

Ethical Issues when Teaching Praxis is Coextensive with Qualitative Research Praxis—An Introduction

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Abstract: Coteaching is a rather recent form of praxis that allows new and experienced teachers to learn to teach while teaching. In its inception, however, coteaching has evolved as a way of doing research by centrally participating in the praxis that one is interested in understanding. The approach leads to a number of ethical issues arising from the fact that coteaching requires collective responsibility all the while participants are positioned differently from an institutional perspective. In this introduction, I articulate a framework that allows us to situate the lead article featured in this debate and the commentaries that an international group of authors—all practitioners of the method—provided.

Table of Contents

- [1. Introduction](#)
- [2. Ontology of the *With*—Ethics as Solidarity](#)
- [3. Ethics of Coteaching](#)
 - [3.1 The implicit Feminine](#)
 - [3.2 Cosmopolitanism \(and cosmopolitics\)](#)
 - [3.3 Voice, equity, and circumvention of power](#)
 - [3.4 Positioning and power](#)
 - [3.5 Responsibility](#)

[4. Coda](#)

[References](#)

[Author](#)

[Citation](#)

1. Introduction

In the course of the 1990s, my colleague and friend Kenneth TOBIN and I evolved and researched a form of teaching praxis that simultaneously became a form of research praxis (ROTH & TOBIN, 2002). In coteaching, two or more individuals enact collective responsibility for all aspects of teaching. These individuals may be new teachers—i.e., those in training—beginning certified teachers, seasoned supervising teachers (mentors), school supervisors, department heads, university supervisors of new teachers, or researchers. That is, while teaching, there are multiple individuals with institutionally different positions involved with the primary purpose of teaching students. Because of the different institutional positions, there are also secondary motivations to the participation of the individuals. Thus, a supervising teacher not only trains the new teacher but also has to submit a report to the university at the end of the teaching intern's term; the university supervisor has to construct a grade reflecting the competencies of the new teacher; and the research is interested in

publishing new understandings that derive out of this experience. Having been started in Vancouver and Victoria (British Columbia), on the one hand, and in Philadelphia, on the other hand, this approach to teaching, teaching teachers, and doing educational research, now has spread not only within Canada and the US but also has been adopted by teachers and researchers on other continents (e.g., ROTH & TOBIN, 2005). [1]

From the brief description we can see that in coteaching, teaching, learning to teach, and research about teaching have become coextensive forms of praxis. What we (Kenneth TOBIN and I) have not realized initially that there are ranges of potentially contentious issues that would be articulated only afterward. One set of issues would arise because in this coextensive nature of different forms of praxis, the professional ethics of teaching come to overlap with the ethics of doing qualitative research. As there are different forms of ethics associated with the different forms of praxis, contradictions may occur. The lead article for this edition of the ethics debate comes from one such setting in which coteaching is used. As the different voices of the co-authors indicate, there are definite ethico-moral issues that need to be addressed. At the very moment that I am writing this text, I have also been working on a new book on coteaching (TOBIN & ROTH, 2006), in which the topic of ethics and the exchanges between researchers and their research ethics boards have been elevated to constitute a chapter on their own. That is, over the past four years since the appearance of our first book, the research ethics in this form of praxis has become very central to our research planning. [2]

2. Ontology of the *With*—Ethics as Solidarity

Our praxis of coteaching evolved followed by our evolving theoretical understanding of what we were doing. Thus, from early on, we recognized that implicit learning was made possible because of the nature of Being as Being-*with* ("Mitsein" [HEIDEGGER, 1977]). Only much later did we recognize that an entire ontology could be grounded in the *with* (NANCY, 2000). Also, we recognized that coteaching required a particular recognition of the ethics of *collective responsibility* when, during a particular critical incident, a coteaching supervisor blamed a coteaching new teacher—the former was in an institutionally superior position over latter, who received a grade for her teaching—for a slow transition from one to another teaching activity. Only later did we first come to recognize that our emerging sense of collective responsibility found its equivalent in a philosophy of the act (BAKHTIN, 1993) and, even more radically, in an ethics more ancient than any Being, an ethics that comes with a form of responsibility that has a one-for-the-other structure (LEVINAS, 1998). That is, in successive developments, we have come to realize that our perhaps naïve, because uninformed term of collective responsibility, had a ground in a first philosophy that recognizes plural singularity and responsibility as its philosophical foundation. [3]

The one-for-the-other structure is quite explicit as each teacher takes full responsibility, that is, shares collective responsibility for every aspect of the lesson. This is also the case for a researcher coteacher. Because of this, the

traditional ideas some research participants—among these members of First Nations and aboriginal peoples around the world—have, feeling that researchers only take (e.g., knowledge, artifacts) and do not give back to them, is reversed. In coteaching, the researcher gives above all, being a resource to the learning of all students in the class and, because of the complex dimensions of learning together while teaching together, to the teacher as well. More so, because coteaching is associated with a second form of praxis, cogenerative dialoguing—a forum for democratic sense-making concerning moments of life in the classroom, which already was the feature topic in a previous edition of the ethics debate in this journal—participant teachers are beneficiaries of the collaboration for a second time. [4]

The one-for-the-other structure of coteaching praxis is linked in an integrate manner with *solidarity*: it is solidarity. Etymologically, the term is derived from the old French *solide*, an adaptation of the Latin *solidus*, solid, free from empty spaces, cavities, or interstices. The adjective *solidary* is used to denote common interests, whereas the noun signifies the fact or quality of being perfectly at one in some respect, for example, interests, aspirations, and sympathies. [5]

This etymology is interesting, because, for example in its adjectival form, which points us to the idea of a formation in which there are no longer differences, interstices, or parts. Yet we know that the participants in a group *are* physically different, taking different positions in a spatio-temporal continuum. With the different positions come *dispositions*, which means both different positions and dispositions. The term disposition denotes a state of being inclined, a frame of mind, or mood. That is, solidarity is consistent with a recent philosophical approach that presupposes difference rather than sameness as the fundamental beginning of Being: solidarity is unity or sameness in the face of difference. Similarly, the praxis of collective responsibility has to be understood as unity—with respect to responsibility—in the face of the multiplicity of differently positioned and dispositioned participants. [6]

In an ontology of the *with* that underlies coteaching, singularities presuppose plurality, and plurality presupposes singularities. Being therefore implies not the assembly and side-by-side existence of singularities, but singularities that only exist in multiplicity. Coteaching therefore implies an ethics not based on the idea of sameness or equality, thought as the starting points, but an ethics based on unity in the face of difference. A singularity presupposes multiplicity, exists only because of multiplicity, and therefore, in its very being also *is* multiplicity—Being therefore always is Being singular plural (NANCY, 2000). [7]

We notice, therefore, that the ontology of the *with* and the LEVINASian ethics with its one-for-the-other structure can be articulated into a common framework. It is this framework that allows us to explain and understand the special nature of coteaching as a coextensive praxis of research and teaching. It is also, as I show below, consistent with the cosmopolitan ethics—in fact, for DERRIDA (2001), it is not only cosmopolitan but also cosmopolitical—that underlies Ed LEHNER's commentary to the feature article. [8]

In the following section, I provide a reading that integrates the feature article by GALLO-FOX et al. and the four commentaries written by an international group of scholars, all of whom are practitioners of coteaching. [9]

3. Ethics of Coteaching

The contributors to this discussion come with different backgrounds and experiences. The authors of the lead article work together implementing coteaching as a form of inducting new teachers to the field and as a form of research praxis. Kate SCANTLEBURY, who has conducted research with Ken TOBIN in the Philadelphia context where the model has been developed, now has received funding to implement the model at her institution, the University of Delaware. Beth WASSELL, who had done her doctoral work under TOBIN, conducting her research in the class of Ian STITH, and Jennifer GALLO-FOX are researchers in the program SCANTLEBURY has set up. Matt JUCK is one of the new teachers who was, at the time of their work, completing his requirements to become certified as a science teacher. [10]

In their responses, different practitioners of coteaching as coextensive method of doing teaching and research focus on a variety and varied issues that stand out to them. Ed LEHNER is a teacher currently completing his doctoral dissertation, who practices both coteaching and cogenerative dialoguing to address the needs of his inner-city school in New York and to conduct research in the two modes. Colette MURPHY and Jim BEGGS have set up coteaching to allow the interns they supervise to learn to teach in West Belfast (Northern Ireland), including schools that serve children from families in economically precarious situations. Steve RITCHIE, now in Brisbane, has used the coteaching model to assist the professional development of teachers attempting to incorporate inquiry into their classroom, a notoriously difficult way for teaching science. Finally, Ian STITH has become a teacher through the coteaching model, conducted research within this model, and now at the present time researches the practice of cogenerative dialoguing in elementary schools. [11]

3.1 The implicit Feminine

The authors of "Warts and All: Ethical Dilemmas in Implementing the Coteaching Model" (GALLO-FOX, WASSELL, SCANTLEBURY, & JUCK, 2006) do not articulate a full ethical model on which to found their coteaching work, as coextensive teaching and research praxis, or their analysis of what has happened to them. They do point out the ethical dilemmas that arise for them, among others, the fact that the praxis implies the participation of individuals positioned very differently in the respective institutions. They do, through the subtitle "The ethics of care" point toward to an ethics that is at least implicitly to their work, and which is both feminist and feminine in its allegiance to care, which is care *for the other*. This care for the other is already implied in the very praxis of using coteaching as a mode of preparing teachers for certification and in their use of continued dialogue, which remains open even in the face of the dilemmas. Their use of the metalogue genre to articulate the issues at hand allows for collective

authorship without erasing the voices of individual participant, in fact, it allows for a poetics of difference in the face of solidarity toward a common goal, the education of teachers and the practice of research as a means to improve teacher education. [12]

It is in particular the notion of care and the willingness to confront each other face-to-face to deal with the ethical dilemmas that led me to think of LEVINAS' (e.g., 1998) notion of the Feminine as a suitable concept that the authors might want to ground their ethics in. LEVINAS uses the notion to differentiate relationship to the Other, which can be in the form of the Other as Feminine or in the form of the Other as Third. The Feminine is the possibility of being human based on welcoming and forgiveness. This "is a relation with the Other who welcomes me in the Home, the discreet presence of the Feminine" (LEVINAS, 1991, p.170). Welcoming the Other in the home means being host and offering hospitality, that is, enacting an ethics of care. The Feminine also is related to politics, which in a different form returns in a cosmopolitan (cosmopolitical) ethics that LEHNER deploys: the Feminine, because it is linked to forgiveness, "is the condition of possibility of politics" (PONZIO, 2006, p.179). [13]

3.2 Cosmopolitanism (and cosmopolitics)

LEHNER articulates for us the apparently dualistic forms of thinking and working that are evident to him in the work of GALLO-FOX et al. He suggests that one of the way of addressing the contradictions and dualistically opposed experiences could have been addressed in cogenerative dialoguing, and thereby set up resources for immediately confronting and changing the unfolding praxis—rather than articulating them a posteriori at a point in time when nothing can be done. LEHNER grounds four-dimensional praxis of coteaching and cogenerative dialoguing to teaching and research in a cosmopolitan ethics. This cosmopolitan ethics will take us back to the ethics of the home and hospitality that go with LEVINAS' notion of the Feminine. [14]

Although the idea of a cosmopolitan ethics existed before him, it was Immanuel KANT (1795/1964) who articulated and defined it in his text on eternal peace. Accordingly, a cosmopolitan ethics ("Weltbürgerrecht"), a condition for lasting peace, requires the law of hospitality as one of its main conditions. Hospitality does not mean the right to residence

"sondern ein Besuchsrecht, welches allen Menschen zusteht, sich zur Gesellschaft anzubieten, vermöge des Rechts des gemeinschaftlichen Besitzes der Oberfläche der Erde, auf der, als Kugelfläche, sie sich nicht ins Unendliche zerstreuen können, sondern endlich sich doch neben einander dulden zu müssen, ursprünglich aber niemand an einem Orte der Erde zu sein mehr Recht hat, als der andere." (KANT, 1795/1968, p.214)¹ [15]

1 My English rendering: "but a right to visitation, due to all human beings, to present themselves to society, in virtue of the common right of possession of the surface of the earth, on which, as it is a globe, they cannot spread to infinity, and therefore in the final count have to reconcile to exist side-by-side; originally, however, no one has more rights than another to be in a specific spot on earth."

This law of hospitality, both singular and universal in its unconditionality, orders that the stranger be accepted, without condition or question, and without asking for his or her identity. KANT here implicitly recognizes the fundamental impossibility for two persons taking the same position, therefore always being dispositioned, which later should become the ground for the philosophies of difference. And yet being accepting the stranger, the Other, that is, the other in general in one's home presupposes reception and inclusion of the other. A cosmopolitan ethics therefore always also is a cosmopolitical ethics. It is at its very It is a form of culture, even culture itself:

"Hospitality is culture itself and not simply one ethics amongst others. Insofar as it has to do with the ethos, that is, the residence, one's home, the familiar place of dwelling, inasmuch as it is a manner of being there, the manner in which we relate to ourselves and to others, to others as our own or as foreigners, *ethics is hospitality*; ethics is so thoroughly coextensive with the experience of hospitality." (DERRIDA, 2001, p.17) [16]

Such acceptance, or rather, this welcoming of the other irrespective of his or her origin, is at the very heart of the LEVINASian ethics captured in the notion of the Feminine. Given that he works in a special school that accepts unconditionally all those students who have been suspended from other schools, it does not surprise that LEHNER espouses cosmopolitan ethics, through the lens of which he looks at the GALLO-FOX et al. experience. [17]

3.3 Voice, equity, and circumvention of power

MURPHY and BEGGS describe their practice for addressing three areas of ethical dilemma emerging from the feature article—voice, equity, and contradictions. Their response is grounded practically rather than philosophically, presupposing rather than arguing for or developing a particular ethics. That is, their work is grounded in an understanding (a) that the voices of all participants *ought to be heard*, (b) that coteaching both presupposes and demands equity—shared rather than equal responsibility—and (c) that practices such as assessment, supervision, or mentoring—all of which reproduce and assert power differentials that the idea of equity is supposed to overcome—are to be absent. They do list a variety of contradictions arising from their own implementation of the coteaching praxis that appear to exceed the control over the project that they had. [18]

As appealing as it appears to be to many educators, the attempt to flatten all inequalities is likely utopian and may constitute an impossibility. If Being is Being singular plural, multiplicity rather than sameness is the basis on which we have to found an approach to ethics in research. As the discussion of KANT's notion of hospitality shows, the host has the duty of hospitality, whereas the other has the right to hospitality; each is hostage to his or her position, though they may be symmetrical with respect to the originary *with* that founds the very nature of Being. This asymmetry of host and guest parallels the asymmetry arising from the fact that in granting hospitality, the host already positions herself

asymmetrically, granting something that the guest cannot grant but only can accept. That is, equity founded in an ontology of the same—an ontology that is at the heart of the idea of representation, the identity of a thing with itself (e.g., $A = A$)—is a foundation build on philosophical sand, encouraging us to shift to an ethics grounded in philosophy of difference. [19]

3.4 Positioning and power

RITCHIE rearticulates some of the issues in the feature article, suggesting that the difficulties in the project may have arisen from false expectations rather than colliding philosophies, implementation problems rather than ethical dilemmas, and from contradictions of inclusion and marginalization. He views dilemmas as having arisen in unresolved issues such as positioning, power, and care. With respect to positioning, it might be interesting to pursue an investigation to determine the extent to which the positioning theory he draws on can be integrated in a philosophy of the with that explicitly recognizes Being as Being singular plural and an entire range of theoretical possibilities associated with the semantics of position that I have begun to allude to. This semantics plays on the inherent difference in position, which can be related to such notions as dis-position, sup-position, pre-sup-position, juxta-position, im-position, ex-position, com-position, pre-position, and so forth. [20]

A second point of caution that I voice whenever someone uses the term power to explicate some social phenomenon derives from my understanding that social phenomena inherently are collective and cannot be reduced to any property of any individual. Thus, a researcher cannot have power or power-over: research, as any social—or more correctly, societal—situation is the result of a collective effort, requiring the collusion of those said to be in power and those said to be subject to power. It is precisely when those in institutional positions where they can wield resources not accessible to others, and therefore, ultimately, affect others in ways detrimental in one or the other way, that *power* may come closest to being an attribute of a person. But a person who is in a position to wield more resources than another is not inherently *in power*, as evidenced in so many school classrooms where there is mayhem rather than the order that the resident teacher may have envisioned. In situations where the institutional positions are multiple, who knows and has access to resources, and therefore comes out in advance of an asymmetrical relation, if such is to be constructed, is the product of a continuously unfolding process, where uncertainty itself may be a manner of managing uncertainty (e.g., ROTH & MIDDLETON, 2006). [21]

To flesh this approach out in a sketchy way, we could say that the research participant in fact is in the position of power. If participant say midway during a study that they no longer want to participate, then all the time and resources invested are lost for the researcher. This situation is further accentuated when a participant says so at the end of the data collection procedure and, in addition, does not agree that the data be used and that they be destroyed. There is nothing left to do for the researchers—those who adhere to and comply with the ethics regulations of their institutional ethics review board—to do as requested. [22]

To avoid such trajectories of the research program, researcher and participant have to meet each other face-to-face and maintain an open dialogue in which misunderstandings, problems, dilemmas continuously are made topics. These dialog situations themselves need to be radically open and adhere to democratic principles, in fact, adhere to an ethics grounded in the principle of the-one-for-the-other: the other as Feminine. This is precisely the direction that I see STITH to be taking, as LEHNER, too, has done. [23]

3.5 Responsibility

As one or the other respondent, STITH articulates his point of view concerning voice, role (position) of the researcher, and differences in philosophies of education. In addition, he raises concerns about the relation between the teachers themselves, a concern that revolves around a person who uses the possessive pronoun "my" to articulate her relation to another: the expression "my student teacher" parallels those used in other contexts, including "my wife," "my husband," or "my graduate student." However, the issue probably is more complex, as the expressions "my department head" or "my prime minister" do not express relations of possession, as the person referred to institutionally has access to more resources—in most instances anyway—so that the "my" is used to express co-membership in a particular group in which the person takes a leadership role, which may in fact be one of the *primus-inter-pares* (first among equals) type. [24]

Ultimately, though this position is not completely fleshed out, STITH appears to be aiming at an ethics of collective responsibility, which, as his references show, derive from LEVINAS' ontology of responsibility that is beyond essence, more ancient than Being, and therefore constituting the very condition for Self, identity, Other, language, and so forth. [25]

4. Coda

Karl MARX alerted us to the fact that praxis precedes theory, a position that is central to the dialectics of understanding and explaining underlying recent approaches to dialectical phenomenological hermeneutics (e.g., RICŒUR, 1991). It is out of praxis and the growing theoretical understanding emerging with reflection on praxis that issues and dilemmas emerge. Inherently, ethical dilemmas can become apparent only after there is a praxis that subsequently is subjected to critical analysis. This analysis, requiring both interpretive and logical reduction, then leads to learning as implicit understanding—preceding, enveloping, and concluding as it does any form of explication—changes in and as part of the interpretive process. This also is the case for coteaching, a praxis in which teaching and researching are coextensive processes. Ethical consideration cannot precede the praxis but have to be worked as the praxis unfolds, as the ethical considerations themselves presuppose a practical understanding of the field to which they pertain. The present collection of feature article, commentary, and response to the commentaries is timely considering the recentness of the praxis, which is only in its beginning. [26]

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