

**TO CARE OR NOT TO  
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**What impact, if any, does care have on men in their teaching practises within adult education?**

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## ABSTRACT

This paper explores the experiences of men using care as a teaching method within the adult and further education sector and does so through a patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity lens (Connell, 2005). This thesis makes the following arguments in relational to the research questions. Neo-liberal and managerialism lead agenda's are squeezing the life out of the ethos of adult education. This research has uncovered some interesting findings such as how policy makers and neo-liberal ideologies are impacting significantly on adult education through the antithesis of care, known as managerialism. Consequently, transforming adult education settings from places of learning, to places of training, which in turn are accountable through outcomes and these outcomes, are constantly market driven. These concepts have impacted significantly on the motivation for adults returning to further education and will impact greatly on the human capital versus care debate and how adult educators teach. The research has shown how men are using care within their teaching practices however; these concepts are slowly been eradicated and challenged through the concept of hegemonic masculinity and managerialism.

The thesis also explored the ideas emotion, feeling and care within adult education practices and learned that, concern for rational and professional functioning has contributed to keeping care and emotion out of education. The notion is that real professionals do not allow themselves to show emotion within their profession thus, maintaining control over your emotions. The focus on education for competitive advantage has led to a growing lack of attention to the need for care within the educational process as a value, the research has found. This is impacting on male teachers who are using care in their teaching practices as policy makers and state departments are de-valuing care as a method of education.

The thesis also shows how we are now defining the purpose of education in terms of personalised human capital and/or making oneself skilled for the economy. It has also shown how patriarchy is not waning rather being administered in a much more subtle and Foucaultian theory of power ideology. The thesis also uncovered that patriarchal and masculinity structures are not been dismantled, moreover, they are just distributing their power in a more subtle way. Despite the emerging resistance to these structures, the impact is still significantly felt within the realm of masculinity and power relations within the adult education sector, the thesis has uncovered.

## Acronyms

AONTAS: The National Adult Learning Organisation

ETB: Educational Training Board

FET: Further Education and Training

NALA: National Adult Literacy Agency

QQI: Quality and Qualifications Ireland

SAP: SOLAS Action Plan

SOLAS: Further Education and Training Authority

VTOS: Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### 1.1 Introduction

It is said 'history repeats itself' and unfortunately for several generations, this is true for some people, of the Irish educational system. Thinking of my experience of formal school takes me to a place I never like to go. Most and I state most, not all, adults from my generation and the generations before mine had a negative formal school experience. Generations of children educated within Irelands' religious and non-religious run educational institutions, educated using punishment and for some people with a complete lack of care. Consequently, a generation of adults let down by their governments and thrown to the 'lions of their capitalist system'. Therefore, the present generation of adults returning to education having again been let down by their government.

This thesis began its journey by exploring care being used within adult education by men. This in turn lead me to look into the human capital versus care debate and examine how this is impacting on adult education, patriarchy and masculinity and their systems of power. The research findings and subsequent analyses uncovered how patriarchal and hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2005) systems are not on the wane moreover, their power is been administered through a more Foucaultian concept of power whereby, its exercise of power has become more subtle. However, it is still very dominant within contemporary society and infiltrates almost every fibre of society. It can be linked into Foucault's (1980) concept on power where patriarchy is seen and unseen, yet remains dominant because men continue to be coerced into imposing it upon society, both consciously and un-consciously. Allowing a shifting patriarchal structure to perhaps switch the emphasis for men to administer the power by encouraging self-regulating, this in turn keeps us disciplined and controlled

Consequently, this uncovered the emerging concepts of neo-liberalism and managerialism which is 'alive and kicking' and in turn is being championed by the ruling elite. As Foucault (1980) states, 'power seen and unseen' or as I believe and my research shows, capitalists and capitalism working at its best. This neo-liberal and managerialism agenda is now the driving force behind the focus on a market driven economy. The Foucaultian theoretical framework can assist us in tracing these

changes which have been occurring within the sector. This ideology views the outcomes of the market as natural thus; poverty and social problems become personal failures as opposed to systemic failures. Neo-liberalism operates on the concept that everything has a price or it should be given one. Finnegan, (2008) states, that this has immediate concerns for educators and can impose a form of lifelong learning based on the market. Grummell (2014) sums this up when she states that this will have “significant implications for the kind of teaching and learning that occur” (2014:130).

## **1.2 Background to the Research and Interviewees**

These concepts and theories mentioned above will now be explored, examined and critiqued within the thesis to understand their impact on adult education, however, more importantly, their impact on male teachers and the impact on their practices. This study will look at five male educators working within adult educational centres and how they embody, if at all, an ethic of care within their teaching environments and the impacts this has on them as men, their teaching environments and their teaching practices. My five informants are from five different counties in Ireland, one each from Dublin, Offaly, Carlow and Meath and one man from Wales. Coincidentally, four of my research participants all started out in their working life as something other than a teacher and in what is considered by society, as a very masculine job. One of my participants continued on to third level education to obtain his HDip in Adult, Community and Further Education in order to work in an adult education environment. Semi-structured interviews were used in order to gain an insight into the lived experiences of my interviewees’ and the findings and analysis were constructed using a ‘social constructionism’ approach.

## **1.3 Structure of Thesis**

This thesis is presented in six chapters and a brief outline of each chapter is presented below:

#### Chapter One: Introduction

This chapter is the introduction and informs you of my research question and my motivational reasons for undertaking the project.

#### Chapter Two: Literature Review

This chapter provides a conceptual framework for the research including theorists Noddings (2003), Lynch (2009) and Feely (2007). It explores Connells (2005) work in relation to hegemonic masculinity and explores ideas of emotion and vulnerability around teaching through the work of Nias (1996) and West and Zembylas (2007). The chapter also examines neo-liberalism with Finnegan (2008), Grummell (2014) and Lynch et al (2014).

#### Chapter Three: Methodology

This section is where I underpin my ontological and epistemological views. It also explains the methods I chose to conduct my research and outlines the reasons for them. I also examine any observations and/or challenges I faced along with a section on my ethical statement. Creswell (2007) Charmaz (2006) and Ryan (2004) are used to explore qualitative research and the paradigms I have used.

#### Chapter Four: Findings

This section examines the findings from my interviews and research. This is constructed through a mixture of my research participants' voices, and my own voice. Through this I have then constructed the themes which emerged and discussed.

#### Chapter Five: Analysis

This chapter presents the data as it was uncovered during the research. I will introduce these findings using the interviewees' voices and tie them into the dominant discourses within the literature review influencing the research participants' views.

## Chapter Six: Implications and Recommendations

This final chapter of the research project will draw any conclusions which were made within the body of work and explore the implications and recommendations identified by me, the researcher for the future. I also explore further areas for research.

In the following chapter the literature, theories and theorists engaged within this research is discussed and critiqued.

## **Chapter two**

## 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 Introduction

Human beings, when they are born, require a significant period of time being nurtured to become independent beings. Unlike most other mammals, which become self-sufficient much more quickly, we need care and are almost totally reliant on others for the first number of years of our lives. This caring and nurturing is done mainly, however not exclusively, by the mother or some other female carer. We, as humans are essentially dependant on others at some stage of our lives and we will need 'others'. Children are dependent on their parents or some other carer, some people of age are dependent on their children or other care givers and people with disabilities are dependent on services or on their families to some degree. Therefore, we all go through a process of dependency at some stage of our lives and this depends on our age, physical and mental conditions, which will/can determine the level of care required. Rearing, caring and nurturing are, some will argue (and I would concur), where our education should begin and when the building blocks of the self start to be laid.

Men; 'one is not born a carer instead we become one'. This is an adaptation of the famous quote by Simone de Beauvoir "one is not born a woman but we become one" (*Le Deuxième Sexe*, 1949). I use the quote as a statement of intent to help the reader become aware that although on a global stage women are recognised as being 'the one caring' (Noddings, 2003), men, too can use care. Particularly in the role of a male adult educator, care is a vital tool in helping learners to achieve a transformative learning experience. When I examine the impact if any, care has on men in their teaching practices within adult education, I am immediately confronted by the socially constructed notion of this as being a woman's role

This section of the thesis will examine and investigate the contemporary and relevant literature, theories and theorists connected to my research topic of the impact, if any, does care have on men in their teaching practices within adult education. My rationales behind this are to critically analyse and evaluate literature within the field to access what knowledge already exists in order to help establish a conceptual framework for the exploration within the research topic. It will also allow

me, the researcher, an opportunity to explore this conceptual framework to highlight recent research around my study and to recommend where additional research is required.

Within this chapter, theories on patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity will be introduced. As will some theories connected to my study on masculinity and emotion, gender and care, teaching and care and gender inequalities within adult education in relation to the impact, if any, does care have on men in their teaching practices within adult education. This chapter will also examine and explore the notions of neo-liberalism and managerialism and how they are impacting on adult education and how they are impacting on teaching practices.

## **2.2 Patriarchy and Hegemonic Masculinity**

The interrelation of gender on a very large scale is centred on a single structural fact which was and perhaps still is the global dominance of men over women and men over men who do not fit the socially constructed hegemonic masculine profile. This structural fact provides the basis for relationships among men that define a hegemonic form of masculinity in all of society. Hegemonic masculinity, according to Connell (2005) is constructed in relation to other subordinated masculinities as well as in relation to women. A patriarchal social order is based on the interplay of these different masculinities. Patriarchy is a system which encourages men to dominate women; it also exerts social pressure on men to perform within a certain system of dominance, discourse and behaviour. This system insists that men remain free from any notion of care. Consequently, because patriarchy defines men as the dominant force, men's and women's roles are strictly defined and, in a sense, enforced.

Women must be seen as inferior, weaker, generally less capable, less intelligent, and less worthy and their work is equally considered of lower value, particularly when this work is in care. Therefore, because of the need to have such rigid roles, patriarchy is largely intolerant of anyone who lives outside of the norm. Consequently, within patriarchal society male teachers' who do not conform to certain standards risk being marginalised, particularly when they use care within their teaching practices. Patriarchy is still pervasive and highly disempowering, and despite the achievements of feminism, it is still a powerful force in even the most

modernized societies. Foucault (1972) devised a theoretical framework of discourse which views discourse as a group of statements that emerge from the same “discursive formations...for which a group of conditions of existence can be defined” (Foucault 1972:117). Patriarchy is a powerful force on both men and women and as Foucault (1972) notes, power is everywhere seen and unseen and while patriarchy is still around, things are gradually changing.

Connell (1995, 2005) in her book *Masculinities*, discusses the concept of hegemonic masculinity whereby men must act a certain way and how, it can be a set of proposed practices that promote the dominant social position of men, and the subordinate social position of women. She discusses how hegemonic masculinities have been distinguished from other masculinities, especially subordinated masculinities. Connell (2005) argues that there is not just one masculinity; moreover, that there can be many different masculinities, and each associated with different positions of power. This Connell (2005) suggests is why hegemonic masculinity and patriarchal systems continue to “raise difficult issues for men and boys “(2005: xi).

Within an educational context Martino, (1995), has researched and shown how the concept of hegemonic masculinity has been used in education studies to understand the dynamics of classroom life, including patterns of resistance and bullying among boys. Men who may, or may not, try to negotiate their way and engage in activities (such as adult education), that masculinities consider demonstrating feminine norms of gender, risk being relegated to the subordinated masculinity of ‘wimp or ‘gay’ and this, can play a big part in course choice for men. This can also impact on male teachers’ who use care in their practices whereby a male teacher must defend their position within a patriarchal and/or hegemonic system and engage in a power struggle with some male and some female learner’s. Masculinity is constructed from cultural and subjective meanings that constantly vary, depending on the time and place. Gender stereotypes are among “the meanings used by society in the construction of gender, and are characteristics that are generally believed to be typical of either women or men” (Courtenay, 2000: 1387).

Rather than me attempt to define masculinity as an entity, a natural character type, a norm and/or a behavioural trait, I concur with Connell (1995), who states we should look on the processes and relationships through which men and women conduct gendered lives. Examining the impact on men, if any, of using care within their teaching practices through these lenses, can further help me to understand and interpret their experiences.

“Masculinity, to the extent to which the term can be defined at all, is simultaneously a place in gendered relations, the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices in bodily experiences, personality and culture” (Connell, 1995:71).

### **2.2.1 Identity and Hegemonic Masculinity**

Each of the research participants had a different working life before they became adult teachers. Their careers would be considered by society to be within the masculine realm of employment, jobs such as a lorry driver, computer programmers and construction workers, which are considered within hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2005) to be ‘real men’s’ work’. Their newfound identities force them on some level to leave their old masculine identities at the door and draw attention to what Foucault (1980) discusses as the microphysics of power as central to the processes of identity formation and how they are formed. Therefore, the battle with our old masculine identity and the newly emerging caring male teacher leaves us in a “complex interplay of agency and resistance to the processes of identity formation” (Devine, Grummell and Lynch, 2010:633).

### **2.2.2 Foucaultian Power**

Foucault’s notion on power been implemented through ‘claims of knowledge’ that are formed out of “power through discourse and discursive formations that shape and normalise our destiny to a certain mode of living” (Foucault, 1980:142). The notion of care being ‘women’s work’ and not being carried out by ‘real men’ remains dominant within the discourse, surrounding patriarchy and masculinity. Ideas like this keep the notion of care relational to females rather than males. Foucault shifts from the notion that power is one man imposing his will over another to understanding that power is



to viewed as something which “circulates or as something which only functions in the form of a chain...power is employed and exercised through a net like organisation” (Foucault, 1980:98). I agree with Foucault, that individuals are “the vehicles of power not its points of application” (1980:98). Consequently, discourse can be the individual that is driving patriarchy in a much more subtle way than before. Nevertheless, Foucault tells us that power relations are a cause and effect relationship, enmeshed throughout society. Looking at this we see power as a system of web like networks woven into the apparatus of society rather than a stand-alone entity. However, this idea by Foucault cannot exist without some form of resistance and by adult education teachers continuing to practice care within their teaching and not engaging in either patriarchal or masculinity discourse, teachers can continue with this resistance.

Exploring, how care impacts on masculinities within the context of a patriarchal society, I believe can also contribute to my view that masculinity is not so much on the wane, more its exercise of power has become more subtle. However, it is still very dominant within contemporary society and infiltrates almost every fibre of society. It can be linked into Foucault’s (1980) concept on power, patriarchy is seen, unseen and remains dominant because men continue to be coerced into imposing it upon society, both consciously and un-consciously. Allowing a shifting patriarchal structure to perhaps switch the emphasis for men to administer the power by encouraging self-regulating, this will keep us disciplined and controlled. This can tie in with Foucault’s (1980) theory that power will now be used in a more softer, subtle and pervasive form of control and subordination of women and/or men who do conform to hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2005). We see how Foucault’s ideas of power and surveillance tie into the neo-liberal system also. This idea of the individual been constructed and “...certain discourses and certain desires come to be constituted as individuals” (Foucault, 1980:99) whereby the individual is the focus and a social product of power. This focus on the individual is a major cause of concern for the adult education sector as it endangers the “...caring and transformative possibilities of further education which are core to its ethos” (Grummell, 2014:135).

## **2.3 Human Capital and Care**

Concern for rational and professional functioning has contributed to keeping care and emotion out of education. The notion is that real professionals do not allow themselves to show emotion within their profession thus, maintaining control over your emotions. The focus on education for competitive advantage has led to a growing lack of attention to the need for care within the educational process as a value. Feely (2007:2) discusses how we are now defining the purpose of education in terms of personalised human capital and/or “making oneself skilled for the economy” (2007:2). Consequently, we need to redefine the idea of care so it has equal value with education, Hayes (2007). I believe care and education should be intertwined and not incorporated to just focus on positive outcomes to serve society.

### **2.3.1 SOLAS**

The implementation of the ‘SOLAS Action Plan’ (SAP) alongside neo-liberalism and managerialism has had a detrimental effect on adult education and relegated ‘care’ within teaching and learning into the background. Another statement from the SAP (2014), strategy which has to cause grave concern for the educational aspect of lifelong learning is under the heading of “skills as an insulator from unemployment” (2014:5). It indicates that market flexibility takes president over ‘job security’ and the notion of a ‘job for life’ is now replaced by the emerging, neo-liberal concept, of ‘work for life’ (2014:6). The purpose of this strategy is now to make sure that those partaking in FET and those who will in the future, partake in the FET sector, will stay engaged, and complete qualifications in order to transition fully into employment. However, it also states that where appropriate, a learner can ‘move into further or higher education’. I would argue that we are now producing adult ‘learners’ to create profit rather than fulfil human ‘needs’. As the document states “...this was a consensus that all programmes should be measured against some form of suitable outcome metric closely related to the objectives” (SOLAS, 2014:26).

The concept behind the strategy has a lot of positives contained within it however, I would argue that it has de-humanised the learner from a person to a commodity aimed at increasing production and performing a role within society. It means enabling every citizen (regardless of their personal status) who are experiencing

barriers to the labour markets to be able to access high quality education, training and to 'get' a job. Grummell (2014) sums this up when she states that this will have "significant implications for the kind of teaching and learning that occur" (2014:130). I would propose that SOLAS's new concept is primarily focused on outcomes and performance and this measurability places the learner behind the needs of the economy.

### **2.3.2 Neo-liberalism and Managerialism**

The neo-liberal agenda is now the driving force behind the focus of a market driven economy. This ideology views the outcomes of the market as natural thus; poverty and social problems become personal failures as opposed to systemic failures. Finnegan, (2008) states, that this has immediate concerns for educators and can impose a form of lifelong learning based on the market. It needs to be understood as a powerful and complex form of cultural hegemony, not just what happens in the market (Finnegan, 2008:58). Leading onto the notion that I believe this neo-liberal agenda will squash the use of care within an educational setting due to the pressures on teachers to provide outcomes. Those who cannot 'keep up' will be left behind and deemed within the neo-liberal view, a 'failure'. Lynch views this as a "...distinct political project underpinned by the spirit of capitalism" Lynch et al, 2010:3) and I would agree.

Managerialism is not just about a learner managing, under neo-liberalism, it is about restructuring social, political and economic structures to primarily focus on "...outputs rather than inputs for indicators of performance and accountability" (Lynch et al. 2014:4). Consequently, incorporating into our classrooms, accountability or showing outcomes to the funders. Grummell, (2014) views this as "an idea of how to capture the performance of further education" (Grummell, 2014:130). This in turn will impact on what is rendered not valuable such as care and thus, subjected to the shelf, it will also determine which knowledge now becomes valuable (Grummell, 2014:130). Further education teachers are now delivering learning that is filtered "through an employment discourse of the government as further education is asked to contribute to the employability of the labour force" (Grummell, 2014:127).

If we now begin to prepare learners to perform a function in society and treat education as a rational justice based concept, I believe and I agree with Noddings (1984) that we will lose the notion that caring is both fundamental to education and human life itself. If we continue with this agenda, the entire ethos of lifelong learning will be lost to the neo-liberal idea of everything and/or everyone been measured and accounted for. Perhaps keeping society within the Foucaultian (1980) notion of regulation and self-regulation and where power is in circulation between the individuals and the institutions of society.

## **2.4 Masculinity and Emotions**

In the social, cultural and educational settings I encountered while growing up, boys were instructed to 'man up' if they displayed any locally termed 'weaknesses' such as emotion and/or care. During my childhood, which was spent in Ballymun, Finglas and Clondalkin (all in Dublin, Ireland), embodying an ethic of care and/or embracing emotion and feelings was culturally viewed as the territory of girls and as a boy/man rendered you weak thus, subjecting you to bullying, abuse and living the existence of a subordinate being.

An important feature of any setting involving other beings is peer groups and these exist in teaching environments also. Connell (2000) discusses the "feeling rules" (2000:153) in occupations and these are also found in teaching. These rules indicate that socialisation plays an important role in how people interpret experience and express emotions. Consequently, will an embodiment of care by male teachers oppose the notions of the tough male teachers and define a teachers' masculinity "through the feeling rules of schools" (Connell, 2000:153)? The data emerging from the findings indicates that my research participants, as male teachers are embodying an ethic of care, however the social pressure on them to be 'men' is still prominent within some sections of their working environments.

Hunt and West in their 2006 article, Learning in a boarder country: using psychodynamic ideas in teaching and research, discuss how we need to understand the interlocking mechanisms that keep us trapped within these powerful cultural and self concepts. We need to progressively "dismantle them in order to re-establish contact with our more spontaneous, felt selves" (2006:166). Do we as men need to

'shape ourselves through feeling' (Bollas, 1995) in order to embody an ethic of care? Bollas feels the core of our self is defined through 'felt experience' and this develops our 'aesthetic of being'. I do feel our cultural and historical biographical experiences can leave us trapped within these powerful concepts and prevent us as men from accessing our emotions however; I am not sure men need to define themselves through feeling. Embodying this 'felt self' (Bollas, 1995) and allowing men to teach with emotion and care also involves finding a voice.

According to Mc Cormack (2009) this can be both "liberating and scary as this new public self may be judged harshly" (2009:24). Mc Cormack (2009) suggests that although 'finding ones voice can be liberating'; he also points out that it is fraught with "danger" (2009:24) as when you speak your truth it can run the risk of angering someone else. It can also impact on male teachers' when they use their voice within the classroom. It has been identified as a barrier to men returning to adult education and when they are confronted with a caring confident teacher, the hegemonic masculine instinct is to try to question that teacher and cause ridicule to the teacher in order to try and wrestle the learners' perceived notion of the dominant position away from the confident voice (King, 2002). Zembylas and Fender in their 2007 article, Reframing emotion in education through lenses of parrhesia and care of the self, discuss further the debate between masculine rational and feminine emotion, how the rationale enjoys a privilege in education while emotion is devalued and how the andragogical techniques used to cultivate both differ (2007:327).

Mezirow (2007) discusses how transformative learning occurs in adults as they engage in activities that directly cause a shift in how that person views the world that they live in. This, he states is achieved through "dialogue, reflection, critical reflection and self-reflection" (Mezirow, 2007:12). This according to Mezirow (2007) is called "perspective transformation" (2007:12) and this is to reflect change within the core or central meaning structures through which we interpret our day-to-day lived worlds. Using these ideas and an ethic of care, an adult teacher can affect real change with a learner to help them have a transformative experience.

If we as teachers can help our learners to examine their own perspectives and reflect on their own personal beliefs and values, they can then identify, assess and

reformulate the assumptions on “which our perspectives are constructed” (Mezirow, 2007:167). However, Dirkx (2008) looks at ways of knowing and states critical reflection for transformation does not fully account for one aspect of this and that is the emotional aspect. Mezirow (2007) in his explanation of his terms of reference, does refer to emotional aspects (2007:166) however, Dirkx (2008) states that further elaboration of the affective component of transformative learning is necessary as “emotions are involved in learning in fundamental ways, for instance, questioning the way we experience the world” (2008:11). I would concur with a lot of this chapter and the concepts brought forward by the theorists I utilised. However, it can also be fraught with danger and can impact on both a teacher and a student. Even in today’s world men are still struggling to embrace their emotional side and fear looking too deep within themselves or their personal terms of reference for fear of exposure on any level. It can be a particularly difficult task to try and incorporate care into the teaching and learning space for a male teacher when dealing with adults who are returning to education. Particularly when the learners are male who may be more culturally conditioned to associate care within the feminine realm. Therefore, when faced with a male teacher using care within a classroom setting, some male learners’ can revert back to their socially constructed notions of being a man and the power relationships this sets up.

## **2.5 Care and Gender**

### **2.5.1 Embodying an Ethic of Care**

Traditionally in Ireland, caring and to a lesser degree, teaching has been considered to be ‘women’s work’ or work performed by men who somehow could not fit into the socially constructed notion of ‘formal’ masculinities. Interest in men’s caregiving has resulted in debate around the quality of care that men can provide. Calasanti and King (2007), in their article, Taking ‘Women’s Work’ ‘Like a Man’: Husbands’ Experiences of Care Work, informs us that based on an implicit if not overt comparison to women’s work, some scholars see male caregivers as “ineffective and inconsequential” (Russell, 2001:353: cited in Calasanti & King, 2007:516). Thus, cementing the socially constructed notion of caring as being a woman’s role and not viewed culturally as real men’s work carried out by real men by some sections of

society. I would argue however, that I, as a man can and do provide an effective form of care and my data found that my research participants can and do also.

### **2.5.2 Noddings' Ethic of Care**

“An ethic of care, a needs and response based ethic which challenges many premises of traditional ethics in moral education”  
(Noddings, 2005)

Nel Noddings who herself is an educator, feminist and philosopher, discusses the notion in her book *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education* (2003), what it means to care and be cared for, how caring for another person relates to your moral picture and how caring ultimately functions within an educational context. Noddings (2003) also discusses using this theory within your educational setting and how it can or cannot be delivered within the masculine and feminine realm. She suggests within the book that this caring method is more suited to the feminine realm. “It may be the case that such an approach is more typical of women than of men” (2003:2), she states, however, women do not have the monopoly on the feminine. Consequently, she has no wish to enter this empirical debate (2003:2).

Noddings' states that the contrasts between the feminine and the masculine approaches are not intended to divide men and women into opposing camps, rather, “to show how great the chasm is that already exists between the masculine and the feminine in each of us...” (2003:6). There is plenty of thought and opinion in contemporary society which both agrees and disagrees with the idea that female and male characteristics differ and feminine characteristics cannot fit into masculinity. This I would agree with up to a point, yes there are certain characteristics which are solely feminine however, I would argue, using care within your teaching practice, is not one. My own experience and my findings from the research data would also concur with this consequently, the impact if any, on my research participants will be discussed in the chapter for analysis.

### ***Care, One-Caring and the Cared-for:***

“Why care about caring” (2003:7) Noddings’ asks us, and then she describes how caring is not a matter of emotion and how she rarely starts with reasoning therefore, it is from an “intuitive or receptive mode with memories, feelings and capacities” (2003:8), from which she begins. Also necessary within her theory of caring and education is engrossment and motivational displacement. Engrossment refers to thinking about someone and their personal narrative and history to gain a greater understanding of him or her. This enables the teacher to then determine the “appropriateness” of any action however; not to develop a “deep fixation on the other” (2003:69) rather to give just enough attention to gain an understanding of the other. Motivational displacement in turn occurs when the teachers’ “behaviour is largely determined by the person for whom she is caring” (2003:70).

However, neither engrossment nor motivational displacement, on their own could constitute caring within education as they both need each other to occur. Noddings’ believes that caring requires some form of recognition from the one cared-for that the one-caring is, in fact, caring and that when there is recognition of and response to the caring from the cared-for, then the caring is described as “completed in the other” (:20034). These, I would argue, are essential within education and in particular within adult education as a lot of adults who are returning to education have emotional scars and some have not encountered care within their personal educational experiences. Consequently, I would concur when she states “that the carer (one-caring) must exhibit engrossment and motivational displacement, and the person who is cared-for must respond in some way to the caring” (2003:69). This concept is also susceptible to manipulation through guilt, sexuality, misunderstandings of the relationship and its context. Using this one-caring model I feel can entrap the teacher as a permanent caregiver and judges them on their ability to care.

Receptivity, Relatedness, Responsiveness, Empathy, Realness and Prizing:

In my own work as a [male] adult educator I use Noddings (2003) ideas of “receptivity, relatedness and responsiveness, caring, one cared for and chains of connections” (Noddings, 2003) along with Rogers’ (1969) ideas of realness, prizing and empathy to try and develop an ethos of care in my learning. I believe these



ideas are important within an adult educational setting as it helps build a relationship between a teacher and their learners'. A lot of men returning to adult education may have had some form of negative experiences in their formal education. Encountering a male teacher who utilises these methods and a caring ethos can help remove any barriers to education that they may be harbouring as a result of this. This can in turn can help build back up their trust in the educational system and in those who teach it to them now thus, ensuring they have a transformative learning experience.

Receptivity is not just a matter of putting oneself into another's shoes consequently, it involves "stepping out of one's personal frame of reference into another's" (Noddings, 2003:24). For receptivity, you must start to, as best as you can, with the view from their eyes to determine the appropriate actions which differs slightly than Rogers' (1969) idea of empathy. For Rogers' you can put yourself in their shoes as empathic understanding significantly increases learning when the student can see that the facilitator is aware of the process of learning to them and how they process their learning which incorporates the learner not being evaluated or judged. It can also take a significant amount of time to try and master these concepts and not all learners will have the same reaction to the ideas therefore, it can affect your own self-esteem if the ideas fail to work. This in turn can impact on you as a male educator and your internal socially constructed notions on masculinity.

When the student associates with the teacher whereby they feel free to initiate conversation, discuss their interests and likes, then relatedness begins to occur. Although the curriculum is important, the interests of the student are primary and relatedness assures the student that the teacher acts from the basis of "I am still the one interested in you and all of this is of variable importance and significance, but you, the student, still matter more" (Noddings, 2003:20). Whereas responsiveness is when the student responds to the teacher's ethic of care and acknowledges it is actually just 'caring'. Again as already stated in earlier chapters, this can be fraught with danger when the concepts are taken out of their context by learners'.

Being real and congruent (Rogers, 1969) within an ethic of care in teaching and someone who is real and genuine helps to build trust and acceptance, while prizing (Rogers, 1969) provides a space for the learner to be able to be themselves and

know that they are accepted. However, we must always be mindful of how we act out this ethic of care because if we act primarily from a desire to accomplish something for another person, but fail to think carefully enough of that other person's needs, we would have failed to care. Instead we are trying to do everything for them, rescue them and fix their lives for them, through the use of the 'Jesus of Rio Syndrome', (Hussey, 1999). Noddings' also uses a distinction between acting because "I must" and acting because "I want" (2003:81-83) within the classroom and within an ethic of care. In the outcomes driven adult education world we now encounter, these concepts are sometimes glossed over due to time and outcome constraints on teachers.

### ***Using Care within the Masculine and Feminine Realm:***

Noddings' (2003) views caring as a feminine quality and that educating through caring can be best delivered within the feminine realm and it can be achieved through the student's needs, feelings and impressions. Feminine teachers also display caring by meeting students morally and not by judging them on academic acts, as used by masculine teachers (2003:6). In her theory, Noddings' (2003:3) does point out that some masculine teachers can use caring for their teaching and for their basis to moral action. However, when Noddings (2003) refers to a positive and educating through care, it is always in the feminine (she) and when the reference is in the negative it is always in the masculine (he). I would argue that men can use Noddings' concepts within their teaching practices within adult education. I would also disagree that using care within adult education is a universal feminine trait that can only be delivered by women. I believe we all have both a masculine and a feminine aspect to our being. However, in my opinion, patriarchal and hegemonic masculine societies have constructed the feminine as the weaker aspect which has resulted in men suppressing their femininity. Engaging with this femininity, even as a male teacher can help to deliver our teaching and learning within a caring environment. However, it leaves me in a constant battle both internally and culturally with my socially constructed notion of masculinities and my male students socially constructed notions also, therefore, impacting on me as a male teacher who uses care within their adult education setting.

Nel Noddings' (2003) discusses the use of care in education as an alternative to the more law and principle-based methods often (although not exclusively) used within the masculine sphere, or, "it is not, I suggest the approach of the mother, it is the approach of the detached one, the father" (Noddings, 2003:2). The suggestion is that women use a more caring approach rooted in the already discussed concepts of "receptiveness, relatedness and responsiveness" (2003:2) and it should not be delivered in the 'language of the father'. I would argue that adults respond better to reciprocity type relationships as opposed to the Noddings (2003) model of 'one-caring type relationships'. Noddings also states that education and caring should start at home (2003:6) before school years begin and the mother should teach the child how to care for all things. I would argue, her concept on home education is based on out-of-date perceptions of just man and woman-type parenting which does not fit into our ever-changing modern society. This 'pedagogy of caring' necessitates that women should be caring and loving and this should be apparent in their teaching consequently, excluding the ideas that men too can use this 'pedagogy of caring' within their own teaching, albeit at home or in their work.

Men as educational practitioners, Noddings' suggests, place too much emphasis on academic outcomes, moral principle and moral reasoning. However, she also explains that these traits are not alien to women (2003:2). Feminists and traditionalists in education have criticised Noddings ethics of care. One objection from Keller, (1996:145) is that the 'one-caring' concept cements the cultural role of the female in life as giving all while receiving little in return. In today's ever changing society the traditional male role is also ever evolving and I would argue that men are now more adaptable to embodying an ethic of care. Contemporary society is largely in agreement about what are considered typically feminine and masculine characteristics. These stereotypes provide collective, organised and dichotomous "meanings of gender and often become widely shared beliefs about who woman and men innately are" (Courtenay, 2000:1387). I would agree with Courtenay (2000) who states that men and boys experience greater social pressure than girls to endorse gendered societal expectations such as the "strongly endorsed beliefs that men are independent, self-reliant, strong, robust and tough" (William and Best, 1990; Golombok and Fivush, 1994; Martin, 1995), cited by Courtenay (2000:1387).

### **2.5.3 Emotion, Feeling and Vulnerability**

Concern for rational and professional functioning has contributed to keeping emotion out of education. The notion is that real professionals do not allow themselves to show emotion within their profession thus, maintaining control over your emotions. Noddings (1996) states that in the teaching profession, the concern can take these forms;

- Fear that professional judgement will be impaired by emotions
- Professionals must learn to protect themselves against the burnout that may result from feeling too much for one's students
- It has become a mark of professionalism to be detached, cool and dispassionate

Jennifer Nias in her 1996 article, *Thinking about Feeling: the emotions in teaching*, describes teaching as an occupation, "as highly charged with feeling, aroused and directed towards not just people but also values and ideas" (1996:293). This I feel, can lead on to being a teacher and how this affectivity influences and/or impacts on his/her teaching as a result of their displaying emotion and care. Nias (1996) has indicated that affectivity is of fundamental importance in teaching and identified that there are three main points' in this model, passion, cognition and feelings.

Teachers are expected to display a high level of passion for their learners, the classroom, the subjects they teach and the interactions between the teachers, the learners and their families and/or carers. This is a living reality for teachers "radically affecting their professional efficacy and the development and exercise of the 'competences' by which this is increasingly judged" (Nias, 1996:294). The second point of cognition assumes that one should be acting out of a process of knowing or a perception of a product of my knowing. A teacher does not automatically process an internalised emotional, feeling and caring button, to switch on and off as they please. According to Nias (1996) one cannot separate feeling from perception and affectivity from judgement. Following on from this one cannot help teachers develop their classroom and management skills "without also addressing their emotional reactions and responses and the attitudes, values and beliefs which underpin these"

(Nias, 1996:324). The third point is that neither cognition nor feeling from can be separated from your cultural and social drivers which shaped us and our learners. Consequently, most learners returning to the FET sectors sense of self will be influenced through their personal historical, social and cultural roots and contexts. “These perspectives are shaped by early influences, as well as subsequent professional education and experience” (1996:324). Therefore, the emotional reactions of teachers to their work are shaped by and connected to the view they have of themselves and others. These emotions are not considered new by Nias as

Behind the ordered control and professional calm of all the teachers whose voices are reported here bubble deep, potentially explosive passions, emotions bringing despair, elation, anger and joy of a kind not normally associated in the public mind with work” (Nias, 1996: 328)

Nias also asks “why do teachers have such a deeply emotional relationship with their work?” (1996:327). She goes onto state that,

“Teaching is a job which involves interaction with people and inevitably has an emotional dimension. Teachers, bring their feelings into school or college with them and have to learn to take this into account in their dealings with others. The work of teachers is unique, in that it involves intensive personal interactions... (1996:32).

The idea that we suppress certain memories, feelings, events and thoughts to protect ourselves is discussed by Hunt and West (2006). They explore and examine the concept of engaging with our thoughts and feelings, particularly those which are “hidden from the conscious mind” (2006:13). The notion that we as teachers can have a “desire and a resistance to different relationships and objects” (2006:162) or displaying emotion, can be from an anxiety buried in our unconscious. This nervousness can be linked to “exposing the self to risk” (Klein, 1998) and linked to male educators displaying emotion and/or care, which can lead to a feeling of vulnerability. I believe some male teachers’ have a fear of these ideas and resist engaging their feminine self and using care in order to ensure they never expose

themselves to risk and/or vulnerability. Nonetheless, Mc Cormack (2009) talks about showing vulnerability and whether to hide or defend it however, more importantly to “embody the process of anxiety... in an educative process... a doorway to growth rather than a closed and sealed off experience” (2009:23).

## **2.6 Teaching and Care**

Being a male adult educator for me is a deeply caring and emotional vocation due to the fact I am dealing with ‘people’ some of whom, have emotional scars. I am involved with personal interactions, some of an intense nature on a daily basis. To embody my ethic of care I look to use some of Noddings (2003) notions on educating through care. Noddings (2003:6) states that educational institutes place too much emphasis on academic achievement and that they acknowledge very little regard for theories of education through caring. I have discussed at length the use of Noddings’ concepts of educating using care and I will incorporate other theorists into the discussion now, so as to create a better picture. Noddings’ (2003) also states the view she is trying to present would “be badly distorted if it were presented...in the language of the father” (Noddings, 2003:2). Again I would have to critique this point as the language I use while teaching is of a caring dialogue and several of my fellow male teachers would embody a similar caring linguistic approach.

Lynch (2009) states “the amount of care capital available impacts on people’s ability not only to relate to others at an intimate level, but also to flourish and contribute in other spheres of life” (2009:2), such as education. Therefore, in my view, when adults return to education, displaying care can be of benefit to them and help them to develop affective and supportive relations. When they witness a male teacher embracing these concepts, it can have a positive ripple down effect, as I have witnessed. Human beings are also social animals and thus require caring interaction to develop. Gilligan (1993) states in her book, *In a different voice: psychological theory and women's development*, that the reason love and care matter is because we are relational beings, emotional as well as intellectual and social as well as individual. When this caring interaction is positive then the development takes a recognised course and we develop as we are meant to. When this interaction is uncaring and negative, particularly when the negative interaction is

implemented within a relationship of trust, (and for the purpose of this thesis the other in the relationship is a teacher or educator), it can have lifelong implications.

The focus on education for competitive advantage has led to a growing lack of attention to the need for care within the educational process as a value. Feely (2007:2) discusses how we are now defining the purpose of education in terms of personalised human capital and/or “making oneself skilled for the economy” (2007:2). Lynch (2007) also discusses the issues raised by care ethicists about the importance of “marrying an ethic of care to an ethic of justice when analysing equality in education” (2007:3). Consequently, we need to redefine the idea of care so it has equal value with education. Hayes (2007) identifies the “strong association between the concept of care and that of mothering as opposed to the notion that care is educational” (2007:6). From my personal perspective I believe care and education should be intertwined.

While these theories and theorists have many positive concepts intertwined within them, there are also some issues, I would argue. Using a caring model within ones teaching practice as a man, I feel, can open one up to certain issues surrounding friendships in the relationship and how the learner may view this. Notions which may incorporate certain issues around transference, patriarchy, father figure scenarios and learners not recognising when male tutors are ‘just using care’, can easily arise. Incorporating these methods within my own practice has caused my masculinity to be questioned and/or challenged by not only male learners however, by some female students also.

## **2.7 Gender Bias in Adult Education**

King (2002), states that the negative school experiences some men may have encountered, results in high levels of anxiety and embarrassment in relation to their returning to adult learning programmes. When confronted with the ‘critical gaze’ of their peers, men express levels of fear in relation to how they might be perceived by other learners, and by other males in particular. Those men who fall short of the image of socially constructed hegemonic masculinity which decrees that ‘real men’ should be heterosexual, economically successful, physically strong and

accomplished breadwinners are open to denigration and ridicule by their male peers (Connell, 2005; Hanlon, 2009).

Other barriers identified are related to class, peer norms and the concept of masculinity based on 'earning rather than learning'. Owens (2006) identifies 'this macho thing' and homophobia as commonly cited barriers to participation within further educational programmes (2006:24). Men feared that joining with other men, in adult learning groups, could be construed by peers as an indicator of homosexuality and this in turn could lead to public taunts, 'slagging', humiliation and even violence (2006:24). In the adult education sector, male participation is particularly low. Adult education is non-compulsory education that adults choose for themselves, sometimes leading to an award and sometimes for interest only. In adult education centres throughout Ireland, it is the norm to have nine or ten female learners for every man (Irish Times, 2015). Another study carried out by Aontas (Hulgraine, 2015) indicates that men do not come to adult education due to 'fear, anxiety and embarrassment' and men also stated they are less comfortable engaging in questioning for fear of ridicule. King (2004), states that older men from socio-economically disadvantaged areas are less likely to be involved in adult education as a whole. Adults also stated (NALA, 2010), that some men do not return to adult education due to their negative experiences of formal education and this has instilled a sense of failure, disappointment and shame.

Hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995, 2005) is playing a role in men not returning to adult education also. Constructed societal notions of how men and women should behave are also impacting on course choices. Negative formal school experiences also impacts on a man's decision to return or not to return to adult education (King, 2002). These barriers remain very relevant in today's society and are a backdrop for men's behaviours when returning to adult education. These constructions of masculine practices raise particular barriers for men to the effective and appropriate use of adult, further and community education. They will also impact on a man's decision to embrace his feminine side and use care within his teaching practice as it remains 'safe' and 'comfortable' to remain within the masculine realm.



## **2.8 Conclusion**

This literature review has discussed the theory and theorists which influenced the literature I engaged with. The knowledge created in using this literature within the research can help us to explore, what impact if any, care has on men in their teaching practices within adult education. I have also discussed my personal interpretations of the theories and some issues which I have experienced, my research participants have experienced or we have witnessed.

In the following chapter, the methodological approach of this research is discussed and the methods used are introduced.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The aim of this chapter is to provide an insight into the methods and methodology utilised within this study. Within academia, a researcher will have to encounter and choose between an array of research options and methods. I acknowledge at this point that there are numerous approaches that may guide research therefore; I will now endeavour to provide an explanation, justification and the rationale for the qualitative research approaches, I have chosen to use. Within this framework I have used a social constructionism approach. The theoretical foundations and theorists connected to these approaches will also be introduced and discussed within this chapter.

I also acknowledge that I am a large part of this research process and that my own worldview and experiences have played a central part in the inception, approach and design of this research project. With this in place I will discuss the methods of research and my methodology used in this research. I will also consider the process of the research, ethic considerations and the challenges I encountered on the way. Consequently, keeping within a constructionism approach, I will construct my description of my methodological approaches from the beginning and the 'ground up'. I will start with some personal background, an analogy, some insights into my reasons for choosing this research and the participants' as well as an explanation of the qualitative approaches within the research of 'the impact, if any, does care have on men in their teaching practices within adult education'.

#### **3.2 Background**

I have had a passion for learning from a very young age to the present day. While growing up within my household, learning was encouraged however school was only necessary to help you get a job. The pinnacle of my societal expectations was gaining an apprenticeship and if you achieved the impossible and got one, you had made it. Making money became a priority when I was growing up in a large working class family. My father worked as a postman and my mother worked as a housewife

(unpaid and unrecognised as work by most at that time). A job was my ticket out of school and when I got the chance of a job, I left school on a whim.

It is only upon my return to education that I have felt the full impact of 'my personal lack of schooling' and the journey, although enormously enjoyable thus far, has been inherently imbued with self-doubt about my 'right' to be here. Despite my academic achievements, it is really difficult to shake off the societal expectations of my upbringing which through my experiences have helped me shape how I question and view my world. The lack of care in my education as a child and as an adolescent, coupled with an abundance of care in my education as an adult, particularly from men, are chief motivating factors for my conducting this research. The research has highlighted and interpreted my personal experiences and five other male educators' experiences and perspectives of using care in Further Education. I believe the best way to present these findings is through the lens of social constructionism and semi-structured interviews. I will also discuss the importance of reflexivity using my personal lens to enhance the research.

### **3.3 An Analogy**

I have included an analogy to help understand where my own ideas on research were rooted and how through experimental learning they have evolved. The importance of reflection and learning from experience was vital for me in helping to construct my methodologies and methods.

When I was fourteen I left secondary school to pursue my dream of becoming a qualified painter and decorator. I was apparently a handy goalkeeper and a local contractor told me if I signed for a team he managed, he would give me an apprenticeship. On my first day in work I realised that to decorate you had to follow certain rules and methods which were given to me by a seasoned tradesman. After a period of time I became aware that some of these methods were very rigid and there were better ways to decorate. However, I also became aware that there was no room to question, query or critique and that they were very stuck in a 'positivist' mode of thought. After six months I moved on as I became aware of what I now know to be the Freirian (1972) notion of conscientization and I decided to liberate myself so I was free to express myself. I got a second apprenticeship where it was encouraged to incorporate new methods, paradigms and notions of decorating while upholding the ethos and ethics of always completing a great job and maintaining the respect and

dignity of the client. This in turn led to the building of empathy, trust and the continuation of a relationship built on this honesty and this method of engagement opened me up to a more 'post-positivists' approach. When I became a researcher I was able to link these old ideas of mine and incorporate them into my methodology of research. My first experiences from the beginning of my decorating career and my own culturally built notions on research were very much of a positivist's nature. However, as in my painting career, when I started to research, I soon became aware that these ideas were not compatible with me as they remained too 'rigid' or 'fixed' in their ideas and methods.

### **3.4 Reasons for Research**

I returned to education in 2009 after an accident in 2007 rendered me 'disabled' and unable to decorate anymore. I experienced first-hand how education completely transformed my life and how through a caring approach I was nurtured back to health and integrated back into education where care played a vital role. I believe my worldview and personal experiences are a vital piece of the research. This was the motivation to research the experiences of other educators who are also male and use care in their Further Education practices, why they became further education teachers and who may have inspired them.

To stand up, even in today's modern world, and state, as a man "I am a feminist", can leave one in an arena of vulnerability. However, with this new found voice McCormack (2009) suggests I should use it as a "doorway to growth rather than a closed and sealed off experience" (2009:23). This idea has lead me to embrace my beliefs rather than hide them as I believe the world should be a more egalitarian society, with social justice and equal rights for all, bar none. My personal epistemological stance stems from my 'biography, life history, cultural and societal upbringing, consequently, my own interpretations are subjectively shaped through this' (Creswell, 2007:21). I witnessed huge social unjust and class divide and decided at an early age it was wrong and I would not be a part of it. Incorporated within this was, in my experience, an encounter with a dysfunctional educational system that was cultivated by a complete lack of care and/or respect for human beings.

Therefore, my ontological perspective is grounded in the belief that there is not one truth but many truths. A researcher can then discover that other peoples' truths

can be learned shared and experienced through an outpouring of discourse based on their lived experiences within their social worlds. Through my epistemological stance, I recognise that how I conduct my research, the questions I ask and how I interpret events are greatly influenced by my own knowledge and history. I am a part of the research process and I bring my own meaning, expression and experiences to that process.

Henceforth, after investigating the expansive literature surrounding research methods, I have concluded that in order to select an appropriate methodology, it must tie into my own epistemology, my way of knowing, moreover, it has also to be congruent with my ontology, which is my way of being in the world. Consequently, through my own ontological and epistemological standing, I believe in connecting with people through hearing, interpreting and valuing their lived experiences. Through my own formal education I received an education void of care, it was based on fear, abuse and a motivation to leave, however; upon returning to education as an adult, my experience has been the total opposite. I have received an array of different educational methods and most have been delivered with a caring aspect or incorporated a caring aspect. It therefore, inspired me to become an adult teacher in order to try help returning adults in their quest for transformation and emancipation. This also inspired me to now use care within my environment as a teaching method. This way of being and through my new experiences of education, I created a new way of knowing around education. This has heavily influenced my reasons for conducting this research as I am very interested in hearing about other male teachers' experiences of the impact if any, on them while using care within their adult learning environment. I also at this point acknowledge therefore, that the data being produced by this researcher was as Creswell (2007) stated, 'being filtered through a personal lens', "the personal-self becomes the researcher-self. It ... represents honesty and openness to research, acknowledging that all inquiry is laden with values" (Creswell, 2007:182).

### **3.5 Social Constructionism**

The above quote always remained foremost in my thoughts so my research could be carried out through a holistic lens. This ensured the purpose; methods and questions

where connected and related to form a unified 'picture' as opposed to a disjointed and incoherent view of the research. With this in mind I have used what Morse & Richards (2002) termed 'methodological congruence' (Creswell, 2007:42) and incorporated social constructionism.

Social constructionism is another worldview which is often combined with interpretivism and I believe it was a perfect fit for my research. In this worldview according to Creswell (2007)

Individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. They develop subjective meanings of their experiences...often these meanings are negotiated socially and historically. In other words, they are not simply imprinted on individuals but formed through interaction with others (hence social constructionism) and through historical and cultural norms that operate in individuals' lives. (Creswell, 2007:21)

The practicality of my using very broad and open ended questions is thus justified within this method so that my research participants could construct their own meaning of the phenomena been investigated. This allows me as the researcher to listen carefully to what my participants "say and do in their life settings" (Creswell, 2007:21). I also recognised my own background will shape the interpretations through my historical, cultural and personal experiences. Consequently, I have made interpretations of what I found, which will be (to some degree) shaped by my own experiences and background. Therefore, the researcher's intent is to "make sense, or interpret the meanings others have of their world" (Creswell, 2007:21). The social constructionism worldview can then manifest within phenomenological studies (2007:21). In order for me to remain true to my research question of looking at 'the impact if any, on men using care within their teaching practices in adult education', I collected my data from the lived experiences of my research participants This tied in with the earlier stated concept that the researcher is producing the data rather than discovering the data. It is also imperative to acknowledge that the researcher is interpreting the data.

Social constructionism considers the world outside of the physical text itself therefore, I was mindful of what Charmaz (2006) termed as "not imposing the researchers own concepts, concerns and discourses upon the research participants'

reality” (Charmaz, 2006:33). Consequently, the intent of the author of the document is important as is being aware of the context in which a document is produced;

“...then content of a document is never fixed or static, not least because documents have always to be read, and reading implies that the content of a document will be situated rather than fixed” (Prior, 2003:4).

### **3.6 Qualitative Research**

Qualitative research involves a degree of human participatory interaction, which takes place within the participants’ “natural settings” (Creswell, 2007:38). It also involves the sharing of knowledge and experience in reference to a phenomena being constructed or it looks at how people make sense of what happens, what the meaning of that happening is. It can be a difficult process to try and measure social relations, actions, feelings, emotions, how people live, how they view their world, cope with it and change it. When I am looking to understand a particular social interaction, I also must understand the wider context in which the experience occurs. Therefore, context is very important in qualitative research. It is also important as a researcher to contextualise my own self to understand the reasons for my choosing this topic to research. As Creswell (2007) states “the personal-self becomes the researcher-self, it...represents honesty and openness to research, acknowledging that all inquiry is laden with values” (2007:182).

Therefore, in the context of this research I used semi-structured interviews to record and gather data from my research participant’s narratives, reporting individual experiences and ordering the meaning of those experiences through thematic coding. To hone my skills as an interviewer, I conducted a pilot interview or what DeWalt and DeWalt (2002) term ‘informal’ interviews “with little structure” (2002:121). During this pilot interview I just asked lots of questions and jotted down some notes, some of these questions asked, included;

- I just wanted to start off with asking you about care?
- What it means to you and how do you define care?
- Also do you or do you not use care in your teaching?

- Have you witnessed care and education in your setting?

I also stated “And again it’s okay not to use care, like I’m not judging anyone or anything; I am just interested in your own story”. I utilised this method to create an ease and set a non-judgemental tone within the setting. This went very well and helped construct the remaining five interviews of which four were recorded and one was completed via email. Using Schutt’s (2008) concept of ‘purposeful sampling’, whereby I intentionally chose research participants’ to suit my research, I set about finding my cohort of male participants’ willing to share their experiences of using care in their educational settings.

I interviewed five male adult educators around their perspectives of, ‘the impact if any, does care have on men with their teaching practices, through their own personal lived and told stories. The interviews took place in ‘natural settings’ chosen by my participants’ and I attempted to “make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Creswell, 2007:36). The enquiry did as Creswell (2007) stated, also situate the study within the political, social and cultural context of the participants. The semi-structured interviews with my participants’ were used to develop a shared-understanding and analyses of the phenomena in an attempt to gain an “understanding of how the interviewee experiences aspects of his/her own life, and/or the world of objects and other people” (Ryan, 2004:76). This was achieved through actively engaging with the interviewees’ and Ryan states this is “constructed as an interpersonal situation” (2004:77). Consequently, my characteristics, sensitivity and other qualities needed to be bracketed so as not to affect what was said.

A recording device was used to ensure I saved and was able to document the data. I used ‘open-ended’ questions to allow the participants’ an opportunity to speak openly and at length. From the beginning I used questions that were non-invasive and had familiarity to my interviewee’s in order to provide a space and allow for the participants’ to construct and present their life stories and experiences around the phenomena of being a male teacher using care in Further Education. The design and conduct of these interviews was framed so as to ensure a respectful, reciprocal, democratic and empowering dialogue (Byrne and Lentin, 2000). This helped to



design a research process to eliminate what Kvale (2006) identifies as the inequality at the heart of interviewing.

The data which was recorded, I then transcribed into text within a document. This enabled me to read and re-read the transcripts several times in order to code the data and do justice to the emerging themes. Therefore, with all these notions in place and after using the Freirian (1972) concept of 'creating a dialogue between equals', I set about interpreting the data. This process began with my research participants' naming their own worlds after reading their transcribed interviews and I began the "initial coding" (Charmaz, 2006:42) of the data. Charmaz (2006) discusses three stages of coding your data, initial coding, focused coding and theoretical coding and these were used in the coding of my data. This is not a linear process and it allows the data to be interpreted through studying the "fragments' of data, words, lines, segments and incidents" (Charmaz, 2006:42) and thus, the 'real story' starts to emerge. During this stage of the process the researcher needs to acknowledge their own preconceived ideas of the research to "reduce the likelihood that researchers merely superimpose their preconceived notions on the data" (2006:52). The importance of reflexivity is highlighted here as the researcher needs to be mindful of not taking things at 'face value'. The validity of arguments', findings and ideas must be earned and not just accepted because of reputation therefore, it is up to me as the researcher to the evaluate the evidence for and against these arguments, ideas and findings. Engaging in reflexivity as a researcher allows you to acknowledge and recognise that you are an inescapable part of the social world you are researching.

"Researchers are in the world and of the world...Reflexivity suggests that researchers should acknowledge and disclose their own selves in the research; they should hold themselves up to the light..." (Cohen et al, 2003:141).

Approaches and thinking are entwined within the life experiences and values of the researcher and these can influence the design and conduct of the research. However, I am an advocate for social justice as well as an egalitarian and the study was undertaken from these perspectives. These approaches ensured I sought an understanding rather than an explanation, I acknowledged the situated location of interpretation, I remained aware of the role of language and history in this

interpretation and I was comfortable with ambiguity as I view inquiry as a conversation.

I then presented the initial findings from the data gathered to the research participants' in order to accurately verify my findings. I have transcribed each interview and returned a copy of their personal transcription to each participant to ensure they can re-examine the interview before making a decision on the content and the meaning making of their world. Participants' were constantly made aware that they can omit part of or the entire transcript and/or withdraw themselves and/or full or part of their narratives from the study at any time up until the final draft was written on May the eleventh. Practising this clarity and honesty indicates a level of reflexivity is incorporated within the process and this reflexivity also considers inequalities of power in the research relationship. I continually sought to introduce processes and approaches which minimise such inequalities. The privacy and anonymity of the research participants' was/is paramount in this research, alongside the security of all data gathered which is password protected on my laptop. All research participants' were assigned a pseudonym and all data is stored under secure conditions. Therefore the rationale for choosing a qualitative research approach in this case can be justified, as using this method has helped explore individuals lived experiences. In my view, qualitative research also provides a more holistic and person-centred approach to research. I also at this point acknowledge therefore, that the data being produced by this researcher was as Creswell (2007) stated, 'being filtered through a personal lens', "the personal-self becomes the researcher-self. It ... represents honesty and openness to research, acknowledging that all inquiry is laden with values" (Creswell, 2007:182).

Following on from my earlier analogy, I knew that one method would not 'fit' all and as a researcher, I needed to be adaptable in my research methods. This enabled me to influence my decision to use a qualitative (Creswell, 2007) method of research based on my own ontological and epistemological standing. I therefore used a social constructionism approach and semi-structured interviews to seek an understanding of the research participants' worldview around the phenomena of using care within further education by male teachers through their lens and their narratives. I have also incorporated my personal narrative and story as I believe

human beings are “storying creatures” (Sikes & Gale, 2006:1) who make sense of their world and the events in it by constructing narratives from their experiences to explain and interpret happenings to both ourselves and other people. The structures and language we use in constructing these stories or our experiences and perceptions, are in themselves, windows of significance as they provide vital information “about our social and cultural positioning” (Sikes & Gale, 2006:1). These methods all suited my research as people develop subjective meanings of their experiences, meanings which are then directed towards certain things or objects. I used a method known as semi-structured interviews in order to obtain a richness of data. Creswell (2007) tells us that often these “subjective meanings are negotiated socially and historically” (2007:21) and engaging in semi-structured interviews has allowed these experiences and meanings to be justifiably interpreted.

### **3.7 Reflexivity**

Before embarking on my career as an adult education teacher, reflection was to me what I saw while shaving at a mirror. As time has progressed, I have learned the absolute importance of reflection in all I do. Whenever I reflect on things Socrates springs to mind and I think of his idea of the unexamined life. His notion of humans looking within themselves for the real value of life to seek happiness, self-fulfilment and achieve goals, while not hurting self or others, ties in well with my own thinking. I use this idea of self-reflection and how professional reflection is very much incorporated and to the fore front of my practice. In all we do, reflection and examination is a worthwhile exercise to see where we are at and where we need to go. The teacher, tutor or facilitator must now become a reflective professional and I believe this is an imperative practice within my teaching as reflection will and can have an impact on my philosophy of education, teaching style, values and attitudes, albeit in a positive or negative manner.

The shift in my ability to reflect, self-reflect, critique, question and enquire has been one of the most outstanding achievements by me, while conducting this research project. It is also, I believe a vital piece of learning for all who are on their own journey within research. My tendency to view my world through, ‘rose tinted glasses’ with positive regard, has been slightly altered to incorporate a reflective

view of the world which enables me to engage in critique. From here this research project has been a wonderful experience and full of learning, albeit, even when at times it was proving ambiguous to find the learning. However, having come through the other side of the project, I can look back, reflect upon and acknowledge how much I actually have learned and how that has transformed me as a person and a researcher. Even at times when my research appeared to be going nowhere, the teaching I have received enabled me to acknowledge this and alter course. Thus, helping me understand the importance of using qualitative research methods and therefore, having the confidence in my own methods, to continue.

My personal narrative fits into the social constructionism approach which will incorporate my own life history. Consequently, this has required significant efforts on my part to keep my own “habitual, taken-for-granted attitudes and understandings bracketed” (Finlay, 2013:122). However, it allowed for the removal of certain barriers and the building of rapport and empathy while conducting semi-structured interviews in the context of my study. Consequently, this ensured the elimination of other problems arising within the context of the interviews such as, will men talk openly and honestly to another man around such non-manly topics? Or will they revert to their historical and cultural constructed notions of masculinity. I also know each participant personally and this also had the possibility to impact on their decision to participate and the narratives they told. One of my research participants found it very hard to conduct a recorded or orally transmitted interview however even after I had said it would be okay to pull out of the process, he insisted on answering my questions via an email. After some inquiring and research myself, I decided to include this interview. It introduced a new method of inquiry to me known as Computer Assisted Self-Interviewing (Lavrakas, 2008) whereby the respondent uses a computer to answer the interview questions.

### **3.8 Ethical Statement**

Semi-structured interviews were conducted within my research hence; my responsibility is to the individual participants and the families they live with. Maintaining ethical considerations relating to the research and constantly searching for ways of carrying out research the 'right' way are at the core of this study. Developing, a research practice and process which seeks to do no harm to research

participants and the researcher, is in my view the goal of ethical research. When considering the 'principle of informed consent', Halvorson (2005) recommends that, there should be no coercion, participation is to be voluntary and it is based on full and open information. Therefore, this research and study has endeavoured to design consent procedures that are explicit, unambiguous and accessible to all research participants.

Maynooth University has a range of ethical guidelines and consent forms which can be followed and they will ensure ethical procedure is observed. However, I believe wise ethical research requires on-going critical reflexivity and constant attention to the purpose and process of inquiry. This can expose people's vulnerabilities and requires sensitivity, attention and empathy while ensuring I maintain a deep commitment to practices which place ethical obligations to participants above the goal of data collection. A list of useful supports (included within the appendix) and their contacts will be available to my research participants should they need additional support or counselling as a consequence of participation.

As expected and in addition to all the above, the ethical guidelines laid down by Maynooth University will be strictly adhered to.

### **3.8.1 Informed Consent**

I choose to interview a particular population of male teacher as I had a small insight into their educational journeys and their 'stories' fitted within the context of my research. However, this did not lead me on a road to complacency when it came to informing them of my research and their consent to allow full participation of their 'story'. I met and spoke with each one on an individual basis whereby each one was informed of the nature and the purpose of my research. I felt this was an ethical necessity on my part and I informed my participants of their right to withdraw at any time just 'before going to press'. We all agreed that I would send each individual a copy of their own transcript to allow them to confirm what was said and gain their consensual participation. We also agreed to protect their identities and that the research participants' real names would not be used or any material which could identify them.

### **3.8.2 Trust and Privacy**

The issue which arose here was in relation to the material recorded. Each of my participants knew one or more of the other participants and there was some concern about my sharing the material. I made a point of reassuring each participant of my adherence to privacy and the non-reference to interviews or the sharing of information with each other. We all agreed to this non-discussion clause and I guaranteed them I would never discuss their interviews with anyone however; I could not guarantee they would not discuss the research among themselves.

### **3.8.3 Power**

There are always issues of power regarding the relationship between a researcher and the research participants. These can arise from the interview settings, questions presented, a lack of understanding of the research by the participants and feelings of an obligation to divulge information. After fully informing each participant on the nature, purpose and methods of the research, I feel confident that each participant who participated on this research project was fully informed and freely agreed to the interview process. My research participants and I either studied together and/or worked together as colleagues therefore, nullifying any notions of a dominant power within the interview process.

### **3.8.4 Limitations of the Study**

Time constraints prevented me from interviewing a much broader cohort of male educators. This may or may not have brought about different themes, findings, analyses and discussions. These same time constraints will have also affected the coding and ordering of the data, therefore, with more time, a much richer thesis may have been produced.

## **3.9 Conclusion**

Approaching any research study is a daunting, challenging, frustrating, life-changing, yet immensely satisfying and rewarding process. This methodology section has shown how the incorporation of my ontological and epistemological standpoints, coupled with the exciting methods incorporated and the ethical stance taken,

enabled me to produce this chapter and reflect on those challenges as they presented.

The emerging themes resulting from the transcribing and coding of the data will be presented in the next chapter, Chapter Four Findings

## **Chapter Four**

### **Findings**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This research investigated what impact, if any, does care have on men in their teaching practices within adult education as its primary focus. The motivation behind this enquiry was to examine whether using care in adult teaching practices may impact on socially constructed or embedded, notions of masculinity, and if so, what values and views do male teachers assign to the issue of care? The process of documenting the findings had endeavoured to highlight the shifts in using care through the lens of the research participants. This findings chapter is presented through the participants' voices and my interpretations of events during the interviewing process of the research.

This section of the findings chapter will present the findings from the recorded interviews I had with the research participants connected to the questionnaire. Using thematic coding, I will present my findings under particular headings, while using quotes from the transcribed interviews to illustrate the meanings of the headings and thus, giving a voice to my research participants. The questionnaire was loosely used as a guide to invoke conversations around my research participants' perspectives on using care in their Adult Education settings. During this process several themes emerged around care, masculinity, self-care and care within your practice, if there were any significant moments and/or influences on their personal journeys and why the participants chose teaching as a career.

#### **4.2 Setting the Scene**

I will give a brief introduction to each of my research participants in this section and introduce their names that will be used for the purposes of this research. A short biography of each person and a snippet of their work setting will also be discussed without revealing any identifying characteristics. I prepared a brief outline of my research and suggested a sample of questions to try and invoke conversation during the interviewing process. This allowed the participants to think about their experiences of the phenomena and how their experiences shaped their understandings of the impact, if any, on them while using care as a method within



their own practices and using care. This allowed for the interviews to develop and flow into a more coherent piece of research.

### **Interview One:**

This interview took place in Simon's workplace as it was the most suitable arrangement for him. It is a QQI level 4/5 further education and training centre for learners with disabilities, both physical and intellectual. I have known Simon for two years and asked to speak with him as I am a little familiar with his life history. Although he completed both secondary level schooling and third level in succession, he became a computer programmer straight after school. However, Simon always wanted to teach and fifteen years ago went back to college and did his masters. After completing this he worked as an English language teacher, in a primary school and then in a secondary school, before embarking on a career as an adult educator. Simon revealed he has never being happier and believes he has found his niche.

### **Interview Two:**

Matthew works part-time in an Education Training Board centre not too far from my home therefore; it was more convenient for us both to hold the interview in my sitting room. I have known Matthew for years and he is well known to my family too hence the space created no uneven power relations. I chose to speak with Matthew as he has a similar history to me in both his schooling and work biography. We both left education as young men before completing secondary school and we both worked in construction. However, Matthew returned to adult education and has continued on to complete his HDip in teaching. He attributes his return to education as a fallout from the economic collapse yet reveals in his interview that a fear of old age and his inability to continue in construction due to age, also impacted on his decision to return.

### **Interview Three:**

This interview took place in a quiet café in a little country village in County Kildare. The purpose for this was that Mark lives and works a fair distance from me and this café was half way from his work, his home and my home. We met five years ago when we both started a third level degree course. During the first year of university

Mark changed his course to incorporate teaching however, we remained in touch and became close friends. Discovering a small piece of Marks personal narrative allowed me an insight into why he decided to enter adult educating as a career. Mark was a high achiever in secondary school however after completing his leaving certificate he left education to 'earn some money'. He tried many jobs and ended up driving a truck for many years. After the economic crash which resulted in some personal issues, Mark returned to complete an access course and then moved on to complete a degree.

#### **Interview Four:**

Luke is by far the youngest of my research participants. I met Luke in university and this is where the interview took place. All my other research participants were either married with children or had been married and now separated with children. However, Luke was a young gay man and continued into university to complete his HDip in adult education and only ever wanted to teach in a Youthreach centre. We stayed in touch after college and I felt Luke's perspective on my research would enhance the data.

#### **Interview Five:**

I have worked alongside Peter in a work setting as an adult education teacher for a number of years. Peter left school and trained as a chef and with this qualification Peter travelled and worked around the world. He decided to work in an adult education centre as he seen the effect education had on him and wanted to help others to help themselves. This interview never got going and it was not recorded and transcribed as Peter answered my questions via email. We had set up several appointments and each time some form of obstacle prevented the two of us from getting together to chat. After several cancellations I suggested it was okay for us to accept defeat and not to try and persevere with the interview. I felt a lot of the 'obstacles' were a resistance on Peter's part and I did not want to be 'pushy'. I suggested we leave the interview for this paper and maybe look again to interview for another paper. However, I received an email from Peter with the questions we had discussed answered in an attached word document. I was unsure as to the validity of this however as mentioned in my methodology section I was able to source previous

research into this type of 'interview' and was delighted to use Peter's insightful comments.

Although this is the chapter dedicated to my findings, I felt it was important for my research participants to be introduced and contextualised in relation to the study. I will start with the first question that I asked all my research participants and that was, 'I just wanted to ask you about care, such as what it means to you and how you would define care'.

### **4.3 Findings**

#### **Care, what does it mean to you?**

Care is a word which can have many explanations and invoke much debate as to what care actually is. Within the context of this thesis, I have outlined my understandings on care and I openly discussed this with the interviewees' before commencing the interviews. Care, can also be an uncomfortable word when mentioned in the company of men. This uncomfortable-ness emerged within the context of my interviews as did four distinct views on care. The views which emerged were care as a continuum, care of a student within your teaching and learning environment, self-care and personal care for their learners.

#### **Care as a Continuum**

All of my interviewees' highlighted that care is not an instant thing rather it is ongoing. Peter equates care as not been a random thing, more a continuum and believes that it must be enacted as a continuum as opposed to a spontaneous act. When students re-enter education as an adult they can carry memories of past experiences and need care to flourish.

Peter

My experience is that care is not just one act, its on-going and you must look and listen if you are to do it effectively. Care to me is defined by preparation, understanding, making change a comfortable and fun experience. Making a connection on some wave length and using that trust as a base to proceed with planning or action.

Matthew also spoke of the ambiguity surrounding the meaning of care

'Care' (puzzled look on face), well it depends on what you actually mean, it's something I didn't really think about before, but ya I do care for my students if that's what you mean. I like to see people do well in life and it cannot happen overnight, get themselves out of the shit, you know the way this country has gone. I think that if I want to do my job and do it well, you kind of have to care I suppose.

The findings also uncovered care to be vital within the classroom and my interviewees' felt it must be unconditional. Although the curriculum is important, the interests of the student are primary and relatedness ensures the student that the teacher acts from the basis of, 'you, the learner are the most important and matter more than the curriculum'.

Luke

I do use care in my teaching. The reason I use care is because I do care about all the learners in my centre and I want the best for them. The other reason why I care is because the learners who come to Youthreach where I teach, have not felt someone care about them before, and as teacher I want to them know that someone does care about them. By doing this it helps me as teacher build a relationship with my learners, get to know them, help them with the problems they are facing and lead them to a brighter future. If I don't show them that I really do care, then I don't have a relationship with them. What I mean is that without care there is no relationship between a student and a teacher. Care is vital in education

Peter also acknowledged the importance of care:

Yes, for sure, care in teaching is fundamental both at the beginning as you get the person to understand the methods used and the advice and support that follows throughout so as confidence is gained and learning is shown. Care and education in my everyday work is evident.

The importance of care within their everyday work was very evident in these interviews however, they also stated, that we must always be mindful of how we act out this ethic of care because if we act primarily from a desire to accomplish something for another person, but fail to think carefully enough of that other person's needs, we would have failed to care. Simon came up with some interesting comments during this part of his interview. He states the importance of care within

your setting and the battle between himself, management and the funders to remain within his philosophy.

Simon

When a student enters the setting we work in they may be very low in self-confidence, self-esteem and self-preservation. Through using care and working on a one-to-one basis with that learner after a period of time that learner may lift their head and speak to someone and/or engage in a class activity. We cannot quantify that to SOLAS within a box ticking exercise therefore, it has no value.

I also found it interesting how Simon states

If you don't have it (care) then within his setting, you would have to fake it. However, we must always be aware of the place we are therefore, we are not trying to do everything for them, rescue them and fix their lives for them.

### **Personal Care**

Within some of the settings my interviewees' work, a student's personal care is on the curriculum. The learners are taught to care for themselves in terms of both a hygienic and independent living arena. This leaves the teachers in a sense of limbo through care as it becomes difficult to know when do they stop using care and allow a learner to fend for themselves. Mark noted that in his setting care is taking to mean personal care and how much assistance a person needs with their own personal care. However, Mark was quick to point out that in his setting he is shocked by some parts of the ethos in his job, whereby they are not to look on education as care, as care is someone else's job.

Mark

In my area of intellectual disability education it is assumed that we as staff do not "care" for students, this is done by care assistance, demarcation (with a grin). My job is to deliver modules not care. It's all about moving them on to employment or further education, but the empowering part of it all seems to be getting lost, still I'm a cynically bastard and that could be just me hahaha!!!!

Luke also stated that when he thinks of care, he thinks of how much care means to him and how it is about looking after yourself and those around you and teaching your learners' to learn to care for themselves. This process can be either empowering

or detrimental for a student as the interviewees' stated you have to know when you are not just doing it for them or ticking boxes for funders as according to

Matthew

I think I have a natural empathic streak; I like to help people but I'm not a pleaser I believe in helping people to help themselves. And I believe I can do that through education. I think what care means to me is don't leave people behind and do your best for them, and show them that you care and you're on their side. However, that's my idea but when it comes to the funders their perception is we must get results. So that's a different pressure, on the outcomes not the person, it's just get them through and I find it tough to be person-centred and results focused. Getting a person a distinction is not empowering them or showing them care or empathy to leave here in a better place, its box ticking.

### **Self-Care**

Self-care as a concept was also prominent within all of the interviews and the importance of it for your personal well-being. It emerged that "often within the realm of management and funding, that self-care was not valued", Simon stated. Matthew added that

Self-care is vital to your health and longevity in this job. We always put ourselves second and the students first yet if we cannot care for ourselves then how can we care for anyone.

Simon reiterated this and "felt it is imperative to mind yourself and watch your boundaries". Luke also stated "that you need to learn to care for yourself first before you start to care for others".

Reflecting on these themes that emerged here in this section of the findings chapter, the interviewees' feel we need to redefine the idea of care so that it has equal value with education. The cultural notions on care and the strong association between the concept of care and that of mothering as opposed to the notion that care is educational really need to be re-evaluated according to my research participants'. The importance of care and the passion to which it was discussed with me is evident within this section. Consequently, Luke stated,

Care is not just about the other however, it is very important to look at the self and care for the self and how important this concept can be.

### **The Dominant Discourse on Masculinity**

During the interviews several attempts were made to remind me that it is okay to care even if you're a man and to try to de-construct social notions of caring. Although Luke, as a gay man, would not fit the hegemonic notion of masculinity, he still wanted me to know that it was good to care as a man.

I feel men need to care for themselves more, men still associate care with women, and they feel the area of care is not associated towards them, as they are this macho man type. I feel more needs to be done to show men it is ok to care; you are still a man if you care. In fact care is so important for a healthy and happy life.

Mark witnesses non-teaching staff acting out of a caring realm yet cementing socially constructed notions on caring and perhaps dis-empowering a learner. In his setting the majority of teaching staff are male however, the support staff that work in his setting are mostly female and Mark stated:

I have witnessed staff caring for students, sometimes it maybe something necessary i.e. being reminded to wash hands but sometimes, no most times female staff can be overly motherly. This can be an issue when you are trying to teach a person to do something, another staff member could be completing this task for that student, thinking that they are helping that student. While in actual fact they are hindering the students learning experience and progression

Simon however, reminds me of the cultural notion of care and how he views society's understandings of care. During this part of the interview, we were nearing the end of his time allocated to me however, he continued to talk and stated,

When you say care, well that can mean any number of things and to say its women's stuff is a rather crude generalisation but as generalisations go, it has gathered some cultural capital recently also. When my wife seen the advertisement for this job I remember saying to her, sure that kind of a job a woman will get, yet I got it. I think to care you must have empathy and sensitivity and I think I have them, at least I was never told I didn't.

Some of the traits associated with femininity within care and education were also highlighted in the interviews. Traits such as empathy, emotion, vulnerability were

noted when Simon stated ...I think to care you must have empathy and sensitivity. A distinct showing of masculine traits such as chest in, deep voice and shoulders back were on display.

Matthew tells me that even as a man he cares for his students and it is okay

My idea of being a man has changed to suit the needs of my environment, and in this case it is a learning environment. Therefore, I believe that a real man adapts to his environment and uses all the tools that he can to do the best job, and in this instance it is making students feel that you are on their side, can empathise with them and you care about them.

Luke identifies a need to equate empathy and emotion with self-care into education

I do feel however, that you must learn to care for yourself first, before you start to care for others. I feel men need to care for themselves more, men still associate care with women, and they feel the area of care is not associated towards them, as they are this macho man type. I feel more needs to be done to show men it is ok to care; you are still a man if you care. In fact care is so important for a healthy and happy life.

Peter is keen to make me aware of the extreme adventures and sports he takes part in, yet he also states "care and education in my everyday work is evident, care is vital from the beginning". Perhaps to just remind me, that some men of today are okay with caring however, they still retain all their manly-ness. The importance of these caring traits being delivered by 'manly' men can have a ripple down effect on men returning to education whereby, they in turn, can embrace this process and allow it to organically become part of their culture and social construct.

### **Perceptions on Being a Man**

In constructing my findings from the recorded data, I decided to delve a little deeper when conducting the interviews as the idea of manly-ness had arisen on several occasions. Although this is highlighted throughout the chapter, I felt within the context of the discussions' that it was an important point to understand how my research participants perceived what it was to be a man in today's world. I mentioned that at times I found it difficult to cope with my embodiment of my emotions due to own cultural and historical biography. Nonetheless, even though it was a constant internal battle for me, I embraced my new found self.



Mark concurred with what I had said and discussed how societies idea of masculinity is changing however not at a pace he likes. As a single dad Mark states

“I am expected to be more caring and be more involved with my kids, yet the idea of a male breadwinner is the pre-dominant idea where I come from”

Peter also feels masculinity is changing however “it is only starting now for our generation”, he feels. His perception of the modern man is one who needs to be adoptable not rigid,

“...showing that strength comes in emotional and physical form and our ways of communication are different today, so my idea of a man today would be someone like Beckham”

Luke laughed and told me how he perceived what it is to be a man in today’s world “would certainly not wash within masculinity”. Someone like maybe “Sam Smith, you know the singer”. Matthew raised an interesting point in that he felt what he perceived himself to be would have to evolve, depending on what role he was playing. Working on a building site you could never show care for someone as it was perceived as a weakness. I now work in a learning environment and

“I have adapted my ideas of being a man to suit. I believe that a real man adapts to his environment and uses all the tools he can to do the best job. And in this instance it is making students feel that you are on their side and care about them”

That’s my idea of being a real man Matthew tells me, as he believes ideas of masculinity are too restrictive and set limits on someone’s learning, therefore, I am left with Matthew’s image of what a real man should look like, when he tells me it should be a mix between John Wayne, David Beckham and Mother Theresa.

## **Outcomes**

I also found within the interviews that a lot of the discourses focused on how education for competitive advantage has led to a growing lack of attention to the need for care within the educational process to have equal value. The need to stop defining the purpose of education in terms of personalised human capital and/or ‘making oneself skilled for the economy’, emerge here also.

Mark enlightens me on some of the ethos within his centre when he states

My job, I am told, is to deliver modules not care. It’s all about moving them on to employment or further education, but the empowering part of it all seems to be getting lost.

Matthew backs this new results driven regime up when he states

... that's my idea but when it comes to the funders their perception is we must get results. So that's a different pressure, on the outcomes not the person, it's just get them through and I find it tough to be person-centred and results focused. Getting a person a distinction is not empowering them or showing them care or empathy to leave here in a better place, its box ticking.

Simon tells me that they are experiencing similar issues in his setting around competitive advantage

The argument here in this setting with management and funders is, are we a vocational, educational or healing setting. I think all three and you need to care to deliver the mix. The Finnish system values care, empathy and sensitivity above even qualifications. In this setting we are now, if a student can't cope with the work, we just move them on to something else, that's a positive outcome for us, yet that student is not helped or cared for, they are not getting what they need at this point in their lives. We are witnessing the loss of weekly meetings with learners to monthly meetings and the monthly goals been more academically orientated. Yes, outcomes and funders are squeezing the care out of the job.

### **Using Care in Your Teaching**

I next introduced the concept of using care within a further education centre and asked for their perspectives on this and their experiences on using care and the impact, if any, on them. I spoke of my own experiences of using care within my setting to ease the mood and diminish the masculinity aspect surrounding this topic. I told each interviewee a little of my view which is that, I find developing the person is much more important than the training modules, as once you develop a person's self-confidence, self-worth and self-esteem, then that person feels more able and willing to deal with the academic criteria, consequently, they agreed that this must be facilitated through care.

Receptivity is not just a matter of putting oneself into another's shoes consequently; it involves stepping out of one's personal frame of reference into another's. This concept however, is open to manipulation and in order to please funders, my interviewees' said some teachers have a tendency to complete work for students or try too hard for them. This type of 'caring' annoys Matthew as he sees it as a rod for a teachers back with no 'boundaries' for you. Matthew states,

When I think about it I see tutors caring all the time doing their best for students I also see them get very pissed off when

students don't turn in or are too wrapped up in their lives to realise that the tutors really have their interests at heart. I can see now why it's hard to keep on caring while some students don't give a 'fuck'. But I know I try my best as the other tutors do. Maybe I see it as a challenge, I always give 100% and I give it unconditionally, all I ask of them is their best shoot and everyone's best shoot is different.

Here we can see the emergence of how the notions on when the 'cared-for-one' shows responsiveness to show care is happening, can be manipulated. Mathew had no problem saying it as it was and I interpreted some of the other interviewees' to be thinking this idea however, not naming it as Matthew did.

Simon

I like to think I do use care in my classroom however, we all have a great way of self-deceiving ourselves and how do we measure it? Feedback? Mmm, (hand under chin in a thoughtful pose) don't think that works. The argument here in this setting with management and funders is, are we a vocational, educational or healing setting. I think all three and you have to care to deliver the mix. I don't think you can 'fake'; I like to think it's something I do naturally although that's my own self-image. I think if you don't use care organically then it would pay dividends in your setting to fake it. The Finnish system values care, empathy and sensitivity above even qualifications. In this setting we now, if a student can't cope with the work, we just move them on to something else, that's a positive outcome for us, yet that student is not helped or cared for, they are not getting what they need at this point in their lives. We are witnessing the loss of weekly meetings with learners to monthly meetings and the monthly goals been more academically orientated. Yes, outcomes and funders are squeezing the care out of the job.

Peter, Mark and Luke also pointed out they too used care as a teaching method. They felt you could not work within an adult education setting without have empathy and a caring nature.

### **Participants Own Experiences of Care and Education**

To close off the interviews I led with a gentle type question to wind down with. I was interested in their journeys and how they got there and this led me to ask about either significant moments or people on their journeys. I spoke about my own journey and how I experienced care while returning to education and how some of the people who taught me, also influenced me. This was an important tactic within this process

as it allowed me to 'lay my cards on the table' and dispel any notions on hegemonic masculinity that may have been present;

Matthew pointed out how a negative experience (unemployment) was turned into a positive for him and how this influenced his new career choice. He also states the significance of care within his returning to education experience.

The turning point in my life was unemployment and the realisation that I was unemployable and on the economic scrap heap. I went back to education to try and get myself out of the shit I was in I was by all means broken in every way you can think of. In the VETOS centre they helped me unpick all the negative ideas I had about myself. I left school at 15 and I thought I was thick because I was told that for long enough, but at VETOS they gave me the encouragement and the space to understand that I was a product of an oppressive system. They also gave me the strength to rewrite my own past and become the author of my own future through the exploration of new possibilities. For me that's caring for people and looking back they cared for me. That's my idea of caring it's how I understand care and I try my best to keep that as part of who I am.

Mark confirmed the importance of care shown to him when he returned to education and the positive impact it had on him. These were highlighted by two ladies who taught him on a return to learning access course and having teachers who believed in him. This encouraged Mark to continue in education and assured him that he had the ability to achieve his goals. Luke is much younger than me and the other research participants and he feels this can leave him a little short of "life experience". However, Luke had a key moment which was very significant for him and influenced his decision to work in the setting he chose. Luke spoke about this moment and the importance of incorporating care and empathy for him within his philosophy of education.

Yes in fact it came this year when I was teaching in Youthreach. As a newly qualified teacher I am still learning as I go and I never really think I am making a difference in the students' life. I would always tell them you know I care, I am here to help, I always chat to them at lunch after class one on one. I make time for them. It was before the Christmas holidays, when I was chatting to one of the toughest male students in the centre, who all teachers where finding challenging, he opened up to me. He asked if he could speak to me of course I said of course, we spoke for nearly two hours and he just let everything out. He told me that he opened up to me because he knew I cared about him, he knew I would not judge him for crying, and he knew I

wanted to help him. This showed me again that showing your students you care is of vital importance in further education. Yes two things. First that all teachers in further education need to understand that care plays a vital role in their teaching. The second thing is that we to have focus more on the area of care for our male learners and educate them more on this area. Show them that care is not just a women thing.

Peter reiterates the importance of care within your family unit as well as your educational experience for your personal development. He told me his parents were key players in his education from home while still a pre-school child. Peter also points out that education can be achieved in many ways, not just through formal schooling. In Peters, case through travel and family bonds therefore, indicating the importance of a varied education. The honesty from my interviewees has to be admired and Simon here laughs at my question as he thinks it should be kept for 'after dinner conversation'. However, he does furnish me with an answer and it is also nice to see him acknowledge his positive formal educational experiences.

I have few enough heroes' as I'm a bit of a cynic. It's an interesting after dinner topic. If I have heroes they have been teachers, through their enthusiasm for the subject and I went to a Christian brother's school and they got us to engage with Shakespeare etc. They inspired me and often the good ones go unacknowledged. No real 'road to Damascus' moments just it took me a long time to get here where I want to be. I love the whole pedagogy of teaching and the academic and science of teaching.

### **Why Teaching Adults?**

Following on from this line of enquiry and incorporating care/teaching and masculinity within our societal context, I decided to ask my interviewees'. Why teaching as an occupation? The interviews next moved onto the question of 'why you became a teacher and how you came into adult teaching'. As stated earlier four out of my five interviewees had an identity shift after a transformative learning experience happened for them, while one continued on from secondary level to third level education. After experiencing what education had achieved for them, they wanted to effect real change for others. They also discussed how transformative learning occurs in adults as they engage in activities that directly caused a shift in how they view/ed the worlds that they live in. This was an important concept for an adult

educator to be able to deliver learning via care to effect 'real change' for adults. For as Peter stated, dialogue, reflection, critical reflection and self-reflection can help a person to alter their central meaning structures through which we interpret our day-to-day lived worlds. Using these ideas and an ethic of care, an adult teacher can affect real change with a learner to help them have a transformative experience.

For Matthew he became a teacher because he just had a realisation that he was good at helping others and enjoyed it. His biography can also enhance his setting as he can empathise with learners who have suffered because of the economic crash or on long term unemployment, it emerged:

I found something that I was good at and I realised this while I was doing my under grad, I was part of the mature students society; I got involved in helping other students. I think I was having such a good time that I wanted people to realise that there is life after the building site and unemployment. While I was working on the sites I was earning good money, but I always knew that someday I would get too old and broken up from the work that I would have to pack it in.

Using these ideas and an ethic of care, an adult teacher can affect real change with a learner to help them have a transformative experience. Mark was difficult to draw words from and seemed very guarded and cautious in his responses. Again for this question I found he had not many words to say here, just a very simple yet powerful statement; "I chose teaching so that I could affect REAL (emphasis placed on this word) change in the lives of the people with whom I work" (Mark).

Luke on the other hand always wanted to be a teacher and knew from an early age this was his path. However, he always felt he would become a secondary school teacher. The importance of both reflection and experience come to the fore for Luke in his decision to teach in Further Education.

I knew I always wanted to be a teacher from a young age. It was in my family my grandfather and my uncle where both teachers and I knew I wanted to follow in their footsteps. However I always thought I would be a secondary school teacher and never thought about further education. It was not until I came to university and reflected back on my secondary school education and realised it was not as wonderful as I thought. I never got to build a relationship with any of my teachers; I never got to know them as a person it was all too focused on education and not me growing as person. I knew when I became a teacher I didn't want to have these experiences with my

students. I wanted to get know them and build a caring relationship with them. I wanted to help students who I feel where let down by the secondary school education system, rebuild their confidence and show them that teachers do care about them, and help them reach their full potential.

Again the importance of experiencing care emerged during my interview with Peter and he highlighted the role it played in his decision to teach. He shared with me what it means to him to care and to be cared for, how caring for another person relates to your moral picture and how caring ultimately functions within an educational context.

I choose teaching as throughout my educational experience, it has always been a positive experience. The care and support shown to me has made a huge impact on who I am today, so I wanted to work in an environment that I could be a part of someone else's journey in learning.

The only job Simon ever wanted to do was to teach and although he eventually became a further Education teacher, Simon tried lots of roles within teaching first.

I always wanted to teach and in fifth year I even filled in the CAO for teaching. We were in a recession and there was no work so I did computer programming to pay the bills. However, I was always unfulfilled and left to work for Tefol and NALA and I also taught in a primary school setting. I choose to work here because I want to do a job where the outcome matters and I want to try make real changes in peoples experiences.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

In addition the concept of identity emerged through different topics while discussing these findings. This was evident within their interviews when we spoke of using care in their new roles as opposed to their old identifying roles. This concept of identity was interconnected within other findings and themes such as, masculinity, using care, self-care and choosing teaching as a career. Therefore, as this is the chapter on findings, I believe I will do the concept of identity more justice by discussing it in the analysis chapter.

In the subsequent chapter these themes will be analysed based on the literature examined within my literature review in chapter two, the themes identified within this chapter and my arguments presented throughout Chapter Five Analysis

## **Chapter Five**

### **Analysis**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

When undertaking this chapter to write up my analyses of the research, I conducted the analyses of the findings “through a constant comparative approach between the conversations and the literature” (Charmaz, 2006:163). This chapter will examine how care is used within adult education by men within their teaching and how if any, this impacts on them and their masculinity. I achieved this through investigating the discourses surrounding the literature I utilised in chapter two and the emerging themes in chapter four which in turn allowed me to then make connections, give shape and consequently, meaning to the analyses.

This research has uncovered some interesting findings such as how policy makers and neo-liberal ideologies are impacting significantly on adult education through the antithesis of care, known as managerialism. Consequently, transforming adult education settings from places of learning, to places of training, which in turn are accountable through outcomes and these outcomes, are constantly market driven. It has also shown how patriarchy is not waning rather being administered in a much more subtle and Foucaultian theory of power ideology. This will impact greatly on the human capital versus care debate and how adult educators teach.

#### **5.2 Masculinity and Patriarchy**

Contemporary society is largely in agreement about what are considered typically feminine and masculine characteristics. These stereotypes provide collective, organised and dichotomous “meanings of gender and often become widely shared beliefs about who woman and men innately are” (Courtenay, 2000:1387). Men and boys experience greater social pressure according to Courtenay (2000) than girls to endorse gendered societal expectations such as the “strongly endorsed beliefs that men are independent, self-reliant, strong, robust and tough” (2000:1387). Throughout history masculinity has been defined through macho-ness and breadwinner type scenarios. Employment that required physical strength and endurance, and were care was never a factor within the notion of being a man.



This dominant discourse and social construction of 'men earn rather than learn' and 'men live in a careless culture' also emerged within my findings. Contemporary society has witnessed a shift in societal and cultural notions of masculinity and in today's world men can open up to emotion. Mark states that masculinity is changing however not "as fast as the actuality of being a man". Men are expected to be more caring while embracing their feminine side, yet the idea of a patriarchy pre-dominant society still exists. Most of our government systems (social security, to name but one) are still modelled on the male breadwinner type scenario. The patriarchal glass ceiling model is also alive and kicking according to Mark.

Simon states when you refer to care and states "it is women's stuff is a rather crude generalisation but as generalisations go, it has gathered some cultural capital recently". However, within my research participant's workplaces they witness the relevance of care within an adult setting and how social constructs such as hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2005) still play a part in our everyday. An important feature of any setting involving other beings is peer groups and these exist in teaching environments also. Connell (2000) discusses the "feeling rules" in occupations and these are also found in teaching. These rules indicate that socialisation plays an important role in how people interpret experience and express emotions.

Gender stereotypes are among "the meanings used by society in the construction of gender, and are characteristics that are generally believed to be typical of either women or men" (Courtenay, 2000: 1387). Rather than attempting to define masculinity as an entity, a natural character type, a norm and/or a behavioural trait, I concur with Connell (1995). We should look on the process and relationships through which men and women conduct gendered lives. We can then explore the impact on men if any, of using care within their teaching practices through these lenses. I would argue this can be fraught with danger as within a patriarchal society, male teachers' who do not conform to certain standards risk being marginalized, particularly when they use care within their teaching practices.

However, the data emerging from the findings indicates that my research participants, as male teachers are embodying an ethic of care, consequently, the

social pressure on them to be 'men' is still prominent within some sections of their students socially constructed notions on masculinity. My five research participants had what society termed as jobs that typified 'real men's work'. Devine; Grummell and Lynch (2010) all concur with the notion that since becoming caring teachers they battle with their old masculine identity and are left in a complex interplay of agency and resistance to identity formation. Their newfound identities force them on some level to leave their old masculine identities at the door and draw attention to what Foucault (1980) discusses as the microphysics of power as central to the processes of identity formation and how they are formed.

### **5.2.1 Foucaultian Power**

Foucault's notion on power been implemented through 'claims of knowledge' that are formed out of "power through discourse and discursive formations that shape and normalise our destiny to a certain mode of living" (Foucault, 1980:142), is also prominent here. The notion of care being 'women's work' and not being carried out by 'real men' remains dominant within the discourse, surrounding patriarchy and masculinity. As Luke states "men still associate care with women, and they feel the area of care is not associated towards them, as they are this macho man type". Ideas like this keep the notion of care relational to females rather than males and Simon reiterates this concept when he says

"Well that can mean any number of things and to say its women's stuff is a rather crude generalisation but as generalisations go, it has gathered some cultural capital recently also"

Foucault shifts from the notion that power is one man imposing his will over another to understanding that power is to be viewed as something which "circulates or as something which only functions in the form of a chain...power is employed and exercised through a net like organisation" (Foucault, 1980:98). I agree with Foucault, that individuals are "the vehicles of power not its points of application" (1980:98). Consequently, discourse can be the individual that is driving patriarchy in a much more subtle way than before. As Mark tells us

"I am expected to be more caring and be more involved with my kids, yet the idea of a male breadwinner is the pre-dominant idea where I come from"

Nevertheless, Foucault tells us that power relations are a cause and effect relation, enmeshed throughout society. Looking at this we see power as a system of web like networks woven into the apparatus of society rather than a stand-alone entity. However, this idea by Foucault cannot exist without some form of resistance and by adult education teachers continuing to practice care within their teaching and not engaging in either patriarchal or masculinity discourse, can continue with this resistance.

The findings chapter and the literature review chapter have explored how care impacts on masculinities within the context of a patriarchal society. I believe they have also contributed to my view that masculinity is not so much on the wane, more its exercise of power has become more subtle. However, it is still very dominant within contemporary society and infiltrates almost every fibre of society. It can be linked into Foucault's (1980) concept on power, patriarchy is seen, unseen and remains dominant because men continue to be coerced into imposing it upon society, both consciously and un-consciously. Allowing a shifting patriarchal structure to perhaps switch the emphasis for men to administer the power by encouraging self-regulating, which keeps us disciplined and controlled? This can tie in with Foucault's (1980) theory that power will now be used in a more softer, subtle and pervasive form of control and subordination of women and/or men who do conform to hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2005). We see how Foucault's ideas of power and surveillance tie into the neo-liberal system also. This idea of the individual been constructed and "...certain discourses and certain desires come to be constituted as individuals" (Foucault, 1980:99) whereby the individual is the focus and a social product of power. This focus on the individual is a major cause of concern for the adult education sector as it endangers the "...caring and transformative possibilities of further education which are core to its ethos" (Grummell, 2014:135).

### **5.3 Human Capital and Care**

Concern for rational and professional functioning has contributed to keeping care and emotion out of education. The notion is that real professionals do not allow themselves to show emotion within their profession thus, maintaining control over your emotions. The focus on education for competitive advantage has led to a

growing lack of attention to the need for care within the educational process as a value. Feely (2007:2) discusses how we are now defining the purpose of education in terms of personalised human capital and/or “making oneself skilled for the economy” (2007:2). Lynch (2007) also discusses the issues raised by care ethicists about the importance of “marrying an ethic of care to an ethic of justice when analysing equality in education” (2007:3). Therefore, “the amount of care capital available impacts on people’s ability not only to relate to others at an intimate level, but also to flourish and contribute in other spheres of life” (Lynch, 2009:2), such as education.

Consequently, we need to redefine the idea of care so it has equal value with education. Hayes (2007) identifies the “strong association between the concept of care and that of mothering as opposed to the notion that care is educational” (2007:6). From my personal perspective I believe care and education should be intertwined and not incorporated to just focus on positive outcomes to serve society.

Luke also stated when he thinks of care, he thinks of “how much care means to him and how it is about looking after yourself and those around you and teaching your learners’ to learn to care for themselves”. This process can be either empowering or detrimental for a student as the interviewees’ stated ‘you have to know when you are not just doing it for them’ or ‘ticking boxes for funders’. Mark found that his job was to deliver modules not care. “It’s all about moving them on to employment or further education”. However, Matthew found in his setting that when he thinks of what care means to him it is “to not leave people behind and do your best for them, and show them that you care and you’re on their side”.

### **5.3.1 Solas**

With the amalgamation of the adult education sector into sixteen Educational Training Boards, (ETB’s) and the emergence of SOLAS, all of which has gained the sector further recognition and new funding for new educational and training initiatives, it heralded the birth of a new and stronger organisation. However, the findings from my research will ‘beg’ to differ and argue that the implementation of the ‘SOLAS Action Plan’ (SAP) alongside neo-liberalism and managerialism has had a detrimental effect on adult education and relegated ‘care’ within teaching and learning to the ‘dimly lit basement of adult education’. The SAP document states ‘SOLAS will be tasked with

ensuring the provision of high quality FET programmes which are responsive to the needs of learners and the requirements of a changed and changing economy' going forward into the 21<sup>st</sup> century (SOLAS, 2014:5). Another statement which has to cause grave concern for the educational aspect of lifelong learning is under the heading of 'skills as an insulator from unemployment' (2014:5). Mark reminds us of how this is impacting on his teaching when he states "my job is to deliver modules not care. It's all about moving them on to employment or further education, but the empowering part of it all seems to be getting lost". It indicates that market flexibility takes president over 'job security' and the notion of a 'job for life' is now replaced by the emerging, neo-liberal concept, of 'work for life' (2014:6).

These skills can now be honed by participating in lifelong learning through skills development courses that make you market employable. The purpose of this strategy is now to make sure that those partaking in FET and those who will in the future partake in the FET sector, will stay engaged, complete qualifications and transition fully into employment. However, it also states that where appropriate, a learner can 'move into further or higher education'. I would argue that we are now producing adult 'learners' to create profit rather than fulfil human 'needs'. As the document states "...this was a consensus that all programmes should be measured against some form of suitable outcome metric closely related to the objectives" (SOLAS, 2014:26). Nevertheless, Simon sums it up and highlights the pressure teacher's are now under to deliver outcomes as opposed to 'human needs' when he states;

When a student enters the setting we work in they may be very low in self-confidence, self-esteem and self-preservation. Through using care and working on a one-to-one basis with that learner after a period of time that learner may lift their head and speak to someone and/or engage in a class activity. We cannot quantify that to SOLAS within a box ticking exercise therefore, it has no value.

The concept behind the strategy has a lot of positives contained within it however, I would argue it has de-humanised the learner from a person to a commodity aimed at increasing production and performing a role within society. It means enabling every citizen (regardless of their personal status) who are experiencing barriers to the labour markets to be able to access high quality education, training and to 'get' a job.

Grummell (2014) sums this up when she states that this will have “significant implications for the kind of teaching and learning that occur” (2014:130). I would propose that SOLAS’s new concept is primarily focused on outcomes and performance and this measurability places the learner behind the needs of the economy.

The setting I work in requires a student to have a dis-ability to be able to access the college. A student may be very low in self-confidence, self-esteem and self-preservation. Incorporating all the methods of care within our classrooms and in the college as a whole, that learner may lift their head and speak to someone and/or engage in a class activity. We cannot quantify that to SOLAS or to QQUI within a box ticking exercise therefore, it has no value. Reflecting on these themes that emerged within the findings chapter, the interviewees’ feel we need to redefine the idea of care so it has equal value with education. Teachers such as me and my research participants will continue to fight for care to be valued within adult education while we continue to incorporate care within our classrooms. The SAP strategy had an opportunity to achieve this within its action plan, however, it failed. Thus, allowing managerialism and the neo-liberal ideologies to become promoted as the valued systems.

Consequently, I would argue, that when it comes to the funders their perception is we must get results. So that’s a different kind of pressure as the focus is on the outcomes not the person’s learning experiences or care, it is just about getting them through and Matthew finds it tough to be “caring, person-centred and results focused”. “Getting a person a distinction is not empowering them or showing them care or empathy to leave an adult education centre in a better place, it’s a box ticking exercise for your funders”, Matthew also states. Within my own setting the ethos is changing to an outcome driven environment, it has become a numbers game and this is resulting in learners being admitted to courses which at this time in their educational journey is a little beyond them.

### **5.3.2 Neo-liberalism and Managerialism**

The neo-liberal agenda is now the driving force behind the focus of a market driven economy. This ideology views the outcomes of the market as natural thus; poverty

and social problems become personal failures as opposed to systemic failures. Neo-liberalism operates on the concept that everything has a price or it should be given one. Finnegan, (2008) states, that this has immediate concerns for educators and can impose a form of lifelong learning based on the market. It needs to be understood as a powerful and complex form of cultural hegemony, not just what happens in the market (Finnegan, 2008:58). It is capitalism at its best and concurs with the ideas of free markets and free trade which imposes an institution of uneven structures of power and wealth across the globe. Matthew states that

“I think what care means to me is don’t leave people behind and do your best for them, and show them that you care and you’re on their side. However, that’s my idea but when it comes to the funders their perception is we must get results”.

Leading onto the notion that I believe this neo-liberal agenda will squash the use of care within an educational setting due to the pressures on teachers to provide outcomes. Those who cannot ‘keep up’ will be left behind and deemed within the neo-liberal view, a ‘failure’. Lynch views this as a “...distinct political project underpinned by the spirit of capitalism” Lynch et al, 2010:3) and I would agree.

According to Inglis (1997), empowerment is when people can act successfully within the “existing structures of power” (Inglis, 1997:4). Therefore, those people who cannot act within the present system of power will be deemed failures, according to the neo-liberal model. Simon tells us “if a student can’t cope with the work, we just move them on to something else, that’s a positive outcome for us”. Managerialism is not just about a learner managing, under neo-liberalism, it is about restructuring social, political and economic structures to primarily focus on “outputs rather than inputs for indicators of performance and accountability” (Lynch et al. 2014:4). Matthew reminds us of the effects this will have on both teacher and learner “So that’s a different pressure, on the outcomes not the person, it’s just get them through and I find it tough to be person-centred and results focused”. Mark also indicates that teachers and staff will end up “doing it all for them” due to the pressures of “getting them through” as he also stated

“This can be an issue when you are trying to teach a person to do something, another staff member could be completing this task for that student, thinking that they are helping that student”

Matthew also makes the point that “getting a person a distinction is not empowering them or showing them care or empathy to leave here in a better place, its box ticking”. Consequently, incorporating into our classrooms, accountability or showing outcomes to the funders. Grummell, (2014) views this as “an idea of how to capture the performance of further education” (Grummell, 2014:130). This in turn will impact on what is rendered not valuable such as care and thus, subjected to the shelf, it will also determine which knowledge now becomes valuable (Grummell, 2014:130). Further education teachers are now delivering learning that is filtered “through an employment discourse of the government as further education is asked to contribute to the employability of the labour force” (Grummell, 2014:127). Simon tells us how this is unfolding in his setting;

The argument here in this setting with management and funders is, are we a vocational, educational or healing setting. I think all three and you need to care to deliver the mix. The Finnish system values care, empathy and sensitivity above even qualifications. In this setting we are now, if a student can't cope with the work, we just move them on to something else, that's a positive outcome for us, yet that student is not helped or cared for, they are not getting what they need at this point in their lives.

This is an area which requires further in-depth study to learn the effects of human capital and care. If we now begin to prepare learners to perform a function in society and treat education as a rational justice based concept, I believe and agree with Noddings (1984) that we will lose the notion that caring is both fundamental to education and human life itself. If we continue with this agenda, the entire ethos of lifelong learning will be lost to the neo-liberal idea of everything and/or everyone been measured and accounted for. Perhaps keeping society within the Foucaultian (1980) notion of regulation and self-regulation and where power is in circulation between the individuals and the institutions of society.



#### **5.4 Care as a Continuum and the Importance of Care**

One of the most striking findings for me was how five different men, working in five different adult educational settings came up with almost the same idea of how important care is in the context of adult education and what I interpreted from the data to mean was 'that care was a continuum'. Noddings' asks us "Why care about caring" (2003:7) and why do we care. Our job according, to some of the research participants are to deliver modules and ensure a positive outcome for our learners to appease the funders. Yet each of my research participants identified in some form, the battle they face between themselves, management and funders to remain within their ethos of educating using care. The use of care within your teaching environment is that vital that Simon states even "if you don't have it (care), they you need to fake it".

Lynch (2009) confirms the importance of care as a continuum and the importance of care been available from a very young age, Peter equates care as not been a random thing, more as it been a continuum. "My experience is that care is not just one act, its on-going and you must look and listen if you are to do it effectively". Luke understands "care to be vital within your classroom and also feels it must be unconditional", again tying in with the theorists used within the thesis.

Gilligan, (1993) states that the reason love and care matter is because we are relational beings, emotional as well as intellectual and social as well as individual. When the student associates with the teacher whereby they feel free to initiate conversation, discuss the students interests and likes, then learning begins to occur. Although the curriculum is important, the interests of the student are primary and relatedness ensures the student that the teacher acts from the basis of "I am still the one interested in you. All of this is of variable importance and significance, but you still matter more" (Noddings, 2003:20). However, we must always be mindful of how we act out this ethic of care because if we act primarily from a desire to accomplish something for another person, but fail to think carefully enough of that other person's needs, we would have failed to care (Noddings, 2003:20). Consequently, we must always be aware of the place we are, in order that we are not trying to do everything Syndrome', Hussey (1999).

## **5.5 Motivations for Becoming Adult Teacher's**

Using these ideas and an ethic of care, an adult teacher can affect real change with a learner to help them have a transformative experience and this was identified as a motivational factor as to why my research participants chose adult education as a career. Matthew stated that he had a realisation that he was good at helping others and through care, Matthew de-mystifies learning through their own experiences to help enact change. This according to Mezirow (2007) is called "perspective transformation" (2007:12) and this is to reflect change within the core or central meaning structures through which we interpret our day-to-day lived worlds. The findings highlighted the importance of using care within your adult educational setting. I agree with Noddings' who believes that caring requires some form of recognition from the one cared-for that the one-caring is, in fact, caring and that when there is recognition of and response to the caring from the cared-for, then the caring is described as "completed in the other" (:20034). These, I would argue, are essential within education and in particular within adult education as a lot of adults whom are returning to education have emotional scars and some have not encountered care within their personal educational experiences.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

Throughout this chapter where I have analysed the findings from my data, incorporated the theory and theorists from the literature review chapter and linked it together through my own lenses and those of my research participants. This chapter has identified how the men I interviewed are using care within their teaching practices in adult education. However, the holistic approach of using care within the classroom and the idea of educating using these non-validated methods is under threat. The new regimes within adult education and their emphasis on outcomes are disregarding care as a value. Consequently, the approach to adult education has been re-evaluated to almost dismiss a caring approach and replace it with a rational and justice based system.

The chapter has particularly focused on the impact if any, does care have on men in their teaching practices within adult education. I examined using care by men through the lens of hegemonic masculinity through a patriarchal structure. This

section has also explored the idea that hegemonic masculinity is not waning, however, it has also identified how patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity have subtly and silently begun to infiltrate society through a different method. Care and masculinity are within a patriarchal structure, opposite ends of the spectrum. Research needs to be carried out to discover methods to narrow the gap between traditional and progressive modes on thinking around care, education, men and masculinity.

The final chapter in this research project will conclude and recommend from the entire thesis; Chapter Six Conclusion

## **Chapter Six**

### **Conclusion**

#### **6.1 Conclusion**

This thesis set out upon its inception to investigate the impact, if any, does care have on men in their teaching practices within adult education. Although the paper stayed mostly true to this question, the findings from the data uncovered some interesting happenings around, men, care and teaching within adult education and their impacts on theory and practice which required further investigation. These themes were then investigated and analysed using my research participants' voices and the theory and theorists from the literature review. The thesis also showed how history is repeating itself within this generation, as it did when this generation attended formal school. This in turn led me to look into the human capital versus care debate and examine how this is impacting on adult education, patriarchy and masculinity and their systems of power. Consequently, the thesis has shown the impact, on male teachers, both within their professional standing, and upon their positioning within their own and other people's notion of masculinity, when they use care.

The research findings and subsequent analyses uncovered how patriarchal and hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2005) systems are not on the wane moreover, their power is being administered through a more Foucaultian concept of power whereby, its exercise of power has become more subtle. However, it is still very dominant within contemporary society and infiltrates almost every fibre of society. It can be linked into Foucault's (1980) concept on power where patriarchy is seen and unseen, yet remains dominant because men continue to be coerced into imposing it upon society, both consciously and un-consciously. Allowing a shifting patriarchal structure to perhaps switch the emphasis for men to administer the power by encouraging self-regulating and this in turn keeps us disciplined and controlled.

The impact of care on adults returning to education can never be truly measured, as how can we measure the impact of care on students by quantifying their self-esteem and/or self-confidence for funders? Therefore, the devaluing of care and the implementation of this devaluation in favour of a neo-liberal led agenda will impact

significantly on both adults returning to education and how teaching and learning will now occur within the classroom. Consequently, this uncovered the emerging concepts of neo-liberalism and managerialism which is 'alive and kicking' and in turn is being championed by the ruling elite. As Foucault (1980) states, 'power seen and unseen' or as I believe and my research shows, capitalists and capitalism working at its best. This neo-liberal and managerialism agenda is now the driving force behind the focus on a market driven economy. The Foucaultian theoretical framework can assist us in tracing these changes which have been occurring within the sector. This ideology views the outcomes of the market as natural thus; poverty and social problems become personal failures as opposed to systemic failures. Neo-liberalism operates on the concept that everything has a price or it should be given one. Finnegan, (2008) states, that this has immediate concerns for educators and can impose a form of lifelong learning based on the market. Grummell (2014) sums this up when she states that this will have "significant implications for the kind of teaching and learning that occur" (2014:130). Finnegan warned us this was coming in 2008, we did not listen then, perhaps we will listen now.

The thesis also recommends we shift away from this new agenda of assuming that education is a rational process, preparing learners for roles within society and largely ignoring the ways in which care is vital to both education and to human life. A deeper and lengthy research project is required to uncover deeper, the impacts, if any, on using care, showing emotion, displaying feelings and being a man within adult education. I also recommend we need to consider carefully the impacts of neo-liberalism and managerialism on how adult education is both learned and taught for the future. New theories around these concepts need to be articulated in order to highlight their impacts on theory and practice within adult education.

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