Locked in and locked out: Covid-19 and teaching "remotely"

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Abstract   Covid-19 has rendered education "remote", opening a chasm in space and time between teachers and students, between how teaching and learning was practiced *before* and how it is practiced now and for the foreseeable, uncertain future. As many educators find themselves both locked in and locked out, this article seeks to sort through the implications of this *remoteness*. The article builds on the work of William F. Pinar and George Grant, to argue that technology is an ontology shaping how we encounter who we are and the world in which we live. Caught within the tightening circle of a Covid-19 environment predicated on keeping our distance from one another, while we are connecting technologically, at risk is the complicated conversation, as well as attunement, that lie at the heart of teaching, even as teachers know that it is only through improvisational variations on these that one can hope to chart an ethical course forward.

> *[O]ne can never know, first thing in the morning, what will happen by nightfall.*

(Sebald 2003, p. 20)

The shift from online teaching to remote instruction was swift, barely perceptible under the Covid-19 rapid closures and lockdowns, conveyed through a bewildering array of communiques. At our university, McGill, it was first acknowledged that students would need to be taught remotely. This was tied to the need for social distancing as well as to the fact

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that, instruction and exams being "moved" online, there was absolutely nothing keeping students here, in person and on campus. It was during that initial week, when a physical space was vacated, that *remote instruction* replaced *online instruction*, and not only here in Montreal—but throughout North America. It seems to us that a far distance lies between "online" and "remote"; a gulf, even, online being mildly suggestive of connection (*on*line), while "remote" signals a definitive change in the air and more than the response to an emergency. "Remote" instruction has been coined as a provisional response to a crisis; this distinction is being made, in part, to protect online teaching from its detractors; for example, see Hodges et al. (2020). Our use of Pinar (2004, 2019) and Grant (1998) places online and remote within a larger context and trajectory, for a question hovers over the word: remote, in relation to what or whom? In an endeavour to sort through this question and its implications for the pandemic teaching situations in which we find ourselves, we counterpoint our autobiographical reflections (*currere*) with the findings of curriculum scholars, most notably William Pinar (2019), *Moving Images of Eternity: George Grant's Critique of Time, Teaching, and Technology*, which also moved us to read Grant himself.

In a talk he gave on several occasions, George Grant (1998) considered the implications of technology for society. He asked: what does or could it mean to live in a society *beyond* technology? Over the course of the essay, Grant reflects on how computers are first and foremost instruments, created by human beings for human use; in other words, computers are made, and, like all made things, they serve the uses of the maker. We are not in the nightmarish realm of Dr. Frankenstein. However, he also points out, the computer's uses exceed its merely functional ones. Technology is anchored in a "reciprocal" yoking of making with knowing (Grant 1998, p. 422) such that when "abstracted" from their historical origins (p. 422) while simultaneously leveraging their great organizational capabilities, computers can (and do) assume a guise—a social force—that is "homogenizing" (p. 424), becoming *the* way in which things are "normally" done. He comments: "To be awake in any part of our educational system is to know that the desire for these machines shapes those institutions at their heart … in what the young are encouraged to know and to do" (p. 422), thus becoming "an ontology of the age" (p. 431). Wherever there is a pervasive use and discourse of technology, from working to leisure, we find ourselves in the realm of that ontology.

In the present Covid-19 time, we are thoroughly imbricated in the use of technology, even grateful for its presence because it allows us, if at the remove of a screen, to at least see and interact with our loved ones, friends, colleagues—and, now, also students—as well as stay physically well, contributing to public health measures aimed to stem Covid-19. Still, we can and ought to be critical of where this sea change may be going, over the longer term, in its implications for curriculum and pedagogy. Heretic that Grant is, with his temerity to ask "what is the ontology that is declared in technology? What could it be to be 'beyond' it, and would it be good to be 'beyond' it?" (Grant 1998, p. 431), we pose much the same question. Within the "tightening circle" exerted by technology (p. 432), here the prospect of Covid-19 being yoked with remote instruction—or will it be remote instruction yoked with Covid-19?—we find Grant giving voice to our concerns.

Remote teaching and learning: What is implied?

"Zoom". In a single word, Zooming by video conferencing, breakout rooms, and shared screens is what remote teaching and learning look like presently. Zoom was created by Eric Yuan, an engineer, and launched in 2013; one of its first customers was Stanford

University (Wikipedia 2020). Zoom prides itself on its streamlined synchronous interface and easy-to-access options: screen sharing; chat; the ability to see all participants at once, this interface being reminiscent of TV game shows like *Hollywood Squares,* where the square lights up when the "celebrity" is speaking. As our McGill colleague Lisa Starr pointed out, the Zoom gallery interface resembles a nostalgic echo of the opening song of the US sitcom *The Brady Bunch* (personal communication, May 8, 2020). Notable is the "mute" option (by which participants are automatically silenced, or self-silenced, upon "entering the room") as a means to address one of the main irritants of video conferencing among multiple participants: inter-device noise. Notable, too, is the dark screen behind which participants can opt to disappear from view—ostensibly still present (in name); instructors are finding that they can only request, but not require, students to appear "in person".

How did "online" slip so readily into being "remote"? Since the inception of "computer learning", several terms have been used interchangeably: "online", "e-learning", "tele-learning", "distance learning", "remote instruction". Phrases like tele-learning (which remain current, e.g., in Quebec) signal how the educative possibilities that burst onto the scene with television and the VCR opened up teaching to large-group instruction (now further actualized through MOOCs, or Massive Online Open Courses), assisted by "pre-planning, rehearsal, and arrangement of teaching materials" (Wittich 1962, p. 11). In the 1960s, starry-eyed, people dreamt of how "the barriers of remoteness, distance, and accessibility" could be overcome (Wittich 1962, p. 13). This carried over into the 1970s. Bruce Shore (1973), now Emeritus Professor in the Faculty of Education at McGill but then assistant professor, envisioned the possibilities, for instance, for "modular instruction (MI)", foreseeing how "pedagogical technology" could enable, thus free, teacher and student from the burden of in-person "total class participation" (p. 697). Instead, learning could be pursued by way of "texts, audio or video recordings, programmed materials, laboratory exercises" that students could complete on their own or in small groups "with or without the instructor" (Shore 1973, p. 681). The vision of technology in education has often disclosed a dream of abolishing the need for physical presence, especially that of the *teacher* and along with the teacher, that of the student.

Remote instruction first appeared as a creative, practical, nonemergency response to barriers that part-time adult college learners were encountering in balancing work with school, especially the time it took to travel from one place to the other. Remote learning allowed for "noncampus learning" whereby "students remain at home and receive lessons via cable television" (Zwerling 1980, p. 102): an iteration of tele-learning, but which Zwerling, then associate dean of continuing education at New York University, tied to the "electronic cottage" vision of futurist writer and businessman Alvin Toffler (1981). Toffler's dream of the electronic cottage actualizes working and living at home, with people relieved from travelling to work (thus reducing pollution), ensconced within the everyday fabric of family life (rather than torn from it), and even potentially emancipated from bosses through becoming their own "independent entrepreneurs". One of the greatest recompenses for such a "cottage industry", Toffler (1981) maintained, would be psychological:

> Rather than a world of purely vicarious human relationships, with an electric screen interposed between the individual and the rest of humanity, as imagined in many science-fiction stories, one can postulate *a world divided into two sets of human relationships—one real, the other vicarious*—with different roles and rules in each. (emphasis added)

We can have our cake and eat it too—or can we?

In which world (real or virtual) do our Covid-19 "electronic cottages" place teachers and students? More than one person has likened the present Covid-19 situation not to a dream but to a nightmare. In a creative riff on a well-known children's picture book, *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day* (Viorst 2014), our sequestered, shrunken lives have been compared to "Alexander and the Day that Blended into Every Other Day like Some Kafkaesque Nightmare with No Merciful End in Sight" (iFunny 2020). Pinar (2019) points out that "[t]he trouble with technology is that the future becomes represented by novelty, a new device or idea" rather than an "ethically animated reconstruction" of past, present, and future (p. 382). In this piece, in 2021, we try to tease out what might lie behind and beyond the hangover of the "ontology" of remote instruction brought on by Covid-19, even as we feel, as teachers, ethically called to consider our options and envision possibilities within our present time.

Covid-19 and curriculum

Technology runs like a thread throughout Pinar's (2019) curricular engagement with George Grant's ideas, perhaps because Grant himself believed that "[t]he first task of thought in our era is to think what technology is" (cited in Pinar 2019, p. 95). However, it is surely also because, for Pinar, who has long advocated for particularity and "working from within" (Pinar 2009, p. 39) as constitutive of curricular engagement, "technological homogeneity universally enforced" (Pinar 2019, p. x) increasingly represents curriculum's "nightmare that is the present" (Pinar 2012, p. 5). Grant (1998) foresaw that a vast technological apparatus would become harnessed to responding to crises, as he also anticipated that—given the likely impact on population, resources, and the environment—the "medical profession" would be at the centre of measures of social control taken to respond to the crisis (p. 419). Grant's writings are eerily prescient, as is Pinar's curricular engagement with Grant. Given such a crisis, Grant was concerned to identify the values by which we would conduct ourselves and what choices we would make, especially when faced with a "tyranny" (1998, p. 420) of thought: "the moral exhortations of our politicians, our scholars, our psychiatrists, our social scientists" caught in the "circle of technological society".

When technology is not simply a tool—one among several that teacher-bricoleurs might pick up to teach with artfully and thoughtfully (Strong-Wilson and Rouse 2013)—but an ontology and *remote* system, with possibilities for surveillance (as in the government-endorsed app, downloadable on one's phone, with an alert to maintain proper social distancing from those who display as Covid-19-positive), then it is the teacher, as well as the student, who must fit within a preconceived mold. That mold is shaped by the platforms that are touted and supported materially, viz., by a university's or school board's IT department and its technicians, who generate training videos, offer tutorials, and troubleshoot problems. We are already moving "into the tightening circle in which more technological science is called for to meet the problems which technological science has produced" (Grant 1998, p. 432).

Remote instruction under Covid-19 is predicated on another tightening circle, that of New Taylorism—the conceptualization of teaching and learning that values not merely a systematic approach based on Ralph Tyler's (1949) four-point rationale (viz., identifying objectives, planning experiences, organizing the classroom, and evaluating student attainment of objectives) but also a decontextualized and commodified one (Au 2011). That conceptualization is tied to the marketing of technology as a universe that allows for *everyone* (teachers and students) to be using the *same* kinds of tools in *highly similar* ways for the *same* ends. A technicolour world, its features can be turned on and off at will by those who

are the "managers" or the "consumers", contributing to a public veneer of equity encapsulated by "anytime, anywhere" learning. Essentially, though, it remains the Tyler rationale, as controlled by specialists with technological expertise whose very rationale is often based on helping teachers migrate to online platforms. Within Tyler's (1949) rationalized approach to curriculum, the teacher's role is as an instrument (Spector 2018): one who manipulates situations (or is manipulated) to produce desired outcomes. This is a role ideally fitted to deploying technology, as Apple and Jungck (1990) presaged in their study of a grade 7 curriculum unit on computers which several teachers in the school delivered simultaneously by aid of "curriculum-on-a-cart" (p. 240). The main driving force behind the Tyler rationale—all of Tyler's disclaimers to student-centredness to the contrary—is an assessment which, contrary to following *after* learning, shapes learning from the start (Au 2011; Pinar 2011). A culture of assessment orients itself to standardized tests and cross-national comparisons and rankings, tied to a global capitalist economy that a massive "marshalling of technological mastery" lubricates—as Grant reminds us (1998, p. 419).

With remote instruction, it needs to be considered that a main desired outcome becomes the reproduction of the system itself, whereby remote instruction is not simply a temporary stop-gap measure but fulfillment of a larger agenda. As Daniel (2020) notes, while institutions that normally teach face to face will eventually return to this face-to-face state, "the expansion of online learning in tertiary education will accelerate" (p. 95), with schools motivated to keep pace. Such an agenda entails the teacher's conversion to online methods of instruction (Starkey 2020), with resources that can be effectively rationalized now and into the future—when policymakers and decision makers will argue that in-person learning is not only unnecessary (given everyone's migration to these new platforms) but, indeed, has been superseded, given a "new normal" of social distancing. We are hearing about this new normal as a constant refrain in the media as we move through cycles of de-confining and re-confining. On May 16, 2020, for instance, the *Globe and Mail*, Canada's main national newspaper, published its "Definitive Guide to the Postpandemic Future". The article claimed to track "46 ways our world is about to change" (p. A1)—with social distancing listed as number three. We will be instructed in how to greet one another as well as who we can see and when and how, from tapping toes (with shoes on) to bumping clad elbows.

"I thought how unpleasant it is to be locked out", Virginia Woolf (2016) once mused, "and I thought how it is worse perhaps to be locked in" (p. 23). Within a Covid-19 world, we are both locked out *and* locked in, by our mutual consent, as we are constantly reminded by our politicians as well as our administrators that "we are all in this together". Such a situation seems eerily evocative of a "transmission belt" of domination, Simona Forti's (2014, p. 179) analogy for the everyday actions by which obedient subjects, through their complacency, come to accede to what may be unacceptable and even morally reprehensible. Within a seemingly eternal postpandemic world, the "scientific management and Taylorization of teaching" into students and teachers as flickers on a screen advance inexorably (Au 2011, p. 37). "Grant saw it coming; we are almost there now" (Pinar 2019, p. 389). With remote instruction tied and knotted to Covid-19, only one year after Pinar (2019) published his book, we are not "almost there": we woke up one day to find that we *are* there.

> Children stare at screens, unending distraction, completing tasks online in a curriculum designed by software engineers, teachers relocated to the "gig economy" wherein they are hired as contract workers—no longer public but now decidedly domestic servants—checking to see if the kids have completed their "individualized" assignments for the day. (Pinar 2019, p. 389)

And where do we stand—one, as a university teacher, the other as a secondary school teacher?

Teaching as complicated conversation

What's in a conversation? That a zoom meeting would smell as sweet… (Amarou, pandemic teaching journal)

From Teresa's pandemic teaching journal:

At the centre of my teaching are conversations, which begin with a provocation and self-work/memory-work, followed by sharing in small groups. Lectures primarily serve to give a context for the conversations; they are not the class itself. My teaching is *entirely organized* around in-class conversation. This is a pedagogical move. The conversations are characterized by a progression: from what appears easier to talk about conceptually because grounded in an experience that students can access (e.g., their memories) to conversations that become more complicated, entangled and difficult, the more that we move away from that experience to others' experiences. For instance, in an undergraduate Children's literature course, I begin with students' memories of reading, followed by Vivian Paley's (1997) *Girl with the Brown Crayon*; we get to know her classroom and its particular students and then we become immersed as Paley's students did in reading Leo Lionni's picture books, which critique social norms and practices of exclusion. Not long after, the book conversations start; the course leads to and is entirely structured around these conversations, which have students engage with social justice novels, one per week. The conversations prompt students to go deeper and explore tensions even as they are challenged to discuss ways to pedagogically approach a difficult subject and justify their choices.

In graduate courses, I have found that students come to class having read the readings but with neither opportunity nor time to really digest them. Classes are working sessions in which, reading through focused conversation in small groups, given a prompt and juxtaposed reading, they are challenged to make meaning of the texts. In a graduate curriculum course on the subject of autobiography, we write autobiographically before talking about the readings. I have found that conversations are significantly enriched when students do self-/memory-work tied to the subject of the reading, which helps keep a string on "conceptual kites" (Pinar 2009, p. 25). The conversations continue in the journals, in which my responses are textured by what the student's writing provokes in me, even as I respond to the particular points or experiences raised in the student's writing.

To argue for the importance of conversation in teaching and learning is akin to arguing that the earth revolves around the sun; it is manifestly self-evident. Indeed, the *lack* of classroom conversations is an easy demerit where the evaluation of teachers is concerned, evidence that a teacher is out of touch with her students, that she doesn't value their input, that she hasn't created a safe space in which they might try out ideas.

However, as Pinar (2004) notes, the reality of what is called "conversation" in educational settings can disclose the forces of bureaucratization, that creeping homogenization which, not insignificantly, Pinar associates with "remoteness" (p. 190). Indeed, the very rendering of conversation as a "tool" can undermine the uncertainty and possibility that

distinguishes a conversation from a script. In the latter, a whole class "conversation" can devolve into a sort of prepared lecture with call-and-response elements—i.e., the teacher talks about what s/he thinks is important, and periodically solicits appropriate repetitions of key points from students. Pinar (2004) writes: "[E]ven lively classroom talk directed toward expertise in the school subject … is not the practice of curriculum as 'complicated conversation'" (p. 191). It is curriculum as a *complicated* conversation that matters a conversation that "requires curricular innovation and experimentation, opportunities for students and faculty to articulate relations among the school subjects, society, and self-formation" (2004, p. 191). This conversation is an unpredictable interplay between people in time and place, where creativity is fostered by the conversation's orality (Pinar 2019).

From Amarou's pandemic teaching journal (April 2020):

> Since returning to the classroom after a hiatus in graduate school, conversation has become central to my teaching, and not just in the form of whole/small group discussions. Students receive feedback, including any written feedback, as part of formal or informal writing conferences with me. The formal conferences take the form of one-on-one conversations at a table I have parked outside my classroom door. In that conversation between my student and me, I am able to show, not tell, the strengths and weaknesses of the writing at hand; I'm able to inquire into how things are going, generally. Students can ask questions and share concerns that they might otherwise never articulate. Most of all, because it is a conversation, there is a particularity, an essential ungovernability to what happens.

> I have 150–155 students. These conferences take a long time and require both careful planning on my part and discipline on the part of the entire class. The first conference takes the longest; thereafter, the conferences have the tenor of picking up a conversation where we last left off, about writing, an idea in the class, one's overworked parent, or college aspirations. This year one of my colleagues from another department, who teaches in the classroom next door, admitted to eavesdropping and was so excited by the pedagogical possibilities that he initiated a set of conferences himself. Past students tell me these are one of the most meaningful parts of my class. I suspect that a significant part of that meaning has to do with the intimacy—the attunement—that comes from presence, from a singular conversation between two people about a subject—writing—a conversation that is not on display in front of peers or engaged in for the edification of anyone else.

It is the threat of losing complicated conversation that has been the most devastating impact of the policies that educational institutions have put in place in the wake of Covid-19. In making teaching and learning "remote"—but with the requirement that class conversations continue, either in Zoom meetings or in asynchronous comment threads—education policymakers have passed judgment on what a curricular conversation *is* and *is not.* A conversation is not something that takes place at a particular place, at a particular time, with a particular group of people who are very much themselves. These local, subjective, and interdependent elements of conversation apparently *do not matter*, or at least not as much. But as teachers, we know that they *do* matter. Pinar (2004) writes that complicated conversation, like jazz, is improvisational:

> [it] is not "chit-chat", nor is it the simple exchange of messages or only the communication of information. None of these … requires "true human presence". Nor is language only a tool by means of which thoughts are recoded into words. Curriculum

as conversation is no conveyor belt of "representational knowledge". It is a matter of attunement… (p. 189)

Attunement

From Amarou's pandemic teaching journal (April 2020):

I'm hungry for any sort of conversation with my students. Recently, I posted "discussion questions" on Google Classroom for my Grade 9's who are reading *Maus*. Responses were optional; I wanted to see what students would say when it wasn't an assignment, and whether they would respond to one another. One of my more "resistant" learners posted "IDK", and I laughed out loud when I read it, as he could have just not responded at all—it was, as I said, a purely optional assignment. I know what that "IDK" means, coming from him. He's dipping his toe in; he does have an idea but he's afraid to write it down. It's a signal. In class, rather than put his head down, he'll look at me steadily. With a little prompting, a little invitation, he contributes and risks putting his thoughts into words. But that moment is lost now. Because it was a moment; something subtle.

We are not presently permitted to use Zoom or Google Meet for pedagogical conversations about a subject and if we do opt to use it, for the purposes of "well-being", i.e., checking in with a small group of students. Another district staff person is required to be on the call. [Starting in September, 2020, teachers in my district were authorized—indeed, required—to hold regular synchronous class sessions over Zoom, as there is no timeline for the resumption of in-person teaching and learning.] I understand the rationales that my district provided: privacy, equity, access. These are all really important. But other districts in my state feel that the benefits of synchronous teacher-student conversations outweigh the risks. Furthermore, the requirement that another adult be present in the conversation seems to reveal an anxiety about teacher behavior/professionalism. I am, of course, aware of the vital importance of clear boundaries between teachers and students. At school, my conferences take place in the hallway, visible to any passing student or teacher. What I'm mourning is the loss of conversation in general, as something too risky to countenance, as fundamentally inessential to teaching and learning.

There is a public veneer of equity in embracing asynchronous learning. All curricula are "there": tactile, on display, and publicly available. If students have the requisite technology, these curricula can be accessed at any time and in theory, the experience would be the same. This Tylerian attitude towards teaching and learning, though, is the opposite of a writing conference, a private conversation held in the hallway outside my classroom door that is attuned to the particular student. It reveals to me a suspicion of particularity, a belief that if all have access to the same commodity (a text to read followed by questions to respond to, all tied to a standard, of course) that the school's responsibility vis-a-vis learning has been satisfied. While this is ever an undercurrent in non-Covid times, it is absolutely fluorescent in our current environment.

The "plan" (viz. curriculum plan) cannot anticipate the precise subjectivities of the people and circumstances. Aoki (2005) suggests that teachers dwell "between two curriculum worlds" (p. 159): the curriculum-as-plan and the curriculum-as-lived-experience. This

"betweenness" is unavoidable, necessary even. He writes of Miss O, a fifth-grade teacher experiencing the tension between these two worlds; Miss O does not attempt to resolve the tension, but embraces it, "attun[ed] to the aliveness of the situation" (p. 162). In teaching, it is the presence of the people, and the ungovernability of time and circumstance, that calls for attunement. Gauthier (2019) identifies this, after German philosopher and pedagogue Herbart (1776–1841), as pedagogical tact, an uncodifiable knowledge that comes into play only in the interval of teaching: "[T]he opportune moment, the necessary intensity, the appropriate gesture, the calibrated word, the measured action, sufficient closeness or distance, closure or adapted flexibility" (p. 123; authors' translation).

We find ourselves in extraordinary circumstances. How might we chart a course, plan a curriculum, let alone live it, when we are continually informed that the manner in which teachers and students teach and learn will never be the same? The turn toward technology feels like a reflex: technology will bridge the gap, span the distance, we are told, making it possible to do what we were doing before Covid-19. Of course, it will. After all, our lives are already intertwined with our technological devices. But as our discussion attests, this move overlooks, among other things, the ethical implications of what is not just a tool but an ontology in which time and space are diminished in meaning and importance in order to teach (and live) remotely. "In a technological era, 'the intimate and the ultimate are being eclipsed by the immediate'" (Davis, as cited in Pinar 2019, p. 288). "Immediate" speaks to both time and place, as does "accessible", a word frequently on the lips of administrators and policymakers.

So long as teachers and students are recognized for what they are, as living people and not computers, technology *cannot* collapse the curriculum-as-lived into the curriculum-as-planned since the relationship between a plan and a lived experience with others is aspirational at best. Pinar (2019, p. 187) writes, "One of the key metaphors for curriculum is 'journey'", noting the connotations of both time and space at work in such a comparison:

> In time and place the pilgrim plots his unpredictable course, attuned to what surrounds, obeying (or not) what is revealed, engaging (or not) with what and who appears. It is a pilgrimage that demands fealty in finding one's way along a trail that sometimes fades away.

Like Aoki's teacher, Miss O, who straddles the two worlds, the pilgrim takes a next step in concert with what is both without and within. The word that captures this double action for both Aoki and Pinar is attunement. "Attunement is listening, feeling, thinking, sometimes separate sometimes fused attentiveness to what is revealed to—and what is withheld from—us. Through the prism of the personal we try to decipher the meaning of the moment, its materiality, temporality, calling us to coincide with neither" (Pinar 2019, p. 289).

From Teresa's pandemic teaching journal (April, 2020):

> I have come to know myself as a person through the kind of teaching that I "perform", teaching being a projection outwards and the classic university lecture being one of those forms. A more essential part of my teacher performance, though, is my quiet presence as I circle around a class, travelling from group to group, listening, prompting, becoming excited with the students, asking critical questions, observing, noting topics and questions to bring up with the whole group. These walk-abouts constitute significant stretches of time within a class, graduate or undergraduate,

when I am moving with the students even as I move inside, thinking, planning, this before I talk again, building my talk on their (students') conversations, and trying to move into a place, with them, even as I work to keep the talk going. This attunement took years of practice—being able to listen to them as I listened to myself.

I have found that graduate students often come to graduate school because of a felt lack in what they, or teaching, have become (even as they try to disguise this feeling) while undergraduate students both long and dread chances to think and act like the teachers they are struggling to be/become. The attuning process in my in-class teaching walkabouts work in hand in glove with the feedback I give on journals or assignments: *always* particular to the student, as I work to make myself cognizant of the journeys students are on—even as I also want to attune them to the journeys entailed by working with difficult, complicated knowledge.

Writing about students' experience of online education, Rose (2017), herself a specialist in educational technology, draws on the work of Levinas (1998) and Noddings (2003, 2005), positing that the face—as in "face-to-face", in the same physical space and time—"is the basis of caring, ethical relations, and that those relations represent an integral, essential element of education" (Rose 2017, p. 28). In reviewing the research on "the implications of facelessness" (p. 23), she suggests that "[not only] is it difficult for those who come together in online learning environments to form caring relations, but that the prevalence of such faceless contacts may contribute to a further inability to engage empathetically with others—and, indeed, to a devaluation of human contact in general" (p. 24).

Rose (2017) further notes that video conferencing (e.g., Zoom) has done little to alter the unreality of such conversations, where eye contact is nearly impossible, and the vagaries of internet connections often distort both what is seen and what is heard. Such "discussions" are ultimately devoid of the nonverbal and contextual significance that so abundantly characterizes in-person conversations. Also curtailed is improvisation: participants speaking to one another directly, in the moment, without a lag. A further enemy of attunement online or "remotely" is distraction, which Pinar (2019) attributes to "devices" (p. 289), understood to be those pieces of technology that so enamor us. We regularly ask our in-person students to close their devices and listen. Listening, Pinar (2019) points out, drawing on Lipari, is multimodal: one listens not only to "words but also to the music of the voice" while observing "the posture and gesture of the body" (Lipari, as cited in Pinar 2019, p. 280). Listening and speaking are but two sides of the same coin: "[T]o cleave them apart would be like touching without being touched in kind" (ibid.).

Closing one's devices is not an option at present. We do not doubt that technology is necessary for teaching and learning during these extraordinary times. As a "dwelling place from where we offer our hospitality to others and the world" (Lipari, as cited in Pinar 2019, p. 280), we do doubt that it is sufficient.

Conclusion: Pandemic teaching

The "humanness of curriculum construction", Janet Miller (2000) once said—this, on the cusp of a then new technological century, the year 2000 (when all computers were predicted to either crash or propel us forward)—is predicated on the fact that "[o]ur work must begin anew each day in response to particular questions and contexts of teaching, learning, theorizing, and curriculum" (p. 259). In 2020, we unexpectedly found ourselves waking up to a like cusp, certain outcomes of which may prove irreversible for the future

of curriculum, teaching, and learning. "My responsibility as a unique being cannot be replaced by or transferred to anyone else", Spector (2018, p. 505) reminds us.

So, what does that responsibility entail? First and foremost, as Grant (1998) reiterates, it means that "[i]t always matters what we do" (p. 431). Furthermore, it matters that we think what we do, words that Hannah Arendt first uttered in 1958, but that Maxine Greene (1973) invested with an ethical energy in the context of education. The danger is that remote instruction during Covid-19 times, when freedoms are increasingly being restricted, is already, and will progressively, re-engender "teacher-proof 'curriculum on a cart'" (Apple and Jungck 1990, as cited in Winter 2017, p. 64), except curricula will be on fancy e-carts, transmissible anywhere and everywhere. Particular teachers teaching particular students will not be expected to *act or think* pedagogically. With the abolition of the freedom to act, Arnstine (1971) once warned, "it is but a short step to the cessation of thinking altogether. People who cannot act freely may busy themselves doing efficiently tasks they have been assigned" (p. 5, as cited in Spector 2018, p. 515).

"Haunted by what we cannot think through but are obligated to try" (Pinar 2019, p. 181), we recall our students even as we remember ourselves. How will we get through this, as teachers? What will we be doing come Monday morning? "Note that study comes first, not the formulation of objectives or the composition of lesson plans. Professional ethics—above all knowledge of subject matter accented…by efforts to engage one's students through anecdote, emotional intensity and subjective presence—precede any specification of outcomes" (Pinar 2019, p. 185). We remind ourselves of what we are called to teach—a subject matter, which engages us as subjects—teachers through their passion, and students through their engagement. We are pressed by our own commitment to teaching to look at how we can use technological tools critically, not to merely "upload lessons and/or having teachers lecture in front of a camera" (UNESCO 2020) but to *approximate* a context for complicated conversation and attunement, even as we remain aware that these will surely carry the residual character of simulacra: projected images.

The writing of this article spanned our anticipation of teaching remotely, and then the teaching itself, events in which we, along with most or all of our colleagues at universities and many schools, are deeply involved. Presently, even teaching in-person is a far cry from the original. Universities went online in fall 2020 (and most will continue to be remote for the time being), while many public schools have followed suit, including Amarou's. We find that we have sought to *over*compensate for presence by more actively seeking out ways in which we as well as students can make ourselves—and our thinking—more visible, through sharing student and instructor–generated profiles with one another, conferencing individually, engaging response in small-group work while also drawing on the immediacy of the chat (e.g., for elicited memories). Feedback—oral and written—remains central to our pedagogies.

We know that any classroom is a sea of emotion (Hampton 1995). However, we also know that this sea may become more nebulous as students encounter one another on screen rather than "live"/alive, in person. As part of our pedagogy of teaching from home, we remind students of real lives—ours; their own; and others'. We do this even as we continue to remind them of the larger world we live in—nature, books, objects, difficult knowledges—and of our attachments to and within that world. We use "provocations" (texts, images, short films, books) and tools (document camera, white boards) to invite complicated conversation as a mode of engagement with the subject matter. Like others, we have found that the situation of the pandemic is a subject that enters naturally into the conversation, either directly (e.g., by teachers' and student-teachers' desires to debrief with one another after their day with students, masks, visors, and restricted movement and materials)

or indirectly (as teachers gravitate toward creating thematic units on anxiety, worries, and wellness, or wish to critically revisit and improve their pandemic practices) (Hughes Henry and Kushnick 2020). Mindful of students' accumulated time online and onscreen, we have tailored contact time in class to intervals that do not exceed two hours (Hughes 2020). We continue our practices of breaking into small groups (using Zoom breakout rooms), which tend to be smaller than before (e.g., three rather than six students) so as to reach for greater intimacy. We "visit" rooms, using the broadcast function to alert students' of our coming, or students call and invite us. We invite groups to share a thought or question with the larger group. We provide constructive feedback on plans and drafts of assignments (already one of our practices, but even more critical now) to establish connections, get to know our students, and allow them to get to know our voices. In short, we carry on with what as pedagogues we already know (Gauthier 2019), cognizant of the face-to-face presence we miss but nevertheless work to re-create by engaging students' thinking with our own and others'.

We remind ourselves, as we convey to our students, that "[o]ur first obligation is to seek acquaintance with joy so that any arrival at despair" in this self-isolating, social-distancing situation "does not carry us into madness" (Grant 1998, p. 431). Policymakers may not welcome critical questions in a climate of crisis about the technology and remote learning that allow us to carry on, Grant warns. Yet, if we are not to be "tamed confederates", Grant reminds us, we need to ask questions (1998, p. 433) about this "elephant in the virtual classroom"—this pandemic teaching—that is also being tied to (positive) disruptive change (Bowles and Sendell 2020, p. 156). We are open to the possibilities—indeed, have learned much about ourselves and how to deftly incorporate technology in teaching—yet we continue to resist associations of teaching with remoteness: with any homogenization of a profoundly ethical undertaking that we know resides in particular conversations with particular selves.

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