



Open-mindedness and the Virtues in Education

Conference celebrating the work of
Professor William Hare

2-4 October, 2008

Professor William Hare, since the publication of his book, *Open-mindedness and Education* in 1979, has been recognized as one of Canada's pre-eminent philosophers of education. In several books and over 60 articles, Hare has extended our understanding of the concept of open-mindedness and located it at the core of the very idea of education. He has also explored a number of the other "virtues" in education, primarily in his provocative 1993 book, *What Makes a Good Teacher*.

To honour, celebrate, and continue Professor Hare's contributions to educational studies on the occasion of his retirement, the Faculty of Education at Mount Saint Vincent University is hosting a two-day conference aimed at bringing together emerging and established scholars and the broader community. It is our hope that their discussions and interaction can help us better understand the meaning of education and the importance of ethical practice among educators.

Welcome to the conference. In the following pages you will find the conference programme, presentation abstracts, and local information to help you enjoy your visit.

Programme

Thursday, October 2nd

7 pm	Seton Academic Centre, Auditorium A	Robert W. Jackson Lecture: Teaching for Intellectual Virtue (and Against Intellectual Vice), Eamonn Callan,
8 pm	Margie O'Brien Faculty Lounge (Seton Academic Centre, Room 404)	Reception

Friday, October 3rd

8:30 - 9:30	SAC 430	Open-Mindedness: A Case of Interdisciplinary Collaboration, Nez Elik and Toward Negative Capability in Teaching: Lessons from Psychoanalysis, Christopher Higgins
9:30 - 9:40	Margie O'Brien Faculty Lounge	Break
9:40 - 10:40	SAC 430	Open-minded Listening or Silencing Dissent: On the Teacher as Listener, Andrea English and Thinking about Forgiveness: a Preamble to its Cultivation in Schooling, Douglas Stewart
10:40 - 11:00	Margie O'Brien Faculty Lounge	Break
11:00 - 12:00	SAC 430	Critical Realism and Open-Mindedness, Donovan Plumb and Gods, Gadflies, and Bulldog Tenacity: In Praise of Closed-Mindedness, Daniel H. Cohen and George Miller
12:15 - 2:00	Margie O'Brien Faculty Lounge	Lunch
2:15 - 3:15	SAC 430	The Place of Fear in Teacher Education, Mary Jane Harkins, Michelle Forrest and Terrah Keener and Science Education and Open-Mindedness: Green Compared to What? Stephen P. Norris and David P. Burns
3:15 - 3:30	Margie O'Brien Faculty Lounge	Break
3:30 - 4:30	SAC 430	Hare's Monitoring for Open-Mindedness: Viewed Through the Workplace, Tracey Leary and Educational Crimes, David Blacker

Saturday, October 4th

9:00 - 10:00	SAC 430	Exploring Teacher Credibility: A Conversation with William Hare, Sonya E. Singer and Mary Jane Harkins and Rule Following, Standards of Practice, and Open-mindedness, Scott Johnson
10:00 - 10:10	Margie O'Brien Faculty Lounge	Break
10:10 - 11:10	SAC 430	Connecting Critical Thinking and Open-Mindedness in Theory and Practice, Catherine Broom and Open-Mindedness and Critical Thinking, Harvey Siegel
11:10 - 11:30	Margie O'Brien Faculty Lounge	Break
11:30 - 12:30	SAC 430	Sensitive Issues and the Spirit of Criticism in Teaching, Michelle Forrest and Virtue and the Character of the Education Researcher, David P. Burns and Colin Piquette

Abstracts

Robert W. Jackson Lecture: Teaching for Intellectual Virtue (and Against Intellectual Vice), Eamonn Callan

This paper addresses a relatively neglected facet of educational success (and failure) in teaching. In our anxiety to boost measurable educational achievement, we are apt to overlook the less tangible ways in which teaching can affect for good or ill students' intellectual characters -- e.g., through the encouragement of intellectual humility or the correction of arrogance. Through close analysis of a case-study, the author explores what it might mean to try to teach a little humility to a very able but arrogant student.

Open-Mindedness: A Case of Interdisciplinary Collaboration, Nez Elik

My proposed paper will aim to show how open-mindedness is an important goal for teacher education because it is very important to have interdisciplinary collaboration among various disciplines (such as sociology, psychology, mathematics, physics, chemistry, etc.). This is because the profession of teaching requires an ability to combine many skills. Open-mindedness also promotes more effective human relationships and decisions.

For instance, my research has shown that open-mindedness is positively associated with more positive attitudes toward children with learning and behavioral problems in preservice teachers. In addition to focusing on the importance of fostering open-mindedness in teacher education to increase effectiveness of teacher education programs (and teachers) my paper will focus on the concept of open-mindedness per se. The study of open-mindedness itself has been carried out in an interdisciplinary way, and constitutes a good example of how disciplines can contribute their share within the bigger picture. Particularly, open-mindedness has been studied in philosophy (e.g., William Hare), psychology (e.g., Keith Stanovich), neuroscience, and education (e.g., William Hare). I will explicate the term open-mindedness based on these disciplines and summarize the findings and their implications for teacher education.

Toward Negative Capability in Teaching: Lessons from Psychoanalysis, Christopher Higgins

Without a serious analysis of closed-mindedness, talk of open-mindedness becomes anodyne. We must begin by asking why it is that minds need opening, and why we must keep re-opening them, each time with difficulty. What is it that drives us to become narrow, rigid, repetitive, biased, or self-involved? Luckily, there is a discipline devoted to exploring these very questions: psychoanalysis. The goal of analysis is (positive) freedom: to expand the range of what one feels and notices, to free up energy for love and work. To achieve this goal, it asks us to undertake a difficult apprenticeship, a study of the ways we have fixed upon and begun to live within narrow and frozen interpretations of the world. Psychoanalysis teaches us slowly and painfully how to become open-minded about our own closed-mindedness.

Drawing on the work of Jonathan Lear and others, I will explore what we can learn from psychoanalysis about open and closed-mindedness in teaching. Lear (1998, 3-4) lists psychoanalysis and philosophy as two activities that constantly resist professionalization, or that particular form of closed-mindedness in which we pretend that our crafts have clear standards and foolproof methods. I believe we can add teaching to Lear's list of activities that require a high degree of what Keats called "negative capability." Teachers must learn to tolerate uncertainty on even the most fundamental issues, not knowing whether we have achieved success, or even what success means. Sustaining such open-mindedness takes a special sort of person, and it takes a particular ethos to sustain such people. This paper asks what it would mean to think of and support teaching in this way.

Open-minded Listening or Silencing Dissent: On the Teacher as Listener, Andrea English

In the current age of standardized testing, the notion of the teacher is in danger of getting consumed by a technocratic vision of the teacher as mechanical filter of right and wrong answers. William Hare's concept of open-mindedness in teaching provides a much needed contrast to such a vision. In this paper, I take-up the notion

Thinking about Forgiveness: a Preamble to its Cultivation in Schooling, Douglas Stewart

Little philosophical attention has been devoted to exploring forgiveness and its cultivation as a humane response to those in school who inflict harm or wrong on others. This, coupled with the fact that serious offenses (e.g., gun violence, sexual assaults, vicious bullying especially of the marginalised or different) are no longer

of open-mindedness in order to develop what it means for the teacher to listen open-mindedly. On this account, teaching involves a willingness to listen to and for students' viewpoints that may contradict or defy standard notions of correct and incorrect. The paper differentiates four types of classroom teachers in order to distinguish between teachers who view teaching as normatively determining "right" and "wrong" answers, and those who view teaching as a reflective process of openly exploring with students the "gray zones" between knowledge and ignorance. Only the latter promote students' thinking and learning by listening to and engaging challenging viewpoints, unexpected questions and critical responses in the classroom. In closing, the paper draws out implications for understanding the difference between education and indoctrination by pointing out ways in which educators, even unawares, may be silencing dissent.

Critical Realism and Open-Mindedness, Donovan Plumb

The purpose of this presentation is to explore the ways the philosophy of critical realism can contribute to William Hare's defense of open-mindedness in education. Following a brief account of the basic tenets of critical realism drawn primarily from the philosophy of Roy Bhaskar, the presentation will explore critical realist ontology. It will show how critical realism's contention that reality exists independently of what we might think about it is based on a very different view of reality (ontology) than other realist positions (like empiricism).

Critical realism's depiction of reality as clusters of emergent and stratified generative mechanisms that subtend but also vastly exceed our empirical experiences enables it to posit a naturalistic account of physical, psychological, and social phenomena without falling prey to the reductionism of empiricist realism. While critical realism accepts "epistemic relativism," that statements we make about the world are fallible, it does not accept "judgmental relativism," that we have no basis for judging between different accounts about physical or social reality. As such, the tenets of critical realism are consistent with and supportive of Hare's defense of the importance of open-mindedness in education. It provides important means to resist both the positivism of empiricist realism and the relativism of anti-realism, both of which stand against any coherent philosophy of open-mindedness.

unthinkable in school, might suggest the timeliness of such a project.

In this work I focus on inter-personal forgiveness and approach the subject from a secular-philosophical perspective rather than a religious or theological one. The proposal has three sections: conceptualizing forgiveness; justifying forgiveness; and forgiveness in schooling. The latter briefly explores what would seem to be involved in the practice of nurturing a culture or spirit of forgiveness (in school) by drawing on some of the critical "findings" from both the conceptual mapping of forgiveness (section one) and the arguments made in support of forgiveness and the "good" with which it is concerned (section two).

The processes involved in reaching forgiveness (I claim) need to focus on emotions, attitudes, beliefs and decisions of victims (and in seeking forgiveness on emotions, attitudes, etc. of repenting offenders). These processes, I also maintain, are enhanced or facilitated by the presence of empathy and a measure of humility on the part of those forgiving, as well as on those confessing and apologizing for what they have done.

Gods, Gadflies, and Bulldog Tenacity: In Praise of Closed-Mindedness, Daniel H. Cohen and George Miller

An impressive chorus of supporters sings the praises of open-mindedness. Educators, critical thinkers, scientists, all join in the polyphonic harmony in which moral philosophers laud it as politic, political theorists pronounce it justified; and epistemologists count it a virtue. At the risk of adding a dissonant note, we'd like to speak on behalf of being closed-minded.

We offer three arguments for closed-mindedness. Ironically, they are grounded in the work of three philosophers, each of whom is an exemplar of open-mindedness: Donald Davidson, Gilbert Harman, and Paul Feyerabend. First, when it comes to beliefs, global fallibilism is consistent with local dogmatism, and some measure of local dogmatism is the right default strategy for belief management. Second, the general imperative to be open-minded can be counter-productive to specific epistemic projects and too vague to serve as a useful epistemological heuristic. And third, despite the traditional emphasis on "S knows that p" as the canonical subject of epistemological analysis, we are not pure, isolated epistemic agents. We have other cognitive goals besides the narrowly epistemic, which we may pursue in joint endeavors. The effective virtues of a research team need not be instantiated in each member. An uneven distribution of belief-tenacity can be to everyone's cognitive advantage. Put less politely, we need our pig-headed colleagues!

The pattern emerging from these arguments reveals the concept of "cognitive achievements," but the thread holding them together is the concept of intellectual virtues, for it is the virtues – including closed-mindedness at times – that make those achievements possible.

The Place of Fear in Teacher Education, Mary Jane Harkins, Michelle Forrest and Terrah Keener

Moral courage in teaching ... turns on the predictable reactions of others and their ability to make life unpleasant for anyone whose inquiries seem threatening. Hare 1993, p. 48.

William Hare reminds us that, though our conception of the virtue of courage tends to be dominated by cases of superhuman efforts in desperate circumstances such as military actions and other daring physical exploits, moral courage can require just as much fortitude and, as such, is of particular concern for teachers (47). In teaching students to be critical, teachers often tread on cherished beliefs and assumptions. It takes courage to continually face adverse reactions and it is understandable that knowledge of this potential for conflict raises fears. How is the teacher to handle this challenge? As Hare points out, the "enemy within" may be the fear that one's own cherished beliefs may crumble. How can teacher-educators help teachers address their fears of teaching?

This paper will explore how stories contextualize the layers of meaning surrounding teachers' fears and their moral courage. As teacher-educators, we will re-visit our personal stories of things going wrong in schools and discuss how they have shaped and continue to shape our professional lives. Parker Palmer (1998) distinguishes pathological fear from what he calls healthy fear, which is "[t]he fear that makes people 'porous' to real learning" (39). He claims that healthy fear "enhances education, and we must find ways to encourage it" (39). By using stories of our own fears, we disrupt the mistaken impression that moral courage means the absence of fear. We have, after all, persevered as teachers despite and, possibly, because of our fears. We concur with Hare that what is needed are teachers who are "prepared to go on thinking about decisions they have made" (Hare 1993, 162). Our process of re-thinking through story-telling and discussion demonstrates that, as Hare's says, "courage has to be guided by judgement" (49).

Hare's Monitoring for Open-Mindedness: Viewed Through the Workplace, Tracey Leary

A key component within the nature of the culture of any workplace is the level of trust between individuals and groups. Trying to 'measure' trust is a complicated process, and promoting it is as complex. Is there a way for employers and employees to come together in order to work toward trust, and the qualities and expectations that come with it, in the workplace?

This paper and presentation proposes that Hare's concept of student-monitoring of teacher open-mindedness for trustworthiness, may also be viewed as a workplace construct where the positions of 'student' and 'teacher' are occupied by workers and employers. Further, that the study and application of his fifteen-question framework (as in "Credibility and Credulity: Monitoring Teachers for Trustworthiness", *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, Vol.41, No. 207-219) has the potential to benefit

Science Education and Open-Mindedness: Green Compared to What? Stephen P. Norris and David P. Burns

The increasing prominence of issues of sustainability and environmental protection has been coupled with many science educators raising a number of key moral questions and issues: How "green" can or should we really be? What exactly is the obligation of science, and of science education, to combat climate change? Such questions are directed at the proper role of science education and, correlatively, of the science teacher. Should the science teacher simply and exclusively help students grasp an understanding of the natural world or should the science teacher also promote the valuation of that natural world? Ought the science teachers encourage students to question their energy consumption practices or is this a task that should fall outside the goals of science education? In the proposed paper we will discuss the issue of environmental advocacy in science education in light of William Hare's concept of open-mindedness. Although we shall assume that science teaching and learning must go beyond the scientific facts and theories and deal with the implications of science for society, we shall argue that science education should also demand an open-mindedness about environmental concerns such that all proposals for sustainability and the like must be weighed against the alternatives using the best scientific knowledge available.

Educational Crimes, David Blacker

Educators may commit crimes like anyone else. They may rob, murder, rape, or otherwise perpetrate any of the traditional mala in se ['wrong in itself'] sorts of offenses. Like anyone, they may also be guilty of mala prohibita ['wrong by prohibition'] when they violate socially-sanctioned rules, such as driving on the proper side of the road or giving alcohol to minors. Of special interest is a type of wrongdoing that cuts across these two categories and, perhaps, other categories besides these. This is where educators would be widely judged to be committing specifically educational wrongdoing, as opposed to wrongdoing per se.

For example, in the case of a teacher molesting a young student, there are obviously crimes present in the ordinary sense of violations of state criminal codes, e.g., statutory rape. Yet it is just as clear that there is an additional and intense form of wrongdoing that is also present that should be described as an instance of

workplace relationships and improve trust between employees and employers.

specifically educational wrongdoing if not educational crime. The offense is recognizable as such because something in it violates norms central to the practice of education and the virtues commonly associated with teaching. Toward an analysis of such a situation, it might be said at the outset that a kind of educational trust has been undermined in such a case; a further and peculiarly educational insult has been added to the extant criminal injury (in the ordinary sense of "criminal"). My purpose here is to understand more clearly how wrongdoing may have this specifically educational aspect, on its own or amidst other forms of wrongdoing. This project draws upon philosophy of education, moral philosophy, philosophy of law and criminology.

Exploring Teacher Credibility: A Conversation with William Hare, Sonya E. Singer and Mary Jane Harkins

Hare (1993) suggests that an authentic education for students must go beyond the traditional information-based pedagogy of schools. Teaching must therefore be viewed as a dynamic activity that encourages students to be open to new ways of inquiry. Students are viewed as integral participants in critical decision-making processes. The role of the teacher then, as an active participant in this learning, is to establish a mutually supportive partnership with their students in which critical thinking becomes paramount. Intellectual credibility in teaching is inextricably linked to the willingness of both teachers and students to engage in active listening and to nurture an open-mindedness in pursuing new ways of questioning traditional ideas in a safe and respectful environment.

In preparation for this session, we will interview Dr. William Hare and discuss his views of how the Socratic method helps to define our role as teacher educators. In this session, we will interweave our recent conversation with Dr. Hare with his past writings on teacher credibility.

Rule Following, Standards of Practice, and Open-mindedness, Scott Johnson

William Hare has famously claimed in several places (1979, 1985) that the virtue of open-mindedness recommends the abandonment of rigid rule following. Our moral responsibilities cannot be 'evaded' by clinging tenaciously to general rules, regardless of the supposed 'correctness' of these. In other words, our moral responsibility consists in open-mindedness at those times and in those contexts where being open-minded is (morally) appropriate. Yet, he also states are times when we are to be 'open-minded' about open-mindedness. Sometimes it is better to follow a general rule, particularly if it garners good results. We are not open-minded in our rule following, though we are open-minded in realizing that sometimes rules are better followed than not.

If we think of a situation in which a teacher has to make a moral judgment, her rigidly following a general rule might well not be morally correct. Yet, our Standards of Practice are very often written in language that presupposes, indeed, insists on, inflexibility and rigidity. We are to act according to the rule and our moral judgments and actions are to follow from the rule. We are, it is implied, unethical to go willingly against the rule, even if we wish to practice the virtue of open-mindedness.

On some occasions, then, Hare advises to practice the virtue of open-mindedness and avoid following the rule or standard; on others, though, he advises us to follow the rule if it leads to good results. How are we able to determine when it is appropriate to do either?

I wish to investigate, with the help of the Standards of Practice of the College of Teachers of Ontario, some situations in which choosing to be open-minded or not is difficult. I claim that only if we have a further rule(s) to help us understand when open-mindedness is and is not, the best strategy, can we be consistently open-minded. The rules I suggest we consider (following Barbara Herman's work on Practical Judgment (1993)), are the "Rules of Moral Salience." How they operate in the context of the Standards of Practice to ensure open-mindedness is the focus of this paper.

Connecting Critical Thinking and Open-Mindedness in Theory and Practice, Catherine Broom

Most academics agree that “critical thinking” is one of the main aims and methods of Social Studies. However, the term is conceptually complex. Underlying general agreement as to its importance is confusion. Social Studies theorists and practitioners differently understand and theorize the concept. In this talk, I will discuss the relations between three well-known, contemporary conceptions of critical thinking and Hare’s theory of “Open-mindedness.” These conceptions are developed by Robert Ennis, Richard Paul, and Roland Case et al. I will draw out similar strands from each theorist with the aim of developing a common understanding of the term that I will present as a model. The model includes the virtues and character, qualities of being, but extends beyond these to encompass qualities (or structures) of thought. After which, I will link into practice by exploring how the model of critical thinking presented can be nurtured in our students through interactive lessons. I will describe how curriculum guides and texts in Nova Scotia define the term and explore with participants my concern as to why so few critical thinking activities are embedded in texts and guides. I will then provide a number of sample exercises and activities that practicing teachers can use to enhance their teaching of critical thinking in Social Studies. In the spirit of the topic, participants are invited to actively participate in critical discussion of the information presented.

Sensitive Issues and the Spirit of Criticism in Teaching, Michelle Forrest

John Passmore identified a valuable aspect of critique without which criticism can reduce to little more than forensic analysis with no regard for the context of a given critical act. Without what he called the ‘critical spirit’ a critic hasn’t the capacity to know when criticism itself is inappropriate (1972). There are times in the consideration of an issue when the very discussion of it is insensitive to those who may be implicated and unwittingly happen to be present for said discussion. If critical thinking is to be considered more than the acquisition of skills; if critical thinking imbued with the critical spirit is a character trait, as Passmore claims, how is one to teach students to be critical such that this critical spirit is nurtured?

In an attempt to answer this question, I will distinguish between the controversial and the sensitive in teaching to be critical, and I will use an example of this distinction as a case in point for considering the importance of the critical spirit. I will then consider how insights from feminist standpoint epistemology may offer useful directions for those who are teaching to be critical and wish to develop in students the critical spirit necessary for handling sensitive issues appropriately.

Open-Mindedness and Critical Thinking, Harvey Siegel

William Hare has made fundamental contributions to philosophy of education. Among the most important of these contributions is his hugely important work on open-mindedness. In this paper I explore the several relationships that exist between Hare’s favored educational ideal (open-mindedness) and my own (critical thinking). I argue that while both are of central importance, it is the latter that is the more fundamental of the two.

Virtue and the Character of the Education Researcher, David P. Burns and Colin Piquette

In his 1993 book, Professor Hare asks “What Makes a Good Teacher?” In the proposed paper we ask, what makes a good education researcher? We begin our discussion with Richard Rudner’s classic 1953 essay, *The Scientist Qua Scientist Makes Value Judgments*, which confronted science with the internal subjectivity it had long ignored. Rudner’s bold claim that scientists do, in fact, make value judgments as (qua) scientists called attention to the very foundations of scientific conduct. In an era of institutional “research ethics”, like the Tri-Council’s ethics policy, Rudner’s call for an approach to these value judgments is even more relevant. The contemporary education researcher primarily engages with ethics through the mediums of procedure and committee which are both (arguably) designed to provide a certain level of consistency and objectivity. This conventional approach has its roots in principle-based theories of ethics which have long been dominant in Western universities. We explain that calls, like Rudner’s, for an objective science of ethics are at the root of this dominant institutional approach. This paper critiques the suitability of such principle-based ethics for solving Rudner’s concerns and posits that educational research ethics is better understood as a matter of character and virtue. We argue that, much like the ethical teacher, the ethical education researcher is a certain kind of person.