

150 TCoNTC – To Care or Not to Care Paper Series

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Research Domains

Learning, teaching and assessment (LTA)

Abstract

This paper discusses a series of cross-disciplinary pedagogic research-pieces on the role of the concept of care in Higher Education and its perception by staff and students. It seeks to outline a series of research papers which are being developed, with the aim of contributing to the body of research on students' perception of care, the attitude of faculties towards the subject of care, the impact of care on students' learning, and how insights into the phenomenon of care can be used to achieve better outcomes for students.

The paper builds on previous research on the dimensions of care, students' perceptions of care, the relationship between care-oriented practices and identified learning differences, and the care-needs of particular groups of students as informed by those identified learning differences.

The authors will provide an overview of the whole research paper series, its key themes, the methodologies being adopted, and some initial findings.

Full paper

The TCoNTC paper series is a cross-disciplinary pedagogic research project on the role of care in Higher Education, and its perception by staff and students. This paper series will contribute to the body of research on students' perception of care, attitude of faculties towards the subject of care, the impact of care on students' learning and how care can be leveraged to achieve better student outcomes like increased student engagement, higher student performance and progression, better quality students, etc.

Some research has been done on the dimensions of care (Velasquez et al., 2013), students' perception of care (Meyers, 2009) and the need to care for particular student groups like refugees (Lenette, 2016), school leavers (Wilson et al., 2019), non-traditional students (Holmegaard et al., 2017), etc. However, there has been limited research on staff's perspective of care, their attitudes to care, motivations for care and potential impact of care on students. This study is therefore aimed at exploring these concepts with the ultimate goal of providing demonstrated insight into how teaching pedagogies around care can be effectively designed, translated, and transferred unto active teaching practices across student cohorts in Higher Education.

This conference paper will give an overview of the four interconnected papers which the authors are planning and will provide both an overview of identified key themes and the mechanism required to draw some of these together.

There are currently four papers planned in the series. The first paper seeks to critically assess the various definitions of care in a bid to set a good background for the research as the topic is explored further. In this paper, the concept of care will be defined and explored via an analysis of observed teaching practices.

The second paper would build on the findings of the first paper's establishment of a clear and comprehensive definition of care. The garnered understanding of the different perspectives on care will serve as a bedrock to seek a deeper understanding of the motivations of care as evidenced by various teaching colleagues. Four main research questions would lie at the heart of this second paper: Do Higher Education staff care? If yes, why do they care? If yes, how is that care manifested? If no, why do they not care? These questions will help unravel the interconnections between observed core values and philosophies that guide various teaching practices in Higher Education.

Once the study's researchers have been able to establish the facilitators behind motivations for care and their attendant pros and cons, they will then turn their attention to identifying effective strategies necessary for implementing an active culture of care in academia. The focus of this third paper is to delineate the mechanisms necessary to enact the concept of motivation to care via the practice of active coaching in Higher Education.

The fourth and final paper in the series brings the line of inquiry around care and the enactment of care to a head by extrapolating the findings of the first three papers unto the wider Higher Education environment. As awareness about the concept of care, the motivations to care and the coaching activities that facilitate the enactment of care are raised, the last paper of this anthology will explore practical approaches to normalising care in Higher Education. This would close the loop of analysis by disseminating findings on individual teaching pedagogies to the wider teaching sphere, with the potential end of further influencing individual teaching pedagogies.

In this conference paper, the authors will discuss the mixed methodologies being used for the first paper and will conclude by reporting some of the key findings which are beginning to emerge in this four-paper series. They look forward to presenting the individual findings for each stream of work in subsequent years.

References

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