

Editorial

Care & the Future of Learning

care, *v.* to feel concern, feel interest; take thought for, to take care of, look after;

future, *adj.* That is to be, or will be, hereafter.

Oxford English Dictionary

Care as response

This special issue of Critical Studies in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (CriSTaL) entitled *Care & The Future of Learning* responds to historical conditions that have been influenced by the Covid 19 pandemic and its prolonged effects. At the height of the pandemic, we were all interpolated into worlds we could not predict with enforced lockdowns and the rapid change to our home, work, and learning environments. This new world saw us teaching and learning from our bedrooms, kitchens, living rooms, laundries, garages, and across different cities and countries through the virtual platforms that became available to us. In quiet desperation, as my world rapidly shrunk to avatars and Zoom meetings, I tried to make sense of the complex forces that were challenging us and the overnight changes to our teaching and learning environments. In the stark reality that we confronted (and are confronting) it made me consider how do we take *care* of learning in the virtual classroom and in the classroom more broadly, and how do we respond to crisis with care.

During this time, I asked some of my students about their definitions of care and how they understood it in the classroom. Some of their responses resonated with what I would consider valuable and necessary for teaching, that is, elements such as patience, generosity, taking time, respect, listening to others and so on but one comment stood out to me, it stated: 'respect for those who do not want to contribute'. This particular comment captures the crux of issues at the heart of teaching and learning: how do we pay attention to students who may wish to remain silent? In what ways do we engage students who are historically and socially marginalised? How do we address students who may feel uncared for or disgruntled? How do we manage anxiety and resistance in the classroom? In a broader sense, the American activist and author, bell hooks captures some of these dilemmas, challenges and responsibilities in her reflection on teaching and what she calls 'engaged pedagogy' that emerges in the classroom but travels across a lifetime. She writes

Students do not always enjoy studying with me. Often they find my courses challenge them in ways that are deeply unsettling. This was particularly disturbing to me at the beginning of my teaching career because I wanted to be like and admired. It took time and experience for me to understand that the rewards of engaged pedagogy might not emerge during a



course. Luckily, I have taught many students who take time to reconnect and share the impact of our working together on their lives. Then the work I do as a teacher is affirmed again and again, not only by accolades extended to me but by the career choices students make, their habits of being ... I am reminded of the power we have as teachers as well as the awesome responsibility ...

The classroom, with all its limitations, remains a location of possibility. (hooks, 1994: 206)

If the pandemic taught us anything it has been the need to change our habits of thinking and learning, to create environments where we might potentially be able to manage a life and work balance, and to create different contexts for learning. It seemed to offer a moment of pause and reflection, however, just as soon as the moment of pause descended upon us it was quickly taken away by new forms of neoliberal rationalisation and language which did not address the real labour of learning and experience in the classroom – words such as flexibility, choice, and ‘wellbeing’ — became more and more empty terms and the reality of our lives became more brutal and harder edged. Given this, it feels more urgent than ever to respond and care for our pedagogical futures, that is, how we might shape the challenges we now face and must attend to in our covid and post covid worlds.

Care, itself, has had a long theoretical trajectory in research and writing, and in particular with many feminist authors coming out a variety of disciplinary contexts to think through issues of care and different forms of social and political injustice (see for instance, Carol Gilligan (1982), Nel Noddings (1984), bell hooks (1994), Joan Tronto (1993, 2013, 2015, 2017), Haraway (2016), Maria Puig de la Bellacasa (2017), Care Collective (2020)). Within feminist analyses of care, there has been acute concern around the relationships of women and work; race and ethnicity; gender, sexuality and politics; ecological questions, technology and the non-human. Over the years, I have been drawn to Joan Tronto's working definitions of care that offer useful ways to think through the complexities and issues at stake:

...a species activity includes everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repairs the 'world' so that we can live in it as well as possible. That world includes our bodies, ourselves, and our environments, all of which interweave in complex, life sustaining web. (Fisher & Tronto cited in Tronto 1995: 142)

And most recently, I have found this definition of care particularly illuminating:

We need now to stop being dazzled by neoliberal forms of resilience and, instead, have the courage ourselves to return to a forestalled alternative future, one in which care truly matters. (Tronto, 2017: 39)

Translated into this context, I consider Tronto's call for alternative futures a necessity: the pathways, networks, and connections that we need to imagine for our communities and the

ethical and social responsibilities for our teaching and learning. The question that has been prominent in my mind over these last years is how do we *care* for learning in the classroom and what are the implications for the future?

Care as process

Initially the title for this issue was called 'Virtual Spaces, Future Learning'. I invited scholars from around the world to be part of a series of workshops on care. The philosophy behind these workshops was to share ideas, collaborate and respond to the ideas of care and the covid environment; I had thought of the first workshops as a response to technologies and virtual worlds, but as we progressed and developed the conversations the broader theme of 'care and the future of learning' emerged. In this regard, the workshops provided the time, space and attention needed to respond to and engage with issues that affect us deeply, and that concern the structures of our everyday work and engaged practice. As such, the ideas and frameworks changed into a variety of different responses to the framing question, and each of the authors shaped their understanding and practice of care in relation to the sociality, politics, and ecology of the classroom.

After the original workshops and through collaborative process and suggestions from different authors, I invited several writers and scholars working on similar questions to contribute to the issue. This edition, then, is the conglomeration of the fruits of these labours, dialogues and discussions which are drawn from a rich source of scholarly and creative artefacts, and which evolve out of the diversity of approaches that deal with social and political responses to care in the classroom.

Care as pedagogical practice

This special issue is loosely divided into three sequences or parts that engage with themes and responses to care and the future learning. The sequence of papers reflects the concerns around labour, teaching and knowledge transmission in the classroom and curriculum as well as ways to rethink and reflect on our creative and engaged practices. The first section on 'Radical pedagogy and care' deals with issues of radical pedagogies, transformation, and different responsibilities toward care. The second part 'Creativity and care in the classroom' works concurrently with ideas of creativity, pedagogy, new forms of labour and space, neurodiversity, and the care for learning. The final section on 'Technologies, cognition and the future' explores different approaches to the role of learning and cognition, technology, and a future of learning; and as an afterword and reflection, there is a consideration of the consequences of social and political violence, the lack of care in educational contexts and the need for different approaches to justice.

Part One: Radical pedagogy and care

The first essay in the collection by Astrid Lorange and Andrew Brooks 'Endless Study, Infinite Debt: On study inside and outside the university classroom' addresses the tensions of neoliberal framing of flexibility and care that arose throughout the pandemic. Their essay provides a

counternarrative to this logic and they approach care through integrating and arguing for alternative models of pedagogy inspired by Fred Moten and Stefano Harney writings, Black radical traditions, and their ongoing pedagogical art project *Endless Study, Infinite Debt*. Through their art project, they share insights into the potential for care through collective approaches that build solidarity and creativity, and they consider the ambivalent status of university and artistic structures in order to engage with, critique and consider ways to herald change as we confront complex new forms of power and resistance in a post covid world.

'Caring for authors and activists in the classroom: An activist-caring teaching approach' by Nicholas Apoifis is concerned with the transformation and exchange of knowledge practices in the classroom. By reconfiguring the notion of care and responsibility in the transmission of activist knowledge, he argues for the need to give space to the complex social and political contexts through which resistance and activist knowledges emerge, that is, how they are lived, witnessed, and understood in specific historical moments and cultural practices. Drawing on the insights of radical pedagogies, militant ethnographic and narrative approaches, he argues for the need to resist and refuse neoliberal intrusions into university teaching spaces through this activist-caring approach to teaching to reimagine and reconfigure different forms of care and knowledge exchange in the classroom.

Lorena Gibson, Grant Otsuki, and Jordan Anderson's paper "'The most seen I have ever felt": Labour-Based Grading as a pedagogical practice of care' reflects on their experiments with Labour-Based Grading (LBG) models in undergraduate anthropology courses at the Te Herenga Waka – Victoria University of Wellington - to address social disparities witnessed and experienced before and through the Covid-19 pandemic. Their approach addresses pedagogical practice in the classroom through models of LBG as an assessment method that determines students' grades based on the time and effort they spend on an assignment, instead of more conventional criteria. Through their reflections, they explore the possibilities and limitations of this method, and they address the potential for the actualisation of care in the classroom by directly addressing students' anxieties and needs through attending to the often-unseen elements of their labour and work.

Jennifer Hamilton and Nicolette Larder's paper 'Making time to care differently for food: The case for the *Armidale Food School*' approaches care through mapping out the means for alternative learning spaces through anti-colonial and postcapitalist strategies. The school is a research-informed pedagogical project to reimagine how learning can take place through grass roots and community movements. They argue for need to consider a future of learning through a radical ecological and holistic approach to the classroom that sits neither exclusively inside or outside University contexts and frameworks. By drawing on the work of Maria Puig de la Bellacasa and her response to notions of care and ecological concern, the authors propose the case of Armidale Food School that provides a pragmatic and social-materialist approach to pedagogy, and the time it takes to learn.

Part Two: Creativity and care in the classroom

Alys Longley, Janaína Moraes, and Joanna Cook's essay 'Reaching across from here to there, in precarious times: Remote teaching embodied creative practice through scores, instructions, and poetic invitations' poses a series of questions and creative reflections on the challenges of teaching through the pandemic and their visions toward a future of learning. Their questions emerge out of their teaching practices and reflections based in tertiary dance and interdisciplinary arts education during the pandemic. At the same time, their article reflects on fundamental questions around the nature of knowledge and how to facilitate and enable ways to 'stay in touch' in teaching and learning environments through cultivating joy and enabling the imagination. Through a series of vignettes and different points of view, they write through and around their different roles and relationships to teaching and learning as they explore a 'poetics of care' — an approach that offers creative reflections on how we feel, embody, and learn in different spaces and learning environments.

Bryoni Trezise's paper 'Creativity as care during COVID19: The domestic pedagogies of learning from home' considers the impacts of the pandemic and the re-orientation of labour and critical work done in the home-work environment. Drawing on her own experience as a theatre and performance lecturer and the impacts of home schooling, she argues for reframing the context of learning itself and the nature of work. That is, how the 'homespace' can be rethought and how it provides and enables different kinds of workspace expertise informed by diverse rhythms, senses of time, and embodied experience. She presents a series of haikus and creative reflections to establish how 'learning from home' can open out a rich and dynamic approach that can feed back into the teaching and learning in the university context. Trezise suggests 'world-building acts of creativity' provide counterpoints to the often-prescribed demand of 'creativity' and its function in Higher Education, and the essay considers ways to evoke alternative models of pedagogical and critical care.

In a different context, Nicola Shaugnessy's essay 'Learning with labyrinths: Neurodivergent journeying towards new concepts of care and creative pedagogy through participatory community autism research' provides a model for thinking through neurodiversity and patterning of the mind to create new forms of care in the classroom. The essay emerges out of the context of a broader UK research project, 'Playing A/Part' which explores the identities and experiences of autistic girls through creative practices and the implications for pedagogical work. Shaugnessy explains and argues how labyrinths offer an appropriate ethical, aesthetic, and sensory space for the creative pedagogic practices and considers the implications of the study for higher education in terms of teaching neurodivergent learners, and research approaches to autism.

Part Three: Technologies, cognition, and the future

Mary Zournazi's paper '*Building Dwelling Caring* — some reflections on the future of learning' opens some philosophical questions on the accelerated use of technology in our teaching environments as a result of the global pandemic and it considers the ongoing implications for

education, and through a dialogical approach to teaching and learning, she explores how we can create and think *with* technologies to consider the possibilities and limitations of technological use in our educational contexts. Zournazi reflects on some questions that we may need to address for pedagogical care and considers the responsibilities we may need to address as we move toward a *future of learning*.

N. Katherine Hayles and Mary Zournazi's conversational essay 'Creativity and Nonconscious Cognition' traces some of the issues at stake in thinking through technology and embodied experience. Hayles and Zournazi reflect on new modes of understanding and learning which are part of the rapidly changing world of digital and cognitive media technologies in the classroom and beyond. They consider the role of creativity, the necessary cognisance of new modes of learning, bodily orientations, and technological evolutions that structure our individual as well as social and political lives.

Finally, the journal includes a reflexive piece by philosopher Alphonso Lingis 'Caring and criminalising' which explores violence and the mechanisms of power and inequality in educative settings in the US. The paper investigates grief, reparation, and a different approach to justice in the reconfiguration of the impact of social indifference and cultural violence on teaching and learning environments. He asks us to consider the responsibilities and ethical issues at stake for contemporary educational institutions and policy makers, and he argues for a radical approach to care and restorative justice.

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Overall, this collection of diverse papers, reflections and creative engagements with care and the future is an attempt to no longer be dazzled and paralysed by technological and crisis driven learning, but to seek to return to a process of care that addresses the time and space needed for *alternative futures* with the full knowledge of the consequences that such a risk entails and the courage that it takes.

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