



5

Is Caring Pedagogy Really So Progressive? Exploring the Conceptual and Practical Impediments to Operationalizing Care in Higher Education

Caroline Walker-Gleaves

Introduction

Nel Noddings (1986, 2003) asserts that care and caring have deep roots in education since they form the basis of all pedagogic relationships. But, she has argued, the increasing imbalance between self interest and concern for the ‘other’ poses deeply troubling question for education, exacerbated by the frequently repeated mantra that education’s main and indeed global aim is no longer to satisfy individual need or to improve the human experience, but to maintain a nation’s economic health. Such an assertion is amply illustrated by the increasing numbers of qualifications having explicit skills and work-related outcomes, and the growth in employability as a key metric for measuring the success and efficacy of the educational experience (Tran 2015). However, Noddings (2003) goes on to assert ‘there is more to individual life and the life of a nation than economic superiority’ (p. 84), and later on, ‘to

C. Walker-Gleaves (✉)

Newcastle University, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK

e-mail: Caroline.Walker-Gleaves@newcastle.ac.uk

© The Author(s) 2019

P. Gibbs and A. Peterson (eds.), *Higher Education and Hope*,

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-13566-9_5

be happy, children must learn to exercise virtues in ways that help to maintain positive relations with others, especially with those others who share the aim of establishing caring relations' (p. 160). Noddings cites teachers as playing a major role, perhaps *the* major role, in doing this.

The concept of the caring teacher presents a critically important instance of inquiry in pedagogic research therefore, but determining who caring teachers are and what caring teachers do presents considerable methodological challenges, due to the perceived 'virtuous' nature of caring teaching and the consequent lack of conceptual validity of self-reporting caring teachers: no one likes to be thought of as uncaring, whether in their private or their professional lives. However, there is another domain of teaching within higher education that aligns itself with caring teaching, and this is the issue of what is defined as 'excellent' teaching. Studies concerning 'excellent teachers' in higher education are beset by contention and controversy, and defining 'excellence' in teaching is difficult enough, but the plethora of roles under the umbrella of 'academic' makes a definition intensely problematic. Nevertheless, the documentation of excellent and exceptional teaching, especially through the increasing publicity given to teaching awards such as the UK Higher Education Academy National Teaching Fellowships and the US Carnegie Scholars Programme together with the growth in awareness of movements such as The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, suggests that a key attribute of such academics is the ability to care and enact their practice of a caring pedagogy.

As such, the importance attached to differently conceived pedagogies that encompass affect as well as traditionally cognitive approaches to teaching and learning has grown, and research has emerged over the last two decades that explores the links between these and the needs of students, all within the broad notions of 'learning enhancement' and 'learner engagement'. The concept of both of these have risen imperceptibly within the higher education agenda in the UK over the last 20 years, with the introduction variously of the UK Professional Standards Framework for Teaching and Supporting Learning in Higher Education in 2003, the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education in 1997 and in 2005, The National Student Survey. These developments run in parallel with the rise of public ethics and the civic

role of the university, and the concomitant expanding commercialization of education.

But the majority of studies of care pedagogy and caring teacher–student relations are from compulsory education (Walker and Gleaves 2016). Such studies as they exist within university settings demonstrate on the one hand academics’ scepticism around caring, with the formation of interpersonal relationships only as an incidental adjunct to the business of learning, whilst on the other hand, yet other academics consider personal responsiveness and interpersonal knowledge to be the critical factors in constructing engaged and engaging learning environments (Walker-Gleaves 2010; Kreber and Klampfleitner 2013). Central to these studies appear to be three factors that are currently exceptionally under-researched in the field and which will form the basis of this chapter: first, an examination of the extent to which institutions and academics regard the construction of the relational learning climate as their responsibility, second, in instances where academics and institutions do construct such environments, how do students experience these climates in relation to their learning experiences? And third, should all academics espouse such relational climates and what are the costs and consequences of doing so within current higher education settings? This chapter deals with each issue in turn and concludes by examining the implications for caring progressively within twenty first century higher education. In this concluding section it is suggested that while caring teaching is a clear pedagogy of hope it does not seem to be currently possible to provide a neat account about how that manifests in the reality of every day teaching in higher education.

Care and Caring Teachers and Their Teaching Higher Education: Philosophies, Policies and Practices

There is much research on what students want and expect from higher education tutors and academics (Kandiko and Kinchin 2013) in support, emotion, and academic terms. In parallel, the literature is replete

with studies arguing the cautiousness of listening too earnestly to students when it comes to individual support demands and requirements. Many institutions have developed strategies predicated explicitly on the construction of ‘relational capital’ and the management of the ‘student experience’ (Yorke et al. 2014). Globally, academics are increasingly expected to both initiate and respond to a bewildering array of activities and actions to satisfy students’ demands. Seen through such diverse and complex lenses, the concept of caring relationships is receiving increasing attention within universities (Hagenauer and Volet 2014a; Mariskind 2014). But before we look specifically at care in universities, we first need to explore how ‘care’ and ‘caring’ are defined.

According to Fine (2007), the origins of the word ‘care’ illustrate its complex and contested use in modern society. In Greek, the etymological root of the word ‘care’, ‘charis’, was used to signify grace or favour. The Greek work ‘charitas’ signified that someone or something was of grace or kindness. The Latin term ‘caritas’ is a derivation of the Greek word ‘charitas’ and is commonly translated as love or charity. The conflation of the word ‘care’ to the Latin ‘caritas’ was probably due to the Roman Catholic Church (Reich 1995) who fostered the relationship between faith, hope and charity and privileged them as the tenets of the Christian faith. According to Reich, the Latin word for care is ‘cura’, and it was used in literature in opposing ways, but ones that give a clue to the dichotomy that care presents in modern society. For example, cura was used as an adjective to denote the weight of a mission or activity; it was used as a noun to describe a responsibility that weighed heavily on people; and finally, it was used as a noun to mean a liberating force that enabled people to be empowered to their fullest possibility, a use of the word particularly common in the writings of Seneca. In other words, it presented many of the contradictions that are so evident in current debates on its place in education and society.

The Oxford English Dictionary (OED 2009) meaning sheds further light on care’s etymology. The OED attributes care’s origins to Old English words—the noun ‘caru’ meaning ‘a worry or a care’; and a verb ‘carian’ that meant to trouble oneself. In sum, to care meant ‘to worry over or about’. Even these meanings have not remained static however, and as with almost all linguistic conventions, have changed to reflect

society's concerns and norms. Consequently, the trajectory of meaning assigned to 'care' altered in Victorian times, in which 'care' referred to the constant monitoring of the sick to prevent the spread of disease to the general population. In this sense, the personal meaning of caring as being troubled was expanded to cover a universal solicitousness.

Contemporary literature in higher education reveals all these meanings and underlying messages within the realms of both relational and caring teaching within higher education. University strategies from universities in the UK, and indeed in much of global educational institutions, reveal almost an obsession with 'care' and 'caring'. University missions are replete with statements endorsing care for students, responsiveness and caring faculty, and caring philosophies oriented toward inclusion and empowerment. Such missions might once have been confined to Service and Support Departments (for example Nurseries, or Staff Development), Vocational Preparation Programmes (for example Teacher Education, Social Work Training), or more generally, institutions with overt spiritual frameworks and affiliations, such as colleges maintained by particular faiths. As such, these examples expose meanings of care that are overtly religious, specifically exhortations to charity and responsibility, and in addition, with obligation to those who are on the margins.

This last area has assumed great significance in higher education in particular over the last quarter century, with literature attesting to the impact of 'caring pedagogies' on students of difference, whether through poverty, alienation or 'non-traditionality' (Hauver James 2012). But in the last decade in particular, such meanings have moved centre stage in relation to the caring work in universities, and arguably the impetus to 'care' has shifted from institutional ethos and individual responsibility, toward structural imperative and transaction and individual inclination. But two movements in particular stand at odds with such 'caring' pedagogy: educational markets on the one hand, and risk management on the other. For example, according to Bunce et al. (2017), students studying at universities in England have been defined as customers by the government since the introduction of student tuition fees. As they point out however, despite well-publicized opposition to fees from much of the educational establishment, there is a lack of empirical evidence

about the extent to which students have expressed a consumer orientation together with an understanding of how such a stance impacts upon student learning behaviour and academic performance.

Since research in market behaviour suggests that provision of services is altered by the behaviour of customers, then one might expect a burgeoning literature on how academics are expected to deal with increasing amounts of 'caring' work to help keep students satisfied and to placate increasingly vocal customers. One might especially expect this given the parallel rise in importance of very visible student feedback mechanisms, including the National Student Survey (NSS) in which aspects of teaching quality, academic support and learning development play a very significant role. In other words, the pressure on academics to increasingly visibly 'care' and to perform 'caring work' should be evident in both student learning research and higher education pedagogy research. And in turn, that such literature would expose a gradual student learning behaviour in which expectations of particular types of teaching were increasingly evident. But arguably, that is not the case.

Certainly, there are many studies that demonstrate that students are increasingly vocal about 'contact time', and rapid response rates in assessment feedback. But such studies emphasise quite narrow pedagogic actions and reveal an emphasis on time-related contingent pedagogy. Very few studies explore in detail the more global-impact of either 'relationships' or 'care' in higher education, and those that do, reveal complex mechanisms at work in both the ways the students conceptualize and experience caring teaching. For example, the work of Bunce et al. (2017) on students' academic progress, revealed that as expected, consumer orientation mediated traditional relationships between learner identity, grade goal and academic performance, but crucially, that a higher consumer orientation was associated with lower academic performance. Conversely, in the context of espoused 'caring' teachers within higher education, the work of Walker and Gleaves (2016) asserted that it was the more wide-ranging, ecology building and intimacy of caring teaching, that in their teachers' accounts, made the most difference to students' learning. Despite the aforementioned relative paucity of pedagogic care studies in higher education, studies in the fields of transformational and dialogic learning (Shim 2008) have repeatedly shown

that creating purposeful relationships within higher education is critical to student learning and that empathic and responsive relationships in particular are of great salience to students. Critically, and standing behind such testimony, is the fact that all individuals, whether students or teachers, have innate needs to ‘belong’, and to incite ‘mattering’ or ‘relational significance’ to other people (Riley 2009).

So why is there such a seeming disconnect between what many academics seem to believe about caring, what they do about it, and crucially, what students believe about the experience and impact of caring teaching?

Supportive Learning or Purposive Teaching: Understanding Why Relationships Matter to Learners Within Higher Education Contexts

Many studies attesting to the ‘power’ of caring teachers seem to highlight the very personal and often idiosyncratic nature of such teaching, rather than seeking to ask how it can be theorized and transferred. However, the idea that such exceptionality should be accepted only as a function of individual values or beliefs seems to point to a lack of systematicity to the research base and would therefore suggest that we should build data and generate theory to support the claims for relational and caring approaches to higher education pedagogy, and seek to elucidate the mechanisms by which each contributes to student progression and achievement. Any such theory building must first start however, with exploring definitions of care, what caring teaching might look like in general, and how it might be conceptualized to be specifically a purposive and productive higher education pedagogic practice. And that must surely start with an examination of what students experience, and what we imagine they experience, by way of caring.

Repeated analyses of student feedback at institutional, national and international level cite both the critical importance of personal contact in the facilitation of effective student academic support, and the consistent personal investment in students’ progress and ultimate achievements

as predicates to very high-quality learning environments (Docan-Morgan 2011). In addition, empirical studies (Zepke and Leach 2010) reveal that particular teaching practices based on purposeful and mutually productive relationships between academics and students, and standing behind this, the creation of learning environments that promote active understanding of the role of emotion and well as cognition on student behaviours such as resilience, persistence and confidence, are antecedents to high levels of student progression and achievement as well as high levels of perceived satisfaction with their programmes of study.

But relational teaching is significant for other reasons too, related to the diversity of the student body and the need to be inclusive to all students and therefore to maximize the possibility of student achievement across all student demographics and experiences. Motivation research shows repeatedly that student achievement and experience is related to expectations and that these are framed by perceived academics' expectations and their demonstrable engagement (Hagenauer and Volet 2014b). If such expectations are low or absent (for example if there is no engagement between staff and students, there is little or no investment in achievement, or no explicit acknowledgement of an academic's role in the learning process) then it is the students' own expectations (or their peers') that shape their eventual progress and outcomes. For many students this is unproblematic, since they have well-developed self-theories and effective learning behaviours. But there are a significant number of students for whom such lack of a meaningful and purposeful relationship and lack of 'mattering' is a key antecedent either to under-performance, or to academic failure (Docan-Morgan 2011). Such students thrive in academic environments where relational approaches to teaching and learning are explicit and supported at all levels. This is not to say that students should be inculcated into a therapeutic culture, or that nurturing is more important than rigorous intellectual activity: drawing on the evidence from other sectors of education would suggest strongly that such relationships 'scaffold' autonomy more effectively than other adjunct approaches (such as learning skills interventions) and longer term, are more sustainable since they foster the growth of social and cultural capital in such students.

Teachers have a unique opportunity to support students' academic and social development at all levels of schooling and education through the construction of these effective and impactful pedagogic relationships privileging the values and behaviours that include trust, diligence, responsiveness, and attentiveness (Goldstein 1999; Thayer-Bacon and Bacon 1996). The active fostering and maintenance of bonds predicated upon these values and the behaviours of teachers and academics who enact them are consistently associated in the existing educational literature with the concept of pedagogic care and may be termed 'caring exemplifiers' (Larson 2006; Walker and Gleaves 2016; Zembylas et al. 2014). Teachers and academics that enact these exemplifiers:

- Listen to students
- Show empathy for students
- Support students in diverse ways
- Are active in the processes of learning in class
- Give appropriate and encouraging feedback and praise
- Have high expectations in standards of work and behaviour
- Show an active concern in students' personal lives.

But studies such as Komarraju et al. (2010) have shown that students responding to surveys featuring the learning experience and the quality of support and intellectual engagement repeatedly express the opinion that although there is amongst many student bodies, the expectation that deep intellectually transforming bonds will be made during their studies is not operationalized at many institutions, and furthermore, that for many students, there is frequently little sense of academics expressing or enacting any sense of personal investment in students' progress or achievement. Research also suggests that students who do not perceive any form of attachment to lecturers are more likely to withdraw from programmes of study (see, for example, Brinkworth et al. 2009) and also much more likely to express dissatisfaction with other elements of their programmes of study as well. Conversely, academics who support students actively and explicitly in their learning much more positively impact both their academic and personal outcomes.

Although many institutions and individual programmes of study have developed particular innovations at disciplinary or general support level to improve perceptions of support, such innovations, whilst welcome by students, often do not impact upon fundamental issues of a personal relational nature that students appear to value most. Furthermore, other research seems to suggest that the biggest impact on students' progression and achievement is encapsulated in the idea of particular teachers and academics as being 'exceptional', their 'caring' being 'outstanding' or especially memorable or impactful in some way, as suggested in the elucidation of the earlier caring exemplifiers. However, this area is conceptually complex, since relationships in existing studies are frequently operationalized by the frequency of their occurrence, on the basis that time and access are limiting factors to learning and teaching impact. In some qualitative and narrative studies however, it is individual salience that is the critical factor, and so any research must be responsive enough to articulate and interpret students' lived experiences of pedagogic caring and relationships. So, is there such evidence and how does it demonstrate the urgency of adopting caring pedagogies within higher education?

The answer to this, and the explanation as to why Caring Pedagogy is both not really so progressive after all, yet is paradoxically both potentially and inherently disruptive, lies in the beliefs that both academics and institutions have about relationships in general and care in particular. Unsurprisingly, and perhaps especially, given the growth of acknowledgement and realisation of abuse and harassment in society, as exemplified by the testimony in the '*#MeToo*' movement, relational activity between teachers and students at university is higher profile than ever before. Litigation ranging from alleged sexual assault, to exposure of serial predatory behaviour, through to reports of academics seducing their students, demonstrate very widespread concern in our culture about how particular types of relationship maybe manifest in lecturers' motivations about and for their students. Such concerns are multi-layered though—they may reflect the understanding that power inequalities between students and academics increase the risks of coercion, and they may also reflect the beliefs that students are inherently objects of difference and deficit, that therefore ingrain the structural

inequalities of particular types of student. Above all, these changes expose the unique vulnerabilities of learners and learning. As such, it is therefore unsurprising that discussions of relationships, and of caring and deep attachments, provoke anxiety within institutions and in academic staff. Indeed, senior managers, concerned with risk management, publicity, and highly visible impacts on league tables and national ratings, wince at the mention of closeness, intimacy, attachment, since everything must be channelled through the conduit of proper academic progress and achievement, and be empirically demonstrated as to the veracity of intent and impact. In such a context, it is difficult and unorthodox to consider the role that care and caring plays in classrooms and learning; and deeply problematic to envisage an intimate and attachment-based view of relationships that might still have legitimate effects on learners and learning. Certainly, as I have already argued, the evidence is there in relation to testimony and narrative; but the evidence is currently missing in quantifiable terms, and this is a problem for caring in higher education, and why as a pedagogic philosophy and practice, it remains therefore both progressive and even dangerous.

Progressive Caring Pedagogy: Concerns and Contestations in Twenty First Century Higher Education

Over the last decade, pedagogic research in higher education has begun to explore the significance of ‘mattering’ on learners’ behaviours, with studies emerging to illustrate that such processes as motivational displacement, attunement and the formation of deep bonds act as the predicates of human behaviour that is able to be both self-regulating and reflexive. But according to some researchers, caring about students, as the basis of constructing pedagogic bonds, may also lead to the formation of less desirable relationships, and the fostering of potentially damaging educational climates. For example, Ecclestone’s work over the last decade (see her paper of [2012](#) for example) has repeatedly suggested that students may become accustomed to ‘therapeutic’

pedagogies, which infantilize students and make them less resilient, whilst Koskina (2013) points to the possibility of creating damaging 'psychological contracts' between staff and students, leading ultimately to unsustainable academic expectations. Related directly to this, studies such as they exist, point to caring teaching as being difficult and fraught: for students, it may mean that they are required to engage with behaviours and personal qualities such as self-efficacy issues and shyness for example that are uncomfortable for them. In turn, for teachers it may mean that once they engage with student-led responsiveness at a deep level, they may have to make sense of issues of learning entwining both intellect and affect that only emerge through the formation of particular types of academic-student relationships (Hagenauer and Volet 2014a, b).

The caring teaching and learning environments that I have discussed so far, attest to the 'power' of caring teachers for example, but seem to highlight the very personal and often idiosyncratic nature of such teaching, rather than seeking to ask how it can be theorized and transferred. Furthermore, many studies implicitly endorse the notion that exceptionalism should be accepted only as a function of individual values or beliefs without properly attempting to disentangle the meanings and practices of both relational and caring approaches to teaching within higher education. Because although teaching and learning is undoubtedly a relationship, that doesn't make it a necessarily caring one. To elevate it to that is both to reconceptualise it as a responsibility, and also to be explicit about lecturers' obligations to students not as consumers, or customers, but as people. Effective teaching and effective learning relies on the creation, fostering and maintenance of emotional bonds to promote development (Goldstein 1999). Learning is a subjective experience in which the personal meaning of students and lecturers intersect to bring life to a curriculum, all the while bringing to bear on the experience, each other's pasts and feelings about these. When done well, the continual and renewed emotional growth of both the student and teacher is intrinsic to the student's intellectual development.

Whilst literature acknowledges this, there is an almost overwhelming emphasis on the cognitive components of learning at the expense of

understanding its emotional elements, and so any future inquiry must at once be explicit about this current disconnect, whilst seeking to legitimize caring through the demonstration of a sounds vehicle base that it somehow makes a difference. But to do that would require a progressive re-reading of teaching and learning, as an active construction of meaning, what Biesta (2008) termed the ‘in between space’. Of course, very many lecturers do acknowledge this, and already practice teaching in this way, but it is frequently associated with limits—specifically time and space—as in the opportunities for unlimited dialogue and discussion and as in the proximity of lecturer–student hood, rather than by emotion, and not to say spiritual concerns. This collision between values and material concerns is characterised in the apotheosis of the caring relationship, the Oxbridge tutorial system, in which the continued exposure to and experience of learner–teacher close relationships fosters both critical and independent analysis as well as personal growth Palfreyman (2008). The difficulty for academics in the twenty first century is that in almost all other institutional cases, such close intellectual and emotional relationships are deeply problematic, with large student numbers, large lecture spaces, pressures in relation to contact time, assessment turnaround times and so on. Together with the structural impediments to understanding caring as outlined previously, such a scenario requires that we re-phrase the question. The question then, that caring teaching seems to present, is not whether it is desirable, but that how can it be enshrined in higher education pedagogy in such a way that it both accepts the human value of pedagogic relationships, whilst validly and legitimately acknowledging their pedagogic value and impact, however that may be felt and however that may look.

As a virtue, caring’s value in teaching is undisputed, if implicit. Within educational institutions, whether as a teacher, lecturer or academic, caring is an important attribute in terms of demonstrable actions, in that professionals in these spheres would almost certainly be offended and concerned if there was a perception that they were uncaring, toward their work or their students (O’Connor 2008). Nevertheless, it is possible, as Goldstein and Lake (2003) point out,

to attest to caring behaviours whilst rarely demonstrating them, a dissonance that Noddings (1986) terms 'relational fidelity'. Likewise, teachers and academics may well behave consistently in such a way and carry out their work with what appears to be a form of particular social relations so being perceived by others to be caring, yet holding no particular system of beliefs that identifies relational pedagogy as being significant to themselves as individuals. Consequently, a major issue for any inquiry attempting to capture the inner lives of caring teachers concerns fidelity and validity: what something looks like, pedagogically speaking, may not be what its motivation is, and indeed therefore, what the desired and actual effects on students themselves. Such matters are not hypothetical, since they concern the intersection between pedagogic practice and the agendas of individual academics: within the realms of pedagogic relationships, there are many examples of where personal teaching approaches may well reflect personal lifestyle agendas and not be in the best interests of teaching.

This is a key concern for the practice of pedagogic care since it questions the meaning and status of care as a mechanism to effect change, not just in pedagogic, but also social terms. Whilst caring has for a very long time been associated with a form of character education for particular forms of society (Nowak-Fabrykowski 2012), research is increasingly concerned with the impact of teacher care on student outcomes and particularly pro-social related ones. Whilst the reasons are in many cases instrumental, and impact upon school and district measures of institutional performance, they are no less important for that, particularly from the perspective of the pupils themselves. For example, students are increasingly under pressure from forms of social activity that place them at risk, such as cyberbullying, gang membership and drug use. At the same time, students are pressurized to perform more resiliently, to higher academic standards and with better progression outcomes. The literature on caring teaching suggests that teachers who care are able to impart change touching students personally, socially and academically, affecting students' learning in both cognitive and affective domains, and as such is therefore a potentially critical area of future pedagogic research.

Concluding Thoughts

Over the last decade, the meaning of ‘relational’ in higher education pedagogy in many countries worldwide has subtly but clearly changed, toward more simultaneously culturally responsive and transactional meanings and arguably away from humanistic and empowering ones (Zembylas et al. 2014). For example, major changes in the nature of particular European higher education systems over the last decade, such as the introduction of high-level fees, the adoption of intensive ‘internationalization’ programmes, and the construction of global campuses, have exposed critical facets in the construction of educative experiences, and led many institutions to ‘codify’ their obligations to students, not least in terms of academic-student relationships (Walker and Gleaves 2016). The work of Barnett (2008) is critical here: on the concept of ‘solicitude’, Barnett’s vision of teaching in higher education is of such a kind that it values above all the focus on the student as ‘being’, the deepest form of transformation. However, this vision resonates with the notion of institutional codification of caring academic-student relationships: as Blackie et al. (2010) point out, ‘...the whole idea of valuing the person of student seems unmanageable. The sense of personal responsibility implicit in the notion of care when one is dealing with classes of over 100 students is just beyond the imagination of most of us’ (p. 642).

Nevertheless, caring teachers, perhaps against all odds, do reconcile personal motivation with professional rationalization when it comes to pedagogic care in higher education: certainly, the work of Walker and Gleaves (2016) illustrates the potency of its potential to distress and disturb, yet ultimately deepen and transform. For many teachers, the salient question is not ‘why teach?’ but ‘why is the practice of teaching worth putting at the center of one’s life?’. For those teachers are convinced of the educational value of caring relationships as ways to expand the fullest possible outcomes of the act of teaching, even when there is limited evidence to claim that pedagogic caring is especially efficacious in relation to visible and tangible academic outcomes such as grades and progression.

This notion of a compulsion to care even in the face of difficult higher education terrain as well as there currently being limited evidence for caring's potency is precisely where care intersects with hope and all pedagogies of possibility. As a trainee teacher over two decades ago, one of my tutors used to say repeatedly that "hope is a passion for the possible, and your job as teachers of the future, is to teach children so that the possible is inevitable". At the time, and trying to teach physics to classes of over 30 mostly very badly behaved 16 year olds, and being so consumed with the desperation and difficulty of class management, the possible was an abstraction and the inevitable was certain misery. Outcomes for my pupils were targets that I knew on one level that I had to hit regardless, but on my more (and far fewer) cogent days, they were imbued with a sense of urgency and almost overwhelming purpose. It was on these days, that somehow, the possible became the necessary and my hopes became compulsions to make every child that I taught, changed in the process. Through doing everything possible to achieve this, I became what some school-centred literature calls a 'turn-around teacher', but that is actually a caring teacher as exposed through the pedagogic research, and such teachers 'turnaround' children, classes, achievement, schools, indeed, human lives (Sanders and Rivers 1996). They do this through hope—but hope not as a static, distant vision, hope as a dynamic project in reforming each day and each person at a time, in my terms, being actively caring.

But does that mean that such teachers, and they exist in schools, universities, colleges, only ever live in the present and thus see care and thus hope as a daily struggle, a yearning that things will get better, especially if we do all that is possible to make them happen, to make them inevitable as I tried to do as a teacher? What about that deep imagining of hope, that passion that makes it worth going on for? To find an answer for this, we should turn to scripture, just as we did earlier in defining Care to begin with. Jewish Liturgy recognizes two kinds of hope: one a feeling that things will get better, even when we accept the possibility that this may not happen in the way that we might want it to. Called *Tikvah* in Hebrew, this is a natural urge in us all to want and to anticipate a better future, whether in half an hour, tomorrow or the next year. The other kind of hope sits in contrast—termed *Tocheles* in

Hebrew, this is hope as a vision that is certain in its eventuality—writ large as caring teaching, turnaround teaching, my vision of making the possible inevitable.

It is in this vein, that caring teaching is a clear pedagogy of hope, but it defies a neat account about how that manifests in the reality of every day teaching in higher education. One part of caring is very human and very consequential, as natural and integral to human functioning as any biological process. The other part of caring is a vision that demands effort to attain, and that research shows is not the possession or inclination of everyone. But crucially, in a higher education where evidence bases and systematic studies are dominant, is also a vision that is need of an argument to justify its very existence. Reflecting on the codification of relationships in teaching and learning, and in the myriad ways in which each one of us experience care, the obligation of teachers, whether they are school, college or university teachers, is to offer a possibility that even when ideas, thoughts, concepts—all these elements of learning—are difficult, that students will prevail. Hope is that certainty of prevalence.

As such, caring pedagogy, need not be either visible or measurable. But even so, in learning contexts where educators are exhorted constantly to be passionate, and to inspire, how is that possible when educators are also expected to silence their care, or to discipline it so that it is sanitized and institutionally legitimized. Such care and such passion is selective and ambiguous: it is no wonder that students and academics alike are confused by relational expectations of them. But this is not to say that academics who care can let relationships and attachments get in the way of proper academic inquiry, because, as Barale (1994, p. 23) asserts in relation to the visibility and expression of feelings and passions in the classroom, ‘it is precisely our sensitivity to the discomforts we cause and as a result, also experience, that can make classroom erotics a tempting solution to academic alienation’. But it does mean that as academics who are also human beings, we should consider breaking the bounds of silence concerning caring and its place within university teaching and learning, and acknowledge the possibilities that it may create.

References

- Barale, M. A. (1994). The Romance of Class and Queers: Academic Erotic Zones. In L. Garber (Ed.), *Tilting the Tower* (pp. 16–24). New York: Routledge.
- Barnett, R. (2008). *A Will to Learn: Being a Student in an Age of Uncertainty*. Maidenhead, Berkshire: Open University Press.
- Biesta, G. J. J. (2008). *Beyond Learning*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers.
- Blackie, M. A. L., Case, J. M., & Jawitz, J. (2010). Student-Centredness: The Link Between Transforming Students and Transforming Ourselves. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 15(6), 637–646.
- Brinkworth, R., McCann, B., Matthews, C., & Nordström, K. (2009). First Year Expectations and Experiences: Student and Teacher Perspectives. *Higher Education*, 58, 157–173.
- Bunce, L., Baird, A., & Jones, S. E. (2017). The Student-as-Consumer Approach in Higher Education and Its Effects on Academic Performance. *Studies in Higher Education*, 42(11), 1958–1978.
- Docan-Morgan, T. (2011). ‘Everything Changed’: Relational Turning Point Events in College Teacher–Student Relationships from Teachers’ Perspectives. *Communication Education*, 60, 20–50.
- Ecclestone, K. (2012). From Emotional and Psychological Well-Being to Character Education: Challenging Policy Discourses of Behavioural Science and ‘Vulnerability’. *Research Papers in Education*, 27(4), 463–480.
- Fine, M. D. (2007). *A Caring Society?* London: Palgrave.
- Goldstein, L. (1999). The Relational Zone: The Role of Caring in the Co-construction of Mind. *American Educational Research Journal*, 36(3), 647–673.
- Goldstein, L. S., & Lake, V. E. (2003). The Impact of Field Experience on Preservice Teachers’ Understandings of Caring. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 30(3), 115–132.
- Hagenauer, G., & Volet, S. E. (2014a). Teacher–Student Relationship at University: An Important Yet Under-Researched Field. *Oxford Review of Education*, 40(3), 370–388.
- Hagenauer, G., & Volet, S. E. (2014b). ‘I Don’t Think I Could, You Know, Just Teach Without Any Emotion’: Exploring the Nature and Origin of University Teachers’ Emotions. *Research Papers in Education*, 29, 240–262.
- Hauer James, J. (2012). Caring for “Others”: Examining the Interplay of Mothering and Deficit Discourses in Teaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 28(2), 165–173.

- Kandiko, C. B., & Kinchin, I. M. (2013). Developing Discourses of Knowledge and Understanding: Longitudinal Studies of PhD Supervision. *London Review of Education*, 11(1), 46–58.
- Komaraju, M., Musulkin, S., & Bhattacharya, G. (2010). Role of Student-Faculty Interactions in Developing College Students' Academic Self-Concept, Motivation, and Achievement. *Journal of College Student Development*, 51, 332–342.
- Koskina, A. (2013). What Does the Student Psychological Contract Mean? Evidence from a UK Business School. *Studies in Higher Education*, 38(7), 1020, 1036.
- Kreber, C., & Klampfleitner, M. (2013). Lecturers' and Students' Conceptions of Authenticity in Teaching and Actual Teacher Actions and Attributes Students Perceive as Helpful. *Higher Education*, 66, 463–487.
- Larson, A. (2006). Student Perception of Caring Teaching in Physical Education. *Sport, Education and Society*, 11(4), 337–352.
- Mariskind, C. (2014). Teachers' Care in Higher Education: Contesting Gendered Constructions. *Gender and Education*, 26(3), 306–320.
- Noddings, N. (1986). Fidelity in Teaching, Teacher Education, and Research for Teaching. *Harvard Educational Review*, 56(4), 496–510.
- Noddings, N. (2003). *Happiness and Education*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nowak-Fabrykowski, T. K. (2012). An Analysis of Caring Behaviour among Early Childhood Teachers and Children. *Early Child Development and Care*, 182(9), 1185–1192.
- O'Connor, K. E. (2008). 'You Choose to Care': Teachers, Emotions and Professional Identity. *Teaching And Teacher Education*, 24(1), 117–126.
- OED. (2009). *Oxford English Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Palfreyman, D. (Ed.). (2008). *The Oxford Tutorial: Thanks, You Taught Me How to Think* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Oxford Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies.
- Reich, W. T. (1995). 'History of the Notion of Care'. In W. T. Reich (Ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Bioethics* (Rev. ed.). New York: Simon and Schuster, 319–331.
- Riley, P. (2009). An Adult Attachment Perspective on the Student–Teacher Relationship and Classroom Management Difficulties. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 25(5), 626–635.
- Sanders, W., & Rivers, J. (1996). *Cumulative and Residual Effects of Teachers on Future Student Academic Achievement*. Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Value-Added Research and Assessment Center.

- Shim, S. H. (2008). A Philosophical Investigation of the role of Teachers: A Synthesis of Plato. *Confucius, Buber and Freire, Teaching and Teacher Education*, 24(3), 515–535.
- Thayer-Bacon, B., & Bacon, C. S. (1996). Caring Professors: A Model. *The Journal of General Education*, 45(4), 255–256.
- Tran, T. T. (2015). Is Graduate Employability the ‘Whole of Higher-Education-Issue?’ *Journal of Education and Work*, 28(3), 207–227.
- Walker-Gleaves, C. (2010). *Invisible Threads of Pedagogic Care: A Study of ‘Caring’ Academics and Their Work Within a UK University*. Saarbrücken: LAP-Verlag.
- Walker, C., & Gleaves, A. (2016). Constructing the Caring Higher Education Teacher: A Theoretical Framework. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 54, 65–76.
- Yorke, M., Orr, S., & Blair, B. (2014). Hit by a Perfect Storm? *Studies in Higher Education*, 39(10), 1877–1810.
- Zembylas, M., Bozalek, V., & Shefer, T. (2014). Tronto’s Notion of “Privileged Irresponsibility” and the Reconceptualisation of Care: Implications for Critical Pedagogies of Emotion in Higher Education. *Gender and Education*, 26(3), 200–214.
- Zepke, N., & Leach, L. (2010). Beyond Hard Outcomes: ‘Soft’ Outcomes and Engagement as Student Success. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 15, 661–673.