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## Manner in teaching: a study in observing and interpreting teachers' moral virtues<sup>☆</sup>

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### Abstract

This paper shows how manner may be made visible, as a philosophical concept and an object of empirical inquiry. Using Aristotle's ethics as the framework, the philosophical inquiry examines the conceptual nature of teachers' moral conduct, and the empirical inquiry analyzes their moral conduct. This dual conceptual/empirical approach permits inquirers to observe and interpret how teachers express moral virtue. One may draw the conclusion that it is possible to systematically observe and interpret manner in teaching. An implication for teacher education is that encouraging teachers to consider their manner may result in more educative interactions between teachers and students. © 2000 Elsevier Science Ltd. All rights reserved.

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Generations of parents and teachers have read fairy tales to children that end with "... and they lived happily ever after". From these stories, children learn that living "happily ever after" is an ideal to which to aspire. Aspiring toward happiness is as old as the inception of childhood fairy tales and

dates back at least to the time of the Ancient Greeks. "Aristotle, like Socrates and Plato before him, and the Stoics after, begins his inquiry with the question, 'What is a good and happy life for a human being?' In their terms, 'What is eudaimonia (happiness)?" (Sherman, 1997, p. 5). Like those of us who were raised hearing fairy tales with happy endings, the Ancient Greeks inquired whether happiness consists of a life of active public service, of living with family and friends in pursuit of common ends, of pleasure and excitement, of theoretical reflection, or of prosperity, health, or freedom (Sherman, 1997).

Plato and Aristotle concluded that the best human life requires the exercise of virtue. The aretai, the excellences or virtues, are those qualities that make life admirable or excellent. They focus on ideal types of human life, not on universal

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principles of conduct. The virtues are qualities that enable an individual to achieve eudaimonia (MacIntyre, 1984). Eudaimonia is a state of objective achievement, of excellence.

Since an excellent life requires virtue, the Ancient Greeks concerned themselves with the question of how a person acquires virtue. According to Burnyeat (1980):

The question, “Can virtue be taught?” is perhaps the oldest in moral philosophy. Recall the opening of Plato’s *Meno* (70a): ‘Can you tell me, Socrates – can virtue be taught, or is it rather to be acquired by practice? Or is it neither to be practiced nor to be learned but something that comes to men by nature or in some other way?’ (p. 69)

Aristotle suggests “moral virtue comes about as a result of habit” (trans. 1925, 1103a11). He proposes that the moral agent rather than a set of moral principles is the primary source of moral knowledge (Prior, 1991). Within the context of important relations to others, children acquire the characteristics of mature virtue (Sherman, 1997). One such relation is the one between teacher and student.

The purpose of this article is to call attention to the moral virtues (i.e., the manner) a teacher expresses in her relations with students. Prior to delving into this discussion of moral virtue in teaching, I situate this study by briefly reviewing the recent relationship between virtue, moral education, and teaching. Following this review is an overview of the conceptual inquiry undertaken to distinguish manner from other aspects of teachers’ conduct (i.e., method and style) and to frame it according to an Aristotelian ethics. Subsequently, the qualitative methods used to conduct the empirical inquiry of manner are described, and the cross-case analysis of three middle school teachers’ manner is presented. The paper concludes with suggestions about how teacher educators can help teachers consider their expressions of moral virtue and develop their manner so that they may become better models of conduct for their students.

## 1. Virtue, moral education, and teaching

As the introduction to this paper illustrates, the growth and habituation of virtue has been a concern for thousands of years. In recent history, this concern for character and conduct has gained an important place in the educational discourse. Three new approaches to moral education have emerged in the years between the mid-1960s and the late 1990s: values clarification, cognitive developmentalism, and a feminine approach that emphasizes an ethic of caring (McLellan, 1999). In addition, character education has experienced a revival (Noddings, 1995). This section briefly describes these four approaches to moral education.

### 1.1. Values clarification

Values clarification consists of a series of classroom exercises designed to help students become clear about what they value. Values are defined as preferences in all realms of life. Values clarificationists propose that teachers use nonindoctrinative and nonjudgmental methods to help students discover and refine their values. The teacher’s role in a values clarification program is to facilitate students’ explorations of their values without expressing her personal opinion (Solomon, Watson & Battistich, in press). The teacher stimulates thought and encourages a process of valuing that involves choosing freely, choosing from alternatives, and choosing after thoughtful consideration (McLellan, 1999). Following criticism that values clarification programs are ineffective (see Leming, 1985; Oser, 1986), they have fallen out of favor.

### 1.2. Cognitive development

At the same time that values clarificationists elaborated upon their program, other theorists explored an approach to moral education that emphasizes the development of moral reasoning or judgment. Among those theorists, Kohlberg won the greatest following. He identified six stages of moral reasoning and suggested that growth from one stage of moral reasoning to the next is a result of cognitive conflict. In recognition that his scheme of moral education needed to be more

comprehensive, Kohlberg proposed the creation of “just community schools” (McLellan, 1999). Just community schools focus on the creation of a participatory, functioning, collective moral atmosphere in the school. Students and faculty participate in establishing and maintaining community norms through community meetings. Teachers function as collaborators, facilitators, and guides as issues of fairness or morality are focused upon through “higher-stage” reasoning (Solomon et al., in press).

### 1.3. *Caring*

Since Kohlberg’s original stage theory research was based upon a study of boys, Gilligan challenged it. She suggests that girls express their moral reasoning “in a different voice”. Rather than justice, this voice is based upon care (Gilligan, 1971). Drawing from Gilligan’s work, Noddings (1984, 1992) proposed a feminine form of moral education based upon caring. Such an education is organized around centers of care: care for self, for intimate others, for associates and acquaintances, for distant others, for nonhuman animals, for plants and the physical environment, for the human-made world of objects and instruments, and for ideas.

### 1.4. *Character education*

The recent character education movement challenges educators to look at school through a moral lens and capitalize upon opportunities to develop character. Within this approach, virtues are qualities of good character. As Lickona (1997) writes, “Especially important is teaching students what the virtues are, how their habitual practice will lead to a more fulfilling life, and how each of us must take responsibility for developing our own character” (p. 55). Teachers are responsible for creating a moral community that supports the virtues (Lickona, 1997).

## 2. The purpose of the study

The previous section illustrates that teachers approach the task of morally educating the young

through various methods. Regardless of whether a teacher uses methods based upon theories of character education, caring, cognitive developmentalism, or values clarification, the teacher’s manner impinges upon her<sup>1</sup> approach and her relationships with students. Since relationships between teachers and students are moral in character and consequence, teaching is a moral craft as much as it is a procedural endeavor (Clark, 1990). According to Fenstermacher (1990):

What makes teaching a moral endeavor is that it is, quite centrally, human action undertaken in regard to other human beings. Thus, matters of what is fair, right, just, and virtuous are always present . . . . The teacher’s conduct at all times and in all ways, is a moral matter. (p. 133)

A teacher’s manner is an important aspect of her conduct. Yet, despite its importance, it is an aspect of conduct that has been ignored by many educational researchers.

This study attempts to redress the scant attention given to manner as an aspect of a teacher’s conduct. Under investigation is how manner may be made visible, as a philosophical concept and an object of empirical inquiry. Three questions are central to this task: (1) what is manner in teaching? (2) how may one engage in the examination of manner in teaching? and (3) how may one observe and describe manner in terms of moral virtue? The following section describes the conceptual inquiry that attempts to address the first two of these questions.

## 3. The conceptual inquiry

One of the first tasks in undertaking the study of manner in teaching is understanding how manner may be distinguished from the other aspects of a teacher’s conduct. The recent work of Fenstermacher (1999) assists in this task. He outlines a view

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<sup>1</sup> Since teaching is a historically feminized profession and the participants in this study are women, female pronouns are used to refer to teachers.

of pedagogy that consists of three aspects of a teacher's conduct: method, style, and manner. Style pertains to conduct that reflects a teacher's personality. Method applies to acts a teacher undertakes with the intention of bringing about change in learners. Manner encompasses those traits and dispositions that reveal a teacher's moral and intellectual character.

### 3.1. *The technical aspects of style and method*

Style pertains to conduct that reflects a teacher's personality (Fenstermacher, 1999). Studies of teacher personality have included examinations of attitudes, values, interests, favored activities, cognitive abilities, friendliness, cheerfulness, sympatheticness, resourcefulness, reservedness, and conscientiousness (Getzels & Jackson, 1963; Snow, Corno & Jackson, 1996). These attributes of a teacher's style are displayed through conduct unique to her.

In addition to regarding style in terms of personality, teacher style may also be viewed in terms of how a teacher's conduct reflects elements of her taste. For example, a teacher's use of time and space in the classroom, the way she organizes and manages the classroom environment, and her instructional methods are often influenced by her personal preferences. This was evident in studies that examined a teacher's patterns of behavior, her roles as a teacher, and her approaches to instruction. These included a teacher's clarity of presentation, enthusiasm, task orientation, and encouragement and probing of students (Wallen & Travers, 1963). These elements of a teacher's methods reflect her style, thus making the lines between what constitutes a teacher's methods and her style blurred.

### 3.2. *The moral importance of style*

The pedagogical elements of a teacher's method and style have been emphasized by educational researchers, and in turn, teacher educators. However, some educational philosophers and researchers have attended to the moral importance of teacher style. Whitehead (1929) regarded style as the morality of the mind. Elaborating on this, Garrison (1995) suggested pedagogical style reflects

professional virtue. According to Garrison, professional virtues include the ability to creatively organize curricular materials, subject matter, class time, and students' needs and desires. In a similar fashion, Jackson, Boostrom and Hansen (1993) used style to refer to how teachers handle the demands of the job, including whether they are aloof, reserved, warm, intimate, kind, cruel, scatterbrained, or methodical (Jackson et al., 1993). Upon further examination, Hansen (1993) suggested that teachers exhibit style via their personal qualities, and those personal qualities are moral because they act as models of conduct.

These considerations of the moral importance of teacher style relate to manner in teaching. Like manner, these views of style stress the moral aspects of teacher conduct. However, as Richardson (1993) suggests, "In order to develop a better understanding of manner, ... it is necessary to go beyond an examination of style and interaction, and delve into the traits of character and dispositions that the manner exhibits" (p. 16). By studying these traits of character, a teacher's manner may be made visible.

### 3.3. *Manner as the expression of Aristotelian moral virtue*

Manner is thought to mark a person's traits of character (Fenstermacher, 1986, 1992). As Fenstermacher (1999) notes, "We speak of persons being honest, deceptive, brave, cowardly, generous, stingy, and so on in ways of identifying relatively stable traits or dispositions they possess. These qualities make up what I am calling a person's manner" (p. 3). Within the context of this study, I restrict the term, manner, to refer to the way a teacher expresses Aristotelian moral virtues. Those virtues include bravery, friendliness, wit, mildness, magnificence, magnanimity, honor, generosity, temperance, truthfulness, and justice (Aristotle, trans. 1985).

An Aristotelian conception of moral virtue was selected because, unlike other moral philosophies, Aristotle's ethics emphasizes virtue. His moral philosophy discusses human action, how it is to be explained and understood, and what acts are to be done (MacIntyre, 1984). Aristotle's attention to particular aspects of human action makes his

conception of virtue applicable to teaching. As Sherman (1997) suggests:

To make a decision, on the Aristotelian view, is neither to subsume one's choice under some general principles or law nor to ask whether others could endorse the universalized maxim of one's action. Nor is there the move that others should act as we are acting. Thus the *orthos logos* (right reasoning) of the person of practical wisdom does not involve transforming one's choice into some lawlike counterpart, despite a modern bias towards translating the phrase as "right rule". Rather, the focus is always on the specifics of the case; wise judgment hits the mean not in the sense that it always aims at moderation, but in the sense that it hits the target for this case. As such, description and narrative of the case are at the heart of moral judgment (p. 244).

Thus, by drawing upon an Aristotelian conception of virtue, one is able to examine a teacher's moral virtues in light of her particular teaching contexts.

#### *3.4. Overview of a framework for applying Aristotelian virtue to teaching*

This effort to make manner visible focuses on a teacher's individual expressions of moral virtue. As Sherman (1997) writes, "... we can't know another's virtue except by inference from its expression in various kinds of external activity, choices, and conduct" (p. 11). I examine the activities, choices, and conduct of three teachers for the "expression" of virtue. To facilitate this examination, I constructed a framework that applies the Aristotelian moral virtues to teaching.

In constructing a framework to examine Aristotelian moral virtue in teaching, the definitions of each of the Aristotelian moral virtues were contextualized to the actions of teachers. The application of the virtues of wit, honor, mildness, magnanimity, magnificence, generosity, and temperance to teaching rely heavily upon the Aristotelian definition, and thus, the expression of these virtues are seen as relatively congruent to Aristotle's conception of them. On the other hand, the virtues of bravery,

friendliness, truthfulness, and justice relate to Sockett's (1993) discussion of courage, care, honesty, and fairness as professional virtues in teaching. Therefore, Sockett's work influences how these virtues are applied to teaching in this study. The following discussion outlines the framework (also see Table 1) that applies each of the Aristotelian moral virtues to teaching and that facilitates the empirical study of these virtues in a teacher's conduct.

*Bravery:* Bravery is having courage or the moral strength to do the right thing (Barnes, 1995). Aristotle (trans. 1985, 1115b8) states that the courageous are undaunted so far as humanly possible. Courage in teaching is expressed when a teacher exhibits practical reasoning in difficult, turbulent, or troubled circumstances in pursuit of long-term commitments that are morally desirable (Sockett, 1993).

*Friendliness:* The Aristotelian conception of friendship may be characterized by the desire to please others whenever that is compatible with what is right and expedient. Friendship is a relationship between two people who have affection for each other and who recognize each other's affection. When we have a deep friendship of the best kind, we wish for the friend what we wish for ourselves: life, health, happiness, and the fulfillment of his or her desire (Barnes, 1995). In teaching, friendliness may be likened to the professional virtue of care. For a teacher, this means showing concern and care for the framework within which children grow up, accepting responsibility for children, and matching experience with domestic upbringing and relationships. A teacher models care and teaches children to care (Sockett, 1993).

*Truthfulness:* In Aristotelian rhetoric, truthfulness is being straightforward and calling a thing by its own name (Aristotle, trans. 1985, 1127a30). A teacher's honesty and attitude toward the truth are integral to her character and professional integrity. Without an enriched view of honesty and a sophisticated understanding of the ways deceit undermines the educational enterprise, a teacher cannot seek and exemplify the truth. Truth telling is a moral disposition, and professional expertise is manifested by a teacher's pursuit of the truth (Sockett, 1993).

Table 1  
A framework for applying Aristotelian virtues to teaching

| Moral virtue | Aristotle's definition  | Application to teaching  |
|--------------|---|--|
| Bravery      | Having the courage and the moral strength to do the right thing   | Making judgments in troubled circumstances about what is to be done and how to accomplish it |
| Friendliness | Having affection for someone and wishing for them what we wish for ourselves                              | Showing care and respect for children and accepting responsibility for them                  |
| Truthfulness | Being a person who is straightforward   | Being honest, having integrity, and seeking the truth  |
| Wit          | Having tact and joking in a tasteful way  | Having tact and joking/having fun with students in a tasteful way                            |
| Honor        | Showing admiration and esteem toward those who merit it   | Positively reinforcing students who merit it for their good efforts and work well done       |
| Mildness     | Having a good temper  | Having a good temper   |
| Magnanimity  | Possessing pride, dignity, and self-esteem  | Expressing dignity and pride in yourself, your students, and your profession                 |
| Magnificence | Achieving the finest and most appropriate result  | Modeling excellence for students   |
| Generosity   | Having the character of a giver who does good   | Giving of yourself to your students (e.g., time)   |
| Temperance   | Desiring pleasure moderately and not more than is right   | Keeping the expression of feeling and actions under the control of reason                    |
| Justice      | Being fair and treating equals equally and unequals unequally in proportion to their relative differences | Fairness in the application of both rules and norms to individual children                   |

*Wit:* According to Aristotle, wit is the ability to joke in a tasteful way. The character of a witty person is exhibited by tact. The tactful person says and listens to the sort of things suitable for a person of honorable and liberal character, and there are certain things appropriate for such a person to say and allow to be said in fun (Aristotle, trans. 1985, 1128a20). In teaching, it is the same way. A witty teacher has fun and jokes with students at the right times and in the right ways.

*Honor:* The right degree of desire reflects a disposition with an intermediate attitude towards honor (Aristotle, trans. 1985, 1125b21). A person honors another for something that they have done to merit the honor (MacIntyre, 1984) and by showing them esteem and admiration (Aristotle, trans. 1985). A teacher exhibits honor when positively reinforcing students for their good efforts, for work well done, and for their special qualities and talents.

*Mildness:* Mildness is the having of a good temper. A good-tempered person tends to be unpertur-

bed and not to be led by passion. She is angry with the right people, at the right things, in the right way, and for the right length (Aristotle, trans. 1985, 1126a31). The same is true for mildness in teaching.

*Magnanimity:* Magnanimity is greatness of the soul. A magnanimous person is worthy of great things, and she believes her worthiness of those things. She possesses self-esteem (Tessitore, 1996). A magnanimous teacher expresses great dignity and pride in herself, her students, and her profession.

*Magnificence:* Aristotle defines the magnificent person as one who considers how she can achieve the finest and most appropriate result (Aristotle, trans. 1985, 1123a16). Magnificence in teaching is exemplified in the modeling of excellence a teacher does for her students.

*Generosity:* The Aristotelian virtue concerned with liberality is generosity. Aristotle states that liberality resides not in the multitude of the gifts but in the state of the character of the giver. The liberal

give for the sake of what is noble and what is right. The liberal person gives to the right people, the right amounts, and at the right time because virtue consists more in doing good than in receiving (Aristotle, trans. 1985, 1120a22). A teacher expresses her generosity in a multitude of ways, particularly, by giving time and feedback to her students.

*Temperance:* The temperate enjoys none of the things that the licentious enjoys. Nor, does she enjoy wrong pleasures in general. She desires pleasure moderately and not more than is right (Aristotle, trans. 1985, 1115b8). A temperate teacher's feelings and actions are under the control of reason.

*Justice:* Aristotle (trans. 1985, 1130a10) states that justice is complete virtue in relation to all other virtues. Justice is a kind of equality or fairness. A person who is just ensures that everybody gets a fair share (Barnes, 1995). Justice is virtue "toward others" and is especially concerned with the public good. It consists of treating equals equally and unequals unequally in proportion to their relative differences. A teacher who is just is fair. Fairness is central to teaching in one particular respect. A teacher represents adult life. Her determination to instill a sense of justice alongside a sense of caring is an initial model of the outside world. A teacher needs to be morally alert to the opportunities for unfairness that come in the application of both rules and norms to individual children (Sockett, 1993).

#### 4. The empirical inquiry

The framework just described outlines how manner, when conceived as a teacher's expression of moral virtue, may be displayed in a teacher's conduct. However, to understand how a teacher exhibits moral virtue, empirical study is required. Discerning whether and how a teacher expresses manner requires observing and describing how she displays virtue. To gain such an understanding, I employed qualitative research methods. The qualitative methods used here are the form of research Erickson (1986) calls "interpretive". Using an interpretive approach, an understanding of how manner is expressed was "arrived at by studying

a specific case in great detail and then comparing it with other cases studied in equally great detail" (Erickson, 1986, p. 130). From detailed cases, one is able to see how a particular teacher expresses moral virtue in her practice. The following discussion describes the context of the study, the methods of data collection, and the methods used to analyze the data.

##### 4.1. *The context of the study*

This study took place in February 1997–April 1998, at a middle school in southern Arizona. The participants were the school's three reading specialists: Tami, Crystal, and Karen. Each of these teachers had been in her current position for three years. Prior to this, each had several years of teaching experience and had earned a masters degree in literacy.

As the only reading specialists who served the school, each had approximately 300 students. Between them, they taught reading to every sixth, seventh, and eighth grade student in the school. The students went to reading class every third week for five days at a time. The purpose of the reading course taught by Tami, Crystal, and Karen was threefold: to encourage a love of reading, to improve study skills, and to raise reading test scores.

##### 4.2. *Data collection*

A variety of data collection methods were employed to examine teachers' expressions of moral virtue. Use of multiple data collection methods is based upon Erickson's (1983) assumption that

... Full understanding of the reflexivity of social action necessitates specification of modes of interactional coordination through investigation of (1) directly observable content of action, and (2) the interpretations of meaningfulness held by the actors, which must be inferred from observing the reactions of the partners to each other during the event, and from interviewing the participants (and other informants) after the event to elicit their interpretations of what was being done (p. 213).

Through interviews, a card sort, observations, and video recordings, I gained an understanding of manner in teaching as the expression of moral virtue.

The first method of data collection used in this study was audiotaped interviews. Although all the interviews were relatively open-ended, most focused around particular topics and were guided by some general questions (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). The purpose of the initial interview was to put the teacher's experiences in context by asking her to tell about herself (Seidman, 1991). In these interviews, I asked the teacher about her background, her philosophy of education and teaching, and about her perceptions of her own manner. Following these interviews were ones that focused on exploring particular topics that emerged during observation or previous interviews (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). These interviews explored the teacher's most current understandings of her expressions of moral virtue. To prepare for these interviews, I gave the teacher a list of undefined virtues, and I asked her to watch the videos of her teaching to determine how she saw herself expressing these virtues. Then, the teacher and I sat down and watched videotapes of her teaching together. During these meetings, the teacher discussed the incidents that she had identified as expressive of particular virtues. My role in these interviews was to understand how the teacher saw herself displaying particular virtues. I asked her to elaborate upon or clarify how she saw herself expressing virtue during a particular incident.

The second method used to collect data on the teacher's understanding of her manner was a card sort. The card sort was used to elicit the teacher's conceptions of particular virtues and their relationship to teaching. Twenty-five words that might be used to describe teachers' manner were placed on 3 × 5 index cards. The cards included the words: *caring, compassionate, courageous, temperate, mild, just, fair, honorable, magnificent, magnanimous, friendly, witty, trustworthy, truthful, tolerant, respectful, understanding, knowledgeable, rational, reasonable, intelligent, intellectual, wise, moral, and virtuous*. I showed the teacher the cards and asked her to talk about those that she thought pertained to her manner. Following this discussion, I asked

the teacher to talk about those cards that she did not select and why she did not select them.

The third method of data collection in this study was observation. Three kinds of observations were made: descriptive, focused, and selective (Spradley, 1980). In making descriptive observations, as much as possible of what was being seen in the classroom was recorded. These kinds of observations were made at the beginning of the study. Once I was able to identify teacher behavior that was reflective of virtue, I made focused observations. The focus of the observations was on the teacher's expressions of moral virtue. Finally, selective observations were made to look for differences in the teacher's expressions of the virtues. While making these observations, I was what Spradley (1980) refers to as a "passive participant". I was present in the teacher's classroom but not participating to any great extent. Most of my time was spent at an "observation post" (Spradley, 1980) where I made observations of the teacher's expressions of virtue. I recorded observations of the teacher's virtues by writing fieldnotes and videotaping the teacher while she taught. The fieldnotes were my written account of what I saw, heard, and experienced (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). However, in order to permanently record the ways the teacher displayed moral virtue, I video recorded her while teaching. The video records allowed me to continually revisit the teacher to study her virtues. In addition, each teacher and I were able to watch the tapes separately and formulate individual interpretations of her manner.

#### 4.3. *Data analysis*

This study's use of multiple methods of data collection is a form of triangulation. The multiple methods of data collection were used to cross check the accuracy of data gathered in another way (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993) and to ensure a more comprehensive understanding of the teacher's manner. The data collected via field notes, video recordings, an audiotaped card sort, and audiotaped interviews were analyzed. The analysis was ongoing. In reference to this, Merriam (1988) writes, "Data collection and analysis is a simultaneous activity in qualitative research. Analysis



begins with the first interview, the first observation, the first document read” (p. 119). In this on-going process, data were organized, broken into units, synthesized, and searched for patterns (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Through this systematic process, I came to understand aspects of the teacher’s conduct, and the ways the teacher expressed moral virtue in her practice.

The first stage of handling the data for its analysis was the transcription of the audiotaped interviews and card sort. Once the transcription process was complete, the data from those transcriptions were read several times. As the data were read, certain words, phrases, patterns of behavior, and ways of thinking stood out (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). I generated a list of words that repeatedly appeared in the transcripts. These words became the categories for analysis. The data were sorted according to each category. According to Merriam (1988), “This is the process of systematically classifying data into some sort of schema consisting of categories, themes, or types. The categories describe the data, but to some extent, they also interpret the data” (p. 140). After some sense of the written documents was made, my attention turned to the videotapes. I transcribed and sorted portions of the videotapes that exemplified the teacher displaying particular moral virtues. Identification of particular scenes relied upon the theoretical framework already described and the teacher’s suggestions.

The analyzed data were interpreted and used to construct case studies that describe the method, style, and manner of each teacher and a cross-case analysis of the three teachers’ manner. Included are the perspectives and the voices of the teachers and my attempt, as the researcher, to make sense of what I learned (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). The following is a summary discussion of what I learned about observing and interpreting manner in teaching from the cross-case analysis.

## 5. The cross-case analysis: manner made visible

The primary purposes of this study were to ascertain whether and how manner in teaching may be observed and described. This section discusses the

interpretation of Crystal’s, Karen’s, and Tami’s expressions of moral virtue. Discussion begins with the “visible moral virtues”. These are the virtues that one may observe in a teacher’s actions. Following the discussion of the “visible moral virtues” is the discussion of the “invisible moral virtues”. These are the moral virtues whose expression is difficult to observe in a teacher’s practice. Seeing the expression of these virtues requires high levels of interpretation.

### 5.1. *The visible moral virtues*

The moral virtues whose expression are most observable are friendliness, wit, bravery, honor, mildness, generosity, and magnificence. Each of these virtues can be observed in a teacher’s actions, and thus require the least amount of interpretation.

An observer can see a teacher express friendliness toward students when she is respectful, responsive, and compassionate. When Karen responds to students’ contributions, she is accepting. According to Karen, she “allows for a variety of interpretations”. Crystal expresses friendliness in a similar manner. This is evident in her relationship with an eighth grade student, Jamal.<sup>2</sup> Crystal talks to him after class about how he is doing and the books he is reading. As Crystal notes, “He’s a bright kid. He wants that connection. He always stays after and talks to me”. During her discussions with him, she is accepting, diplomatic, and respectful toward him.

Many times when a teacher expresses friendliness, she jokes and has fun with students. These expressions of wit are observable. Often, Tami teases and laughs with her students. She says, “I love to joke and tease and play with them”. This was obvious one day when a girl wore a pendant with a monkey on it, and Tami teased her about wearing a self-portrait on her necklace. Other, more subtle, expressions of wit are also observable in the behavior of the teachers. For example, wit is evident in their appreciation of humor such as when Karen noted that a book the class was reading together “is humorous”.

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<sup>2</sup> Students’ names have been changed to protect their identity.

Courage is observable as well. One of the most observable aspects of the courage of these teachers is that they take a literature-based approach to teaching reading despite pressures to use a more skills-based approach. More specifically, Crystal's courage shows in her decision to read aloud stories that include words such as "shit" and "fart" and her decision not to "bleep-out" that language. Similarly, Tami displays courage by having discussions on topics such as homosexuality with students. Referring to discussions like these, she says, "When you're up there, you're thrown all these curves. They're human beings, and they have different ideas. You can't predict and that's what's hard". Thus, by entering into unpredictable discussions with students, Tami shows courage.

The fact that all of the teachers are mild and do not raise their voices is also observable. Crystal and Karen are polite, and Tami is "very gentle". Karen commonly says "please" and "thank you", and she commends students by telling them when something they have done is "excellent". Crystal is similarly polite; she often says "please" when requesting an action from students, and she refers to students as "ladies and gentlemen". Like Karen and Crystal, Tami commonly says "please", but at the heart of her mildness is the way she "explains things so nicely".

Through their expressions of mildness, the teachers honor students. How the teachers honor students in other ways is observable as well. For example, Karen honors students by giving them "thumbs-up" and complimenting them on their participation. Tami honors students by taking an interest in their culture. She talks to them about fashion, their favorite music, and their groups of friends.

All three teachers observably express their generosity when they share books and materials with students and colleagues. They are also generous in the time and degree of feedback they give to their students. Crystal is generous in the amount and kind of interactions she has with students. Recall her relationship with Jamal. She takes the time to talk to students before and after class in order to learn about their lives and interests. Karen exhibited her generosity when the students were working on their "Reading is..." posters. She told them, "If

you need to borrow the transparency with these messages about reading, feel free to come up and get it". According to Karen, small incidents like these show students that "I'm kind, [and] I share. I give of my time and talents".

As they display models of what is good and acceptable work and behavior, the teachers express magnificence in an observable manner. All three teachers create situations in which students can achieve excellence. The teachers create models of projects, and they provide students with criteria of evaluation. For example, Karen provides students with handouts describing how she expects students to complete assignments, and she creates rubrics detailing the elements that must be included for an "A". The thoroughness with which Karen provides directions and the rubrics she creates helps students achieve excellence and illustrates her magnificence.

## 5.2. *The invisible virtues*

Other virtues are not so visible. Thus, "seeing" them in a teacher's practice requires high degrees of interpretation. The moral virtues of magnanimity, temperance, truthfulness, and justice fall into this category.

The expression of magnanimity is highly interpretive because it is not readily apparent in practice. According to Aristotle (trans. 1985), the magnanimous person seems to be the one who thinks himself worthy of great things and is really worthy of them. An observer cannot see what a teacher thinks of herself. Thus, whether a teacher is identified as expressing the virtue of magnanimity is influenced by the degree to which that teacher perceives herself as being magnanimous. For example, Crystal did not recognize herself as magnanimous. Similarly, Tami said, "I don't really see magnanimity with me". However, in a statement about her role as a teacher, Tami exemplified her magnanimity. She said, "I feel like I have something to teach that is important to them". As this magnanimous statement suggests, Tami has a sense of self-respect and pride with regard to her role as a teacher and the contribution she can make to students' lives. Karen has a similar sense of herself as a teacher. She states:

I feel good that I seem very pleasant, polite, easy going, humanistic, [and] nurturing. I'm very articulate. I make a lot of educational references. I am impressed that after nineteen years of working hard, I know a lot of stuff. I have a very good presence and a very professional and caring presence.

These good feelings about her teaching are not easily observed. Neither are Tami's self-respect and pride. Thus, magnanimity is an invisible virtue.

The expression of temperance is not readily seen in a teacher's practice. Identifying it requires high degrees of interpretation. What makes temperance so interpretive is that it is what Aristotle (trans. 1985) calls a virtue concerned with feelings. Feelings are not easily observed. For example, referring to how she expresses temperance, Karen says, "Sometimes I am in a situation where I'm getting angry, but I'm trying to keep it together. That might show up, but it didn't show up on the video". Since anger does not always show, "seeing" a teacher's expression of temperance requires some input from her. For example, Crystal says she expresses temperance when "relating to Chuck (an autistic child who is mainstreamed into her class) and dealing with his comments, questions, and outbreaks." In her interactions with this student, Crystal sees herself as temperate and mild. Referring to her expressions of temperance and mildness, she states, "They're very close in some respects to me." Similarly, of her expressions of temperance, Tami states, "I just kind of grouped that with mildness." Temperance is not easily observed in practice due to the fact that its expression appears to be in conjunction with the expression of other virtues such as mildness.

Also relatively invisible and requiring high degrees of interpretation is the expression of the moral virtue of truthfulness. Often, a teacher's truthfulness is not observable. The natural assumption is that a teacher is truthful. As Sockett (1993) suggests, "Our use of language as a tool for social living simply breaks down without the assumption that, in general, people convey the truth" (p. 63). My assumption of Karen's, Crystal's, and Tami's

truthfulness was based upon the fact that they suggested that they are truthful in most instances. Since I did not observe a lack of truthfulness in their behavior, I asked the teachers if there were situations when they were not or would not be truthful with students. One of the teachers said that she would not always be truthful with students about incidents from her personal life. Referring to this, she said, "For example, if kids were to ask me if I had ever done drugs, I would say no". She would say no, "because I don't want them going home saying, 'my teacher said that she did drugs'". She does not want parents to have a negative perception of her, and she does not want them to think that she is sending their kids the message that it is permissible to do drugs. Thus, to preserve what she considers a greater good, she would be less than truthful about her past actions. Another time a teacher said that she was not truthful was when Tami was upset with a group of students' behavior during class. Although she was irritated with the class, it was not obvious because she remained so calm. Upon watching a clip of herself on videotape, she said:

I was pissed off at that point. I was irritated, but it came out very gentle. It doesn't come across as harsh as it should . . . I'm not showing how I feel. But the flip side is if you show a lot of anger to this grade level or if you show a lot of emotion, they sense that as weakness. They sense that as 'gotcha.' So, I don't want to be screaming at them or anything, but by the same token, that just looked very gentle. I know I was not happy at that point. I was getting irritated.

Tami was irritated, but she did not share her feelings of irritation with her students. Her anger was not obvious, and if she had not explained her lack of truthfulness to me, I would not have known that she was not expressing her true feelings to her students.

Justice is not readily observable; yet, it pervades all aspects of classroom life. In fact, the pervasiveness of justice makes its presence difficult to observe. It is most apparent on the occasions when Crystal and Karen accommodate Spanish-speaking students by allowing them to read and write in

Spanish. The other occasions when justice is observable are when a teacher faces the challenge of justly meeting the needs of all students. In the following statements, Crystal addresses the frustration of working with such a range of students and the impossibility of meeting all of their needs. She states:

We get them all. Chuck reads picture books. He looks at picture books. He can write some. He can read some, but the chapter books that I tried to get him to read were beyond him. I learned quickly that I'm not going to waste a lot of time breaking my back . . . . I have other kids . . . . I just basically let those kids go by the wayside . . . . Why break my neck [and] break my back trying to reach all of them? If they make it somehow great, but if not, [when] they're in here, they'll just float. I'd rather draw less attention to them than more and make them feel more uncomfortable because they're not on-task. I try to deal with them but without trying to call attention to them.

Similarly, Tami does not call attention to a mainstreamed student in her class. Referring to her situation with this student, she states:

She's Special Ed. She's mildly mentally retarded. This is callous but part of me says those kids are getting special attention. They're going to a class where they're getting groups of five. I'm not going to teach to them. I'm not going to stress it. It's the kids that are middle level and up that need me.

As Tami and Crystal suggest, they must make decisions about what course of action is the most just. Do they attend to the special education students at the expense of regular education students, or do they attend to regular education students at the expense of special education students? Either way, their course of action may be interpreted as less than just. Often, teachers must choose the best course of action from less than the best options. Thus, they attempt to be fair by attending to those students whom they feel need their attention the most.

As the discussion of Tami's, Crystal's, and Karen's expressions of virtue illustrate, making observations of virtue is a complex task. Observing a teacher's expressions of moral virtue is difficult because virtues like wit and friendliness or honor and mildness are expressed simultaneously. Then there are those virtues such as temperance, magnanimity, truthfulness, and justice that require high degrees of interpretation. The interpretive nature of this work suggests that discerning the expression of moral virtue in a teacher's practice is not easy. However, as the next section suggests, encouraging preservice and inservice teachers to consider their manner may result in more educative interactions between teachers and students.

## 6. Implications for teacher education

Making manner visible is but a first step. Manner, as an aspect of conduct, needs to be attended to in teacher education. The following is a brief discussion of the implications of this study for the education of both preservice and inservice teachers.

### 6.1. *Preservice teacher education*

The task for teacher educators engaged in preservice teacher preparation is to encourage preservice teachers to attend to the importance and potential impact of a teacher's manner. One thing that can be done is to provide preservice teachers with new ways of looking at teaching and their roles as educators. This includes moving preservice teachers beyond considerations of method and style to considerations of manner. Rather than submitting to preservice teachers' desires for "a bag of tricks", teacher educators can show future teachers that there is much more to teaching than the methods that teachers use. They can draw attention to teaching as a moral endeavor grounded in the relationship between student and teacher. For a quality relationship between a teacher and a student to ensue, a teacher must have a manner expressive of virtue. While teacher educators cannot ensure that a preservice teacher's manner will be exemplary of

virtue (just as they cannot ensure that she will adopt the methods she is taught), they can ask her to reflect upon attributes of her style that may be indicative of her manner and to think about what these attributes suggest with regard to who she will be as a teacher and how she will interact with students. Secondly, teacher educators can ask a preservice teacher to attend to the manner of the teachers she observes in her field placements. Attention to whether and how teachers convey virtue as they interact with their students may lead the preservice teacher to consider the importance of quality interactions between teachers and students. Perhaps such considerations will result in teachers who attend to all aspects of their conduct and who are concerned about the moral quality of their interactions with students.

### 6.2. *Inservice teacher education*

The goal for teacher education with inservice teachers is the same: to encourage teachers to attend to all aspects of their conduct and the quality of their interactions with students. That being the case, the task of inservice teacher education is the development of manner that is more expressive of virtue. Working toward change in this direction would be what Chin and Benne (1969) describe as “normative re-educative”. It involves “changes in attitudes, values, skills, ... not just changes in knowledge, information, or intellectual rationales for action and practice” (p. 34). Movement in such a direction is enhanced through deep reflection to understand one’s beliefs, knowledge, and practical reasoning. “One way teachers can articulate and appraise their practical reasoning is by working with a partner to examine why they do what they do in their daily teaching practice” (Vasquez-Levy, 1998, p. 535). The teacher and her partner may attend to the teacher’s virtues with the goal of developing them further. The underlying purpose for engaging in such dialogue is to enhance the manner of the teacher so that she may educate children in ways that are ennobling and empowering, that successfully and powerfully impart knowledge and understanding, that promote the learner’s capacity for discernment and reflection, that engender the development of character and

instruct in virtue, and that promote the welfare of the learner as a person and as a prospective citizen in a democracy (Fenstermacher and Richardson, 1993).

## 7. Conclusion

This study’s central contribution is that it calls attention to the moral conduct of teachers. Although limited by the framework for interpreting a teacher’s expressions of moral virtue, it provides a means and a language for observing and describing virtue in teaching. It also illustrates the complexity involved in making manner visible. Some virtues like friendliness, wit, courage, and mildness are expressed through conduct that is observable. On the other hand, interpreting expressions of magnanimity and temperance requires input from teachers. The same is true when making interpretations of a teacher’s expressions of truthfulness and justice.

The complexity and high levels of interpretation involved in examining a teacher’s expressions of moral virtue suggest the need for further study. One area for further study is students’ perceptions of their teacher’s manner. A second area for further study is the nature of the expression of intellectual virtue in teaching. Due to the lack of attention paid in this study to intellectual virtue, nothing can be said about how teachers express the intellectual virtues or about how the moral and the intellectual virtues are expressed in concert with one another. A third area for further study is to move beyond Aristotelian virtue and include a wider range of positive and negative dispositions. A last area for further study is to consider the relationship between a teacher’s manner and her personal cultural histories, her teaching context, and the content she teaches. Conducting research in each of these areas will broaden the concept of manner and further understanding of the moral dimensions of teaching. Teacher educators can use such an understanding to promote the development of teachers who take seriously their moral charge to be models of conduct who instill the moral and intellectual virtues needed to live a good and happy life.

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