I am familiar with distance themselves from those in the community whom they are committed to supporting. In graduate studies students are encouraged to define a theoretical territory that wills to define us as professionals, giving us voices we may not want to use with our students. This process begins the covering of the human face of pedagogues – they of caring hands, if you will - replacing our personalities with a professional mask and gloves that only serve to distance academics from many teachers. The mask is symbolic of the way we present ourselves, while the gloves signify how we treat topics and texts so delicately in order to be as neutral as possible. What is required are more approaches to graduate studies that are inclusive for reasons of wanting to foster a connection to a pedagogy based upon mutual admiration and respect in wider educational sectors. Discussion and debate that shut down communication should not be honoured. As a faculty, we can be more cognizant of the larger community and build a non-threatening milieu, breaking down the barriers to inspiring adults based on their individual interests. It is time to discuss what a Faculty of Education represents and what it can be in the context of society as a whole, not in academic competition with disciplines inside or outside of its domain. We can teach and learn with our children, not for the demands of where the dollars for research will come from. Graduate students have the voices that will allow this evolution to come from within the academy.