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Résumé de l'article

Les perturbations causées par la pandémie COVID-19 ont révélé de façon nouvelle les vulnérabilités du sentiment de soi des étudiant.e.s, en particulier évidentes dans les contextes d'orientations interculturelles de l'enseignement des langues, dans lesquelles l'autoréflexion critique peut être potentiellement désorientante pour les apprenant.e.s. Nous proposons une pédagogie de la bienveillance pour gérer une telle décentration, afin de former des communautés de pratique bienveillantes pour promouvoir l'épanouissement des étudiant.e.s. Nos données proviennent d'un cours de formation des enseignant.e.s sur les orientations interculturelles de l'enseignement des langues, enseigné virtuellement en 2020. Nous avons analysé les échanges de courriels et transcrit les séances de séances de cours sur Zoom pour examiner la pédagogie de l'enseignent.e sur la base de l'éthique de bienveillance de Noddings. Nous identifions six composantes dans la pédagogie de la professeure : la relation, le déplacement motivationnel, la personne dans le contexte, la flexibilité, l'engagement et la "mentalité" de la bienveillance. Les expressions de réciprocité des étudiant.e.s suggèrent des possibilités pour leur adoption de bienveillance et d'épanouissement. Nous proposons qu'une approche pédagogique bienveillante et compatissante puisse contribuer à créer un espace où les étudiants peuvent développer non seulement des compétences interculturelles, mais aussi une positionalité de bienveillance.

Pedagogy of care in intercultural approaches to language education

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Abstract

Disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic revealed in new ways the vulnerabilities of students' sense of self, especially in the contexts of intercultural orientations to language education where critical self-reflection can be disorienting for learners. We propose a pedagogy of care to manage such decentering, aiding the formation of caring communities of practice and development of student flourishing. Our data derives from a teacher education course on intercultural orientations to language education and mediation, taught virtually in 2020. We analysed email exchanges between the professor and students and transcribed Zoom class sessions to examine the instructor's pedagogy based on Noddings's ethics of care. We identify six components within the instructor's pedagogy: relationship; motivational displacement; person in context; flexibility; engrossment; mentality of care. Students' expressions of reciprocity suggest possibilities for their own adoption of care and flourishing. We propose that a caring and compassionate approach to pedagogy can be instrumental in mediating a space where students might develop not only intercultural competencies but also a positionality of care.

Keywords: intercultural mediation; ethics of care; intercultural competence; pedagogy of care; COVID-19

Résumé

Les perturbations causées par la pandémie COVID-19 ont révélé de façon nouvelle les vulnérabilités du sentiment de soi des étudiant.e.s, en particulier évidentes dans les contextes d'orientations interculturelles de l'enseignement des langues, dans lesquelles l'autoréflexion critique peut être potentiellement désorientante pour les apprenant.e.s. Nous proposons une pédagogie de la bienveillance pour gérer une telle décentration, afin de former des communautés de pratique bienveillantes pour promouvoir l'épanouissement des étudiant.e.s. Nos données proviennent d'un cours de formation des enseignant.e.s sur les orientations interculturelles de

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Mots-clés : la médiation interculturelle ; l'éthique de la bienveillance ; la compétence interculturelle ; la pédagogie de la bienveillance ; COVID-19

Introduction

This article is about intercultural orientations to language education and the instructor's role in mediating students' journeys of decentering and transformation of self through an ethics of care. Compounding the growing mental health crisis in higher education (Sillcox, 2022), the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic revealed in new ways the vulnerabilities of students' sense of self as members of increasingly unsettled local and global communities. Students' vulnerability was especially evident in the contexts of intercultural orientations to language education which require students to engage in intra- and interpersonal reflection, leading them to experience a decentered sense of self (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). Language instructors adopting intercultural orientations to language education were challenged during this period with the difficult task of navigating the affective component within such orientations to language learning without adding to their students' disquiet.

In this article, we argue that intercultural orientations to language learning thus require attention to instructors' development of a pedagogy of care (Noddings, 1984), with the goal of students' flourishing (Nussbaum, 2011). Several models could apply, such as Levine's (2020) application of Nussbaum's theory of social justice and his focus on compassion, Eizadirad's (Eizadirad & Sider, 2021) pedagogy of pain or Freire's (2000) critical pedagogy. However, Noddings's (e.g., 1984) work on ethics of care with its priority on relationships seems to align well with the purposes of intercultural orientations to language learning. We are especially compelled by her pedagogy of care that centres on teacher-student relationships and on

relationship-building within learning communities of practice (groups with common interests, shared goals, and identities) (Marshall & Bokhorst-Heng, 2020a; Wenger, 1999).

We first present the constructs within *ethics of care* that informed our case study. We then describe our case study method and analysis of the instructor's pedagogy. We argue that caring pedagogies could be the basis for intercultural orientations to language education and a key component in forming communities of practice, creating opportunities for students' transformation of self and for their flourishing.

Literature review

Intercultural orientations to language pedagogy

Intercultural orientations to language pedagogy are designed to support students' transformation through guided decentering, with language educators positioned as intercultural mediators (Busch, 2023). Several models of intercultural orientations to language learning exist, each proposing slightly different objectives (e.g., Byram, 2021; Kohler, 2015; Kramsch, 2009; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). Common to all, however, is their attention to self-reflection, self-awareness, and identity transformation. Yet despite the theoretical contributions of each of these models to intercultural pedagogy, as Kohler (2015) argues, the affective component of intercultural competence remains under-theorised. One exception would be Levine's (2020) human ecological perspective of language education, in which he proposes a model for the development of learners' "full human potential" through the acquisition of human capabilities (Nussbaum, 2011; Sen, 1992).

Although he does not use the term, Levine's (2020) monograph challenged us to think more carefully about *flourishing* within intercultural orientations to language education. The notion of human flourishing, "eudaimonia," comes from Aristotle (Nussbaum, 2011) who saw a life of eudaimonia as essentially being one in which individuals fulfill their potential as a human being. Fostering students' flourishing can be tricky to manage, though, within the decentering and reflective learning processes inherent to intercultural learning.

Intercultural mediation (Kohler, 2015) becomes key to this process as educators actively cultivate students' capacity for intercultural reflection and dialogue while managing the decentering that they feel. Through this process of mediation, educators aim to guide students to a place of learning and transformation and ultimately, flourishing. This sort of mediation would be contingent on trust between the educator and students (Reed, 2018) and amongst students within a learning community of practice. Trust can be thought of as "an attitude we have towards people whom we hope will be

trustworthy, where trustworthiness is a property not an attitude" (McLeod, 2021, para. 7). It involves a willingness to be vulnerable to others. We see trust, then, as a core component of learning communities of practice, for, in addition to a shared purpose and activity, such communities are defined by members interacting with each other and developing a sense of belonging through relationship-building (Wenger, 1999). Yet, little if no research in applied linguistics has regarded how educators go about establishing a community of practice within their classrooms, built on trusting relationships, within which intercultural learning through mediation may occur. This brings us to *ethics of care*. Applied to education, ethics of care suggests pedagogical strategies that, through the prioritization of relationship building, establish a learning community of practice that supports students' decentering through trust — and thus potentially, their transformation and flourishing.

Ethics of care

Rose and Adams (2014) attribute Noddings (1984, 2012) as the first to identify *care* as an essential component of pedagogical relationships between teachers and students. Her work has spawned various applications of care to educational settings, including support for high-need youth (Cassidy & Bates, 2005), authenticity in teacher education (Rabin, 2013), online learning environments (Rose & Adams, 2014) and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic (Rabin, 2021). We believe ours is the only study that concerns care in relation to intercultural orientations to language learning in online learning settings.

Noddings (2012) regards caring relationships as fundamental to what it means to be human. She characterises caring relationships as:

- comprised of at least two people: (i) the one-caring and (ii) the one cared-for;
- the one-caring acts in response to a perceived or expressed need of the one cared-for;
- the one cared-for is aware of the care given;
- the relationship may come to exhibit reciprocal commitment to each other's well-being.

The one-caring in this relationship exhibits what Noddings (1984) calls *engrossment*, which she distinguishes from empathy. Empathy, she argues, is "The power of projecting one's personality into, and so fully understanding, the object of contemplation" (p. 30). In this regard, empathy is projective, with one's self as a point of reference. However, such empathy could lead to misplaced care; potentially being influenced by our own biases, we may not fully realize the external reality or inner perspective of the one cared-

for (see van Dijke et al., 2023). In contrast, engrossment offers a more receptive and affective alternative. Engrossment means being fully attuned to hearing and feeling the one cared-for's expressed needs, regardless of our own preconceived assumptions. This requires an open and unbiased *motivational displacement*, putting aside our own priorities to meet the needs of the one cared-for. It is important in this caring relationship that the one cared-for *feels* that they are cared for. Otherwise, Noddings (1984) argues, there is no caring relation; there would only be an attitude or virtue of caring within the one-caring. Finally, she uses the word *reciprocity* to refer to the cared-for's response, which completes the caring relationship. As Johannesen (2000) reminds us, reciprocity does not mean a one-to-one equal exchange of care: It may be a direct response, or it simply may be the growth of the cared-for into their full (or fuller) human potential witnessed by the one-caring.

This attention to care within teacher-student relationships, Noddings (2016) also informs pedagogy. She identifies four key components:

Modelling: "We demonstrate our caring in our relations with students" (p. 230).

Dialogue: Dialogue involves the interpersonal relationship between the teacher and student. First, dialogue disrupts the power differential within that relationship. Second, "the purpose of dialogue is to come into contact with ideas and to understand, to meet the other and to care" (p. 186).

Practice: "If we want to produce people who will care for one another, then it makes sense to give students practice in caring and reflection on that practice" (p. 232); in so doing, we produce a "mentality" of care in the classroom that defines how students relate to each other.

Confirmation: The "act of affirming and encouraging the best in others" (p. 232). Confirmation involves trust, continuity and a knowledge of the other and their context so that caring is authentic and purposeful.

The emphasis on relationship, on the affective state of the student and on their personal growth suggests that care ethics, situated in trust, is potentially an appropriate response to the decentering that accompanies intercultural learning.

In this case study, we thus engage the construct of ethics of care to examine an instructor's pedagogy in a course on intercultural orientations to language education. The course (taught in French) was offered to B.Ed. students of French immersion education at an English-language university in New Brunswick (NB), Canada. It was taught online early in the COVID-19 pandemic (June and July 2020), with lockdowns across communities worldwide, a

time when many felt unsettled and uncertain. It was the instructor's first experience teaching intercultural mediation online; it was also the students' and instructor's first experience with a course taught wholly online. These global and learning conditions make the course a rich case study by which to examine how an instructor's ethics of care might support the creation of a caring community of practice within which intercultural orientations to language education might be explored.

Methodology

Three primary questions guided our inquiry:

Q1. What pedagogical strategies of care does the instructor employ in an online course on intercultural mediation in language education?

Q2. How do these strategies contribute to developing a caring community of practice within which student flourishing could occur?

Q3. How does the instructor's pedagogy of care situate students' affect within intercultural orientations to language teaching and learning?

Our analysis was premised on case study methodology which allows for detailed, holistic analyses towards deep description and understanding. Case study does not require generalizability; rather, it is "the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances" (Stake, 1995, p. xi). This approach requires attention to context for understanding the complexities of relationships and processes. We therefore begin our discussion of methodology with the socio-political context that informed conversations about intercultural competence in the course. We then describe the course and methods of analysis.

Context: New Brunswick and its official languages policy

New Brunswick is Canada's only officially bilingual province, with a population of about 776,800 comprising 32% francophones, 66% anglophones and 2% First Nations (mostly Mi'kmaq; Statistics Canada, 2016). Ostensibly, NB's bilingual policy allows for individual choice in official language practices and is described in official discourse as representing mutual respect between the two language groups (Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages [OCOL-NB], n.d.). However, ongoing language ideological debates suggest official bilingualism is also embedded in historical minority/majority power struggles (Heller, 1999; Marshall & Bokhorst-Heng, 2020b) that have characterized anglophone-francophone relations in Canada since at least the eighteenth century. In the eastern territory of *Acadie* (today's Maritime Provinces, including NB), in events called the *Grand Dérangement*

or Great Upheaval (1755–1763), British troops forcibly removed French-speaking Acadians, during which thousands died (Daigle, 1993). After 1764, some Acadians resettled in small rural communities, marginalised outside of political and economic influence (Thériault, 1982). It was during the 1960s, with francophone activism for socio-economic, linguistic, and political equality that linguistic equality was officially granted to francophones in NB, hinged on the institution of provincial official bilingualism and linguistic duality in all government sectors.

Most significantly, premised on language-as-right ideology (Ruíz, 1984; Stanley, 1984), NB's official bilingualism led to the provision of separate educational sectors for francophones and anglophones. French schools became a means of cultural and linguistic maintenance and rights for francophones. And in English schools, through a language-as-resource orientation (Keating Marshall & Bokhorst-Heng, 2018; Ruíz, 1984), French second language education became a primary avenue for anglophones to access the economic capital (jobs) through personal bilingualism (Bokhorst-Heng & Marshall, forthcoming). Yet even today, while most New Brunswickers support official bilingualism, some members of the anglophone community argue against official bilingualism, claiming unilingual disadvantage in a bilingual province (Bokhorst-Heng & Marshall, 2022).

With this brief introduction to the context, we now describe the participants and the course that frames our case study.

Participants

Kelle, the instructor of the course, is an English L1, bilingual professor of French from the Western United States. She was invited to develop and teach a course on intercultural orientations to French immersion education at her co-author's university, through a Fulbright Specialist award in the spring of 2019. She was scheduled to teach the course again in 2020, but COVID-19 restrictions prevented her travel. She thus delivered the course through synchronous online learning: eight three-hour intensive sessions over two weeks on the Zoom video conferencing platform. Students resided in the Eastern and Atlantic Time Zones and Kelle in the Pacific. Kelle was no stranger to uncertainty: in fall 2018, her university had experienced two consecutive tragedies, one of which involved a three-week campus closure, requiring a pivot to online instruction. In response to these crises, she employed a caring pedagogy to manage their impact on her students and their learning — a pedagogy that continues to inform her pedagogical practice.

Four teacher candidates enrolled in the course: two anglophone (English L1) and two francophone (French L1) (pseudonyms are used):

Carly: an anglophone mature student, working full time while studying. She is among the first graduates of NB's French immersion programs.

Dan: an anglophone mature student, originally from the UK. After living in various countries, he recently became a Canadian citizen. He learned French as a second language after his university studies. A family member was diagnosed with late-stage cancer just as he entered the B.Ed. program. The pandemic prohibited his ability to travel, yet he was remotely involved in their care.

Annelise: a francophone mature student, coming from a well-established business career where she used her bilingual competence. French is her L1, and she was the only NB Acadian in the course. She struggled with intense levels of anxiety.

Justine: a francophone in her early 20s. From a francophone majority region outside of NB, she was new to the language dynamics in NB. This was her first B.Ed. course, meeting the other students (who knew each other from previous classes) for the first time. She was shy, often quiet in class discussions although actively engaged.

The course

The course, *French Language and Intercultural Competencies*, was designed to model intercultural orientations to French immersion education through intercultural mediation. Its learning objectives included:

1. building students' language competencies to meet NB's French immersion teacher proficiency requirements;
2. engagement with culture as a concept and its relationship to identity, otherness, intercultural experience, and the francophone world; and
3. intercultural mediation and pedagogies. As well, the course was designed to mediate language ideologies in the francophone world along with national and local language ideological debates.

Procedure

Written informed consent to use course correspondence and record class interaction and course assignments was obtained from participants before the course began, with approval given by the Canadian university's research ethics committee. For this discussion, data included:

- Pre-course email communication: Kelle (25); Carly (1); Dan (7); Annelise (13); Justine (1), analysed for how Kelle's pedagogy of care figured into establishing a caring community of practice even prior to the beginning of the course;

- Zoom recording of eight sessions (about 3 hours each).

All participants used Zoom's gallery view, including Kelle whose screen was captured in the recordings. Recorded data were translated and transcribed for content, including nonverbal expressions, which are important given the online forum. Due to space constraints, here we include only those gestures which bear significance regarding care ethics. Data are presented in translation (italicised English represents code-switching into English).

Our coding considered how Kelle enacted ethics of care, and how elements of transformation (reciprocity) were evident in students' discourse. Some codes were identified a priori based on Noddings's ideas (1984, 2012), including *relationship* and *engrossment/motivational displacement*. Through constant comparative method, other codes emerged representing additional expressions of care ethics, such as *student in context* and *flexibility*. Both authors analysed the data independently, and agreement was achieved through ongoing discussion and a second round of coding. Eighty-two episodes of care were identified in the in-class data. All of the elements could of course be present in any one caring episode, and often were. However, to better understand the components of caring pedagogy, we isolate them here according to Noddings's constructs. For this text, we present excerpts of data exemplifying Kelle's utilisation of caring pedagogy to establish a caring community of practice within her classroom, characterised by trust. The conventions used in transcribing our data can be found in the Appendix. Because our data were recorded from course sessions occurring on a synchronous communication platform, nonverbal expressions are also important to fully represent participants' discourse and have been included in our transcription.[1]

Analysis

Expressions of caring pedagogy

Kelle's pedagogy of care began about two weeks prior to the beginning of class when she sent an introductory email (Excerpt 1) to her students.

Excerpt 1: Kelle's introductory email

Hello!

[1] *Transcription conventions*:

(?) indiscernible speech	Becau- hyphen indicates cut off
// overlapping talk begins/ends	He was <u>thrilled</u>. Emphasis
(.) silence, one second	[notes, comments]
(. . .) silence, three seconds	[*non-verbals*]

> Allow me to introduce myself, my name is Kelle. I'm Wendy's colleague who is going to teach the course ED4163. Attached is the provisional course syllabus so you have an idea of what to expect in the course. Soon (this Tuesday morning at the latest, I hope), there will be a Moodle site with all of the course readings available. Also, I'll also create a folder in OneDrive where you'll turn in your coursework. Lastly, if it's all the same to you, I prefer to use Zoom for our meeting platform. I've created a permanent session for our class, and I'll send you the link before our first course session.
>
> If you want to plan a meeting with me before our first course meeting, don't hesitate to contact me.
>
> I'm excited to meet you all!
>
> Cordially, Kelle

Motivational displacement

In this introductory email, Kelle introduces herself and expresses enthusiasm for the upcoming course. Her invitation for students to contact her before the course begins sets a tone of openness and support. Notable is her inclusion of a provisional syllabus and commitment to provide required course readings "soon" (12 days in advance). She knew from her co-author that some students had requested this early provision of course materials to prepare in advance for the intensive course. We see Kelle's response as evidence of *motivational displacement* within her pedagogy of care.

Motivational displacement in a caring encounter occurs whereby A cares for B by listening to their needs, and then responds in accordance with what is heard. Kelle's normal practice would have been to provide course details and materials immediately prior to the first course session. This had been her intent for this course, too — especially as she was occupied with additional administrative responsibilities at her own university. In her motivational displacement, Kelle retained, but moved beyond, her own interests to "feeling with" (Noddings, 1984) her students.

The subsequent email response sent by Annelise confirms her awareness as being the one cared-for as she takes up Kelle's invitation for connection (Excerpt 2):

Excerpt 2: Annelise's response

> Hello Dr. Marshall
>
> I hope that you're well.
>
> Allow me to introduce myself: My name is Annelise … Student of mature age! ;) I'm 100% Acadian and very proud to be!
>
> I'm married to a marvelous man …, since 2004. We're the parents of two magnificent girls

> dots (14 years old) and … (12 years old). We live in the beautiful valley of …, NB. Our little paradise.
>
> Although I've always dreamed of being a teacher, my life took me in other directions. After a career of 15 years in …, I stepped down from my job …to follow my dream of becoming a teacher.
>
> I would tremendously appreciate the occasion to find a time to meet virtually (Zoom) to discuss the course requirements.
>
> Thank you so much and have a nice day.
>
> Annelise …

Relationship

Annelise's response to Kelle's introduction email suggests she interpreted the message as an invitation for relationship, a central component of ethics of care. She responds accordingly, first providing a short biography and then personal context on her family and community. It would require some intercultural knowledge to understand this detailed contextualization, somewhat typical of Acadian discourse. In meeting for the first time, interlocutors provide their networks of relationships and context (personal biography, physical context, relational context) to position each other. Annelise describes this discourse style during Session 7: "Like, you meet someone in *Acadie* and … as my grandmother used to say, 'We want to figure out our kinship' … And I find that it's, like, unique here in *Acadie*, that we do that." Annelise invites Kelle into local "ways of knowing and being" that are used to establish interpersonal relationships.

Kelle picks up on these local discourse norms in her response, signalling that knowing her students "as persons" is valued within her pedagogy of care (Excerpt 3).

Excerpt 3: Kelle's response to Annelise

> Bonjour Annelise,
>
> I'm delighted to make your acquaintance! (Shall we use *tu* with each other? I'm used to the Canadian custom [of students and professors using *tu*]). I'm an anglophone by birth (but more specifically, I'm Texan!) I started learning French when I was 18, at university. I've spent time in France, Québec, and New Brunswick, so my accent is a little bit Canadian for the French and a little French for my friends in Canada.
>
> I know your hometown well—I went there one time (in 2010, actually) to interview … At the time, I was a doctoral student at The University of Texas and I had an Acadian professor who was from … Her name is …, if by chance you know her. She brought me to *Acadie* in 2009 to identify a dissertation topic, and she's the one who arranged the interview with … That day, too, we went to the

> Monument-Lefebvre. The year after that, I came back to Moncton to conduct my fieldwork for my dissertation on the *Centre culturel Aberdeen*. I had a really nice time, and I always consider Moncton as my Canadian hometown. Since 2009, I've come to Moncton almost every summer. I'm disappointed not to be able to this year.
>
> What would be your availability this week for a Zoom meeting?
>
> It will be a pleasure to meet you in person,
>
> Kelle

Kelle's tone in her dialogue (Noddings, 2016) is congenial as she dismantles the professor-student hierarchy originally invoked by Annelise, who had used the second-person pronoun *vous* in her first email to Kelle. Kelle instead invites Annelise to use the familiar second-person pronoun *tu*, as she herself had done with professors at a university in Québec. She then provides some of her own biographical information and her knowledge of the region — even acknowledging the very real possibility of mutual contacts ("if by chance you know her"). In so doing, Kelle confirms the value she places on relationship, while also establishing her legitimacy as the course instructor: an American speaking into a very specific Acadian culture, a cultural knower and insider. Throughout this dialogue she thus establishes a framework of relationship and trust within which future interaction and care will occur.

Person in context

In her email exchange, Kelle also prioritised context to gain a more holistic understanding of Annelise as a person. Not only is this contextual positioning indicative of an ethics of care, in this case emphasising the importance of seeing the person in their contexts, but it is appropriate in this course on intercultural mediation and models awareness of local cultural norms of communication in the Acadian community.

In her first session with the students (Excerpt 4), Kelle continues to weave components of ethics of care as she establishes a caring community of practice. She builds an ethos of trust as she establishes the norms of practice for course meetings:

Excerpt 4: Session 1

> *Kelle*: But I know that we have a lot to do, not a lot of time. If you think that you're not exactly prepared for the next course session, *please still come*. We always have lively discussions. I know that life — you know *life happens*. [*All smile; Annelise and Dan nod*] So, if *life happens* to you, if you can still come, but if you weren't able to read well, that's ok. [*Carly raises eyebrows, nods*] Like I said, I'm very flexible.

Flexibility

After highlighting the fast pace of the intensive course and the need for attendance, Kelle acknowledges students' extenuating circumstances, repeating, "life happens." She expresses willingness to be "very flexible." Her emphasis on flexibility is evident throughout the data, beyond what could be presented here — for example, providing alternative modalities of assignments to meet students' varying needs, scheduling an additional session at the end of the course, meeting with students online as fit their schedules, adjusting the course schedule in response to class discussions — all demonstrating flexibility and motivational displacement as the one-caring.

Ethics of care is also evident in Kelle's *engrossment* of her students' needs and in the creation of a caring community of practice, which Noddings refers to as a *mentality of care*, exemplified in Excerpt 5. It begins with Annelise's late arrival:

Excerpt 5: Session 5

Kelle: [*Annelise appears online, waving; Kelle smiles, waves*] Hi, Annelise!

Annelise: I'm sorry I'm late-

Kelle: It's alright.

Annelise: I had an appointment at the doctor's. I don't feel super well today. I have a migraine [*Kelle winces*], I had to go to the emergency room for a shot of Imitrex at two in the morning [*Carly winces*]. If I'm a little bit, like, strange, it's because — *I'm a little high*. [*All laugh*]

Kelle: It's alright.

Dan: Uh-oh! [*Grinning*]

Annelise: [*Everyone still laughing*] So, I have to admit that I'm not completely ready for the class. [*Kelle purses her lips, waving, palm open, signalling: "No problem."*] // I couldn't finish my reading.

Dan: Me neither. I had // the same problem. [*Kelle continues waving, shaking her head*]

Kelle: No-

Annelise: Uh // I feel terrible. Ask Carly and Dan. // Like, it's not

Carly: Yeah. //

Annelise: -really like me to like not be ready // for class

Dan: No. Never //

Annelise: It embarrasses me, it bothers me. // It gives me anxiety.

Dan: (?).

Carly: It's *okay*! It's alright. // [*Kelle shakes her head side to side*]

Kelle: Don't worry about it. *No*. In my classes there's always- That's why the sociocultural approach works so well because it draws on the group's knowledge and not the individual's. [*Everyone nods*] So, for people, that's

how life is (*la vie, c'est la vie*). Life happens sometimes. So, it's up the rest of the group to- How would I say it in English, *to carry the lesson*, yes?

Carly: Mm hm!

Kelle: … But also, there's a lesson that we're going to observe today and we're going to try to apply the principles of intercultural instruction. It's *task-based*, so that will also work well with our reading. But that's going to give us a fairly pragmatic example of all the theory we've read about. (…) This will help you, too Annelise, because it's really about observing and talking.

How "life has happened" at this moment to Annelise had clearly influenced her affective state — "I feel terrible … It embarrasses me, it bothers me" — and she appeals to her peers to agree that her current state is not her norm. Ethics of care demonstrated by Kelle and members of the class play a key role in bringing Annelise from her affective state of distress into one of being-cared-for. We identify this in Kelle's engrossment and the pervasive *mentality of care* defining the class's community of practice.

Engrossment

To understand the significance of Kelle's engrossment in Annelise's needs in this excerpt, it is important to know a bit more about Annelise. As an L1 French speaker, an Acadian and a mature student (see Excerpt 2), she had assumed the role of class leader and model of cultural knowledge. Annelise held high expectations of herself while constantly struggling with learner anxiety. As such, much more was feeding into her distress than her late arrival and lack of preparation. Kelle's engrossment in and knowledge of Annelise and her context enabled her to fully "apprehend" Annelise's reality (Noddings, 2016), to be attuned to her affective state and to affirm her in ways that were authentic and purposeful to Annelise. Kelle first reassures Annelise, saying: "It's alright," which she repeats, then saying, "Don't worry about it." She acknowledges how life for Annelise "has happened" to her, while diffusing the stress and the pressure Annelise had put on herself.

Kelle then provides a theoretical and pedagogical response based on discussions from the previous session. In this motivational shift, she aims to restore Annelise's dignity, providing her a way to reconsider her personal "disappointment" instead as an opportunity to understand more deeply the collaborative nature of learning within sociocultural pedagogy (van Lier, 2004) and the flexibility it affords. In addition to care, she models mediation through sociocultural pedagogy as she guides the class in reflective practice.

Another significant moment of engrossment is evident in the final session of the course (Excerpt 6). Just prior to the start of class, Kelle had received a message from Dan (in English) regarding his family member's deteriorating health: "Just a quick fyi, my [family member] might be admitted to hospital

today … things have taken a turn for the worst [sic]." She remembers that Dan's message weighed heavy on her as she began class, evident when she asks students to observe a moment of silence for those suffering around the world. It is important to mention that this is now Session 8, the end of the course. There is considerable ease in the relationship between students and professor to the point where students were even able to (re)negotiate course assignments and due dates to align with their personal circumstances (Marshall, forthcoming). Everyone was also very aware of the difficult situations they were struggling with in their personal lives — including Kelle. It is within this context that the following moment occurred (Excerpt 6):

Excerpt 6: Session 8, Opening

> *Kelle*: We've been in a hurry during the whole course, and usually I'd take a moment to reflect. There's a lot that's going on in the world. There are a lot of people who have family members who're sick, not even because of COVID. [*Dan nods throughout*] I lost my two grandparents this past spring with 7 weeks of separation between the two. So, I'd like to take a brief moment to reflect, pray, whatever you do, to have a moment of silence to unify us with everyone now, in the world, who's suffering. [*Everyone nods*] So, let's take a moment of silence, please. (60 seconds). [*Everyone closes their eyes and/or bows their heads*]. Thank you.
>
> *Dan*: Thank you.

Within this silent moment of reflection on shared global suffering, Kelle supports Dan in recognizing his pain while also respecting his privacy. She shares from her own grief, signalling to Dan and the others that she understands the unique challenges that each of them faced, trusting them with her own pain. Her introductory comments acknowledge the struggles they are all experiencing, even though she does not name them, respecting their trust. The purpose is clear: to "meet the other and to care" (Noddings, 2016, p. 186) while underscoring their positioning within the global community (a hallmark of intercultural orientations to pedagogy).

Mentality of care

Kelle's care also fostered a "mentality of care" amongst the students, cultivating a caring community of practice. This is evident in Excerpt 6 where Kelle disrupts the session's agenda, shifting the priority of the lesson to create space for affect and care. This mentality of care was evident in Excerpt 5 as well where, in response to Annelise's migraine, Kelle's own modeling invites the students to support each other. Dan encourages Annelise, expressing that he too did not complete the readings, defusing her sense of failure. And when Annelise turned to Dan and Carly for affirmation, they

responded accordingly, with Carly repeating Kelle's earlier phrase, "It's okay! It's alright," adopting the instructor's stance as one-caring. Dan's and Carly's responses to Annelise suggest they have taken up Kelle's care through what Noddings calls *reciprocity*. Recall that Noddings regards reciprocity as the real measure of how care is taken up by students, completing the caring relationship.

Reciprocity

The following excerpt further demonstrates students' reciprocity of care within the learning community of practice while themselves engaging in intercultural mediation. Excerpt 7 picks up on a conversation from the previous course session on the region's fraught language ideological debates. There had been several difficult moments as students worked through the conversation, which prompted Carly's reflection the following day. Carly's peers and Kelle are actively engaged and supportive throughout with frequent affirming gestures, and Dan and Kelle (the other two anglophones) frequently nod in agreement.

Excerpt 7: Session 8

Carly: I just wanted to say that Annelise and I, we talked — we talk often [*laughs*]. But we were talking earlier today, and I said, "You know, I was looking for words in the dictionary because I wanted to express my feelings today on the Acadian deportation." Because I thought a lot about that yesterday evening. And my husband and I were talking about it. And I just wanted to say it right. Like, I feel like I have guilt, as an anglophone. But it's more than that. And Annelise and I were talking about that. And I said: "What is — I think it's the word: Remorse." Like, I have remorse because of it. Like what did the people before me, the anglophones do? It wasn't fair. I understand that. I can't change anything. Except speaking in French. So, the only thing that I can do, the only thing that I can change is me.

Kelle: Mm hm!

Carly: And that's what- the way that I treat Acadian people, the way that I love them so much. But also, I'm anglophone. I can't change that. But I can tell others. I can be an example. I can talk a lot about my ability in French and acquire a higher and higher level, to improve my French. It's the only thing that I can change. But at the same time, I think that there are many anglophones who feel the same way I do, that we have remorse. It's just, you can only change yourself. Yeah.

Kelle: Thank you! Well said!

Dan: . . . Like you're saying Carly, language is (?) that we're able to communicate our ideas, explore, make connections, and do new things with what we've received. Like, making other situations better, marrying the two cultures

like we do. And, because really, that's what the English did not want in the past. They did not want the English and the French to go together. [*Annelise shakes head*] So, there are two things we're able to do. . . .

Annelise: [*seriously*] As an Acadian — I can't speak for everybody. I know that the majority, many of us feel: "I don't need pity. I have no bitterness. I don't need for anybody to ask me for forgiveness. I don't need apologies because (..) it didn't happen to me, it was my ancestors. It's not you, it was your ancestors." So, from there, as much as anybody can- I really like the expression "social harmony." So long as you're able to accept my culture, if I accept yours, if you accept the fact that sometimes I marry two cultures together with my Chiac or my franglais, that's all we ask for. Actually, one of the basic needs of a human being is acceptance. Like, so, you know? That's all we want. We want to be accepted. We want to be part of a group. So, you know? Yeah.

Kelle: Yes.

Dan: A good group.

Annelise: [*leaning toward camera, gesturing to include all*] So // me (..) I forgive you all. [*All smile, Dan motions with his thumb up*] I don't need to, but I'm doing it all the same. [*Carly continues smiling, laughs, holds right hand to her chest*]

Carly: Thank you! [*laughs*]

Annelise: Worry pas ta brain! // [*motioning toward camera, leaning in*]

Kelle: [*laughter*] That's right. //

Annelise: Worry pas ta brain. [*repeating motion*] [*all smile; Dan laughs*]

Acadie's history was not new to Carly; she had designed her final lesson plan around her children' storybook about *Acadie*. However, the discussions in class led her to dig deeper. She wrestles with how to reinterpret her position in *Acadie*'s history in reference to her friendship with Annelise and her relationship with her husband, both of whom are Acadian. There is a sense of introspection — about how "the only thing I can change is me," which she repeats twice, with examples. Dan expands on Carly's introspection by also considering his responsibility as one from British origin, while, through the use of the third person, also distancing himself from those from the past. He suggests using language and dialogue, and even intercultural marriage, to bring the two communities together, which the British had historically tried to keep separate.

Annelise responds with care to Carly's and Dan's reflections. She places boundaries around historical events and today's society, absolving them of responsibility for the Acadian deportation. Picking up on Dan's example of intercultural marriage, she speaks about social harmony illustrated through

the "marriage" of the two cultures and languages in *Chiac* (a variety of Acadian French; Perrot, 1995). With an ethics of care, she extends the desire for "acceptance" for the Acadians to Carly and Dan, and, while she feels forgiveness is not needed for historical events, she offers it as a path to social harmony and acceptance. She underscores her forgiveness, twice repeating the *Chiac* phrase: "*Worry pas ta brain*," or "Don't worry about it". As she speaks, she even leans in towards the camera, as if to narrow the physical distance between herself and her peers.

While Carly, Dan, and Annelise were friends prior to the beginning of this class, here they demonstrate an ethics of care for each other in this context of their learning community of practice as they work through some difficult aspects of Acadian history, that continue to shape anglophone-francophone relations in the province, and their own position vis-à-vis this history. The caring community of practice and pedagogy of care created a space where these students felt safe to reflect and dialogue on charged topics that, though they were friends, they had not previously discussed. In the discussion that follows, we summarise our findings by revisiting the questions framing our analysis.

Discussion

We had asked the questions:

Q1 What pedagogical strategies of care does the instructor employ in an online course on intercultural mediation in language education?

Q2 How do these strategies contribute to developing a caring community of practice within which student flourishing could occur?

Q3 How does the instructor's pedagogy of care situate students' affect within intercultural orientations to language teaching and learning?

As we noted, Nodding's model of education from a care perspective involves *modeling*, *dialogue*, *practice*, and *confirmation*. All of these were present in our data:

Modelling: Kelle modeled the priority of relationship, motivational displacement, seeing her students in their context, engrossment of her students' needs and flexibility.

Dialogue: Grounded in ethics of care, Kelle's dialogue enabled her to strengthen the interpersonal relationships with her students. She was able to "meet the other and to care," in ways that were recognised by the cared-for.

Practice: The caring community of practice Kelle purposefully cultivated provided opportunity for students themselves to exhibit care towards each other.

Confirmation: From her first email, Kelle established trust and encouraged her students to share about themselves and their personal contexts. Having this knowledge about her students enabled her to be purposeful in her support of their growth as whole persons within a pedagogy grounded in ethics of care.

Furthermore, through her pedagogy of care, Kelle established a caring community of practice in her classroom, characterised by trust that allowed for the deep involvement of affect in her students' learning experience, though the group was distanced physically.

As a case study, this analysis regards only one moment in time, and it is not possible to confirm whether these teacher candidates would adopt pedagogies of care within their own teaching practices. Furthermore, we recognise that a pedagogy of care manifests differently in a class with only 4 students than in one with higher enrolment. Therefore we do not propose a list of specific strategies for enactment of care to be applied in all contexts; rather we provide principles of how ethics of care can guide such pedagogy. Importantly, our findings do suggest ways for an instructor's caring approach to cultivate a caring virtual community of practice in which instruction on intercultural orientations to language pedagogy may be delivered, which is a novel contribution of this research. Future research endeavors could involve a longitudinal study, following teacher candidates in their own classroom practice to see how ethics of care shapes their pedagogy in intercultural pedagogies and may contribute to their flourishing and that of their students.

Conclusion: Implications for intercultural pedagogies

We note that employing ethics of care might represent a pedagogical stance different from that typically employed in higher education. Often, faculty members have been trained to maintain a "professional," neutral, and hierarchical stance with their students. Yet to engage fully in ethics of care requires the instructor to flatten the instructor-student hierarchy and engage instead as persons in relationship. This is not to say that we drop all personal boundaries. In fact, we are aware also of the potential challenges associated with enacting an ethics of care, including an emotional burden this could place on the instructor (Hoaglund, 1991). However, we argue that, to foster our students' learning of intercultural competence as whole persons, it is important to acknowledge and care about all of the personal elements that might come to bear in their learning experience. Such ethics of care builds trust and opens the

way for them to undergo personal transformation, opening the way for their flourishing — even in uncertain times.

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