

My philosophy of
education education
is about caring
education essay



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I work in Universitas Terbuka (UT), Indonesia Open University, as an academic staff who can be considered as a teacher. At UT, my students are early childhood education and also primary education teachers. Actually, I never had any dream to be a teacher. However, I think I do my job as a teacher just following my instinct, even though I learn some knowledge about how to teach when I did my bachelor degree. Honestly, I got my bachelor degree in teaching without knowing what and why I have to know my philosophy of education. But, I learn in SFU that my teaching is very influenced by my philosophy of education. My philosophy of education will be shown in my teaching as I learned that “ how you teach is who you are” (Hill, Stremmel, & Hu, 2005, p. 25).

In teaching I remember that I have to make lesson plans, teach and then do the evaluation to test the students. I know that I have to put students as the center of my teaching activities. I understand it since education for me is the efforts for helping people to reach the best they can be, and to make them grow as human beings. However, I am never sure whether the way I teach has shown students as being at the centre of my teaching. I am afraid my

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teaching is far from the way it should be. I hope I can learn more about how to be a good and caring teacher while I am studying in SFU.

For me education fundamentally involves teaching: everything is (or can be) teaching. Therefore, my philosophy of education relates with the act of teaching, and in thinking of my philosophy of education, I remember David Orr's article in 1990. I was interested and also compelled by Orr's (1990) title of his article: "What is education for?" Orr (1990), an environmentalist, said that education will not guarantee the graduates being decent, prudent, or wise. In fact, he said education has added many problems to the world. Orr had an opinion that the environmental destruction on Earth resulted from educated people. He further stated that to save the world, we need education of a certain kind. We need learning that can make us a better people. What is the learning that help us to be better human beings? I think we need learning to care for others in order to prevent people from doing harm to others. I also remember that when I was still a student, I would learn more if my teacher showed his/her attention; at least he/she knew my name, and wanted to listen to my difficulties in studying the subject matter. So, a caring teacher will motivate me to learn.

How can we learn about caring in education? This is a question I wish to explore in this paper. Based on my job as a teacher in my university, I have to learn about caring in education, and I want to help my university student teachers aware of the need of teaching caring in their classrooms, whether in early childhood education, or in primary education settings. I think that it is necessary for children to learn about caring since their early years to help them learn that their caring can save other people as well as themselves.

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Therefore, teachers need to learn or to help their students or their children to care for others, as well as for themselves, for the community, and for the natural environment.

In this essay, I will try to explain my ideas about caring, why caring is important as the aim of education, how caring can be shown in my work as a teacher and an academic staff in UT, and lastly, my conclusion will describe the implications of caring in my work at Universitas Terbuka.

What is Caring?

In defining caring, I am really impressed by Noddings's idea about caring since I think as human beings we have to care to each other.

Caring as mentioned by Nodding (2005) is a caring relation; a caring relation is “ a connection or encounter between two human beings” (p. 15) who are “ a carer and a recipient of care, or cared-for. In order for relation to be properly called caring, both parties must contribute to it in characteristic ways” (p. 15). The characterization of caring is as “ engrossment and motivational displacement” (p. 15). Noddings describes motivational displacement as the process of placing your attention on others when you listen, see, or feel, what the other tries to convey (p. 16). There is the attention on others and the desire to help people, as well (p. 16). As for engrossment, Noddings says it is “ an open, nonselective receptivity to the cared-for” (p. 15): this quality of complete attention to the other. In addition, a reception, recognition, and response seems to be had by the cared-for to show that the caring has been received (p. 16).

Noddings also mentions that we could not only say that we care for something without showing it (p. 17-18). Caring can be learnt, teachers not only have to create caring relations in which they are the carers, but they also have a responsibility to help students develop the capacity to care (p. 18). Noddings mentions that human beings can care about ideas or objects as well as care for the intellectual matter; these forms of caring are also mentioned by Weil (p. 18, in Noddings, 2005) as intellectual caring and interpersonal caring. However, caring teachers listen and respond differentially and uniquely to their students and their various temperaments and needs.

What Noddings wants to convey in her idea about caring is that caring does also include conscious love, attention, seeing, listening, understanding others' feelings, and helping or engaging in action as needed. So, when I show my attention to my students, in the same time I also try to see, listen with empathy, show a mutual understanding, and engage in some actions as my caring response. I also have to learn more about caring in order to make my caring meaningful for my students, and my students can also care in the way they teach their students.

Further, Hill, Stremmel, & Hu (2005) noted that "the caring teacher tries to look through students' eyes, to struggle with them as subjects in search of their own projects, their own ways of making sense of the world (Green, 1988, in Hill, Stremmel, & Hu, 2005, p. 33). This is empathy. Moreover, Hill, Stremmel, & Hu (2005) stated that caring teachers try to learn together with their students, and "be a partner, nurturer, and guide in creating multiple

opportunities for learning based on relationship” (p. 33). By learning, teachers can understand their students, and understand themselves as well.

In teaching, actually, I believe that as a teacher, I am also learning from my students, and if I have a good relationship with students I can learn more about my students, and my students can also understand me as their teacher. Therefore, I can have some feedback to improve my teaching as well as I can give my students some comments to improve their learning. This mutual understanding I hope can lead to help me creating a better learning environment for my students to learn better and deeper.

Here are more about the characteristics of caring teachers, according to Caldwell (2008) from her research, and they are:

Student-oriented teacher: treat all students with respect, believes in me, listens, is patient, encourage me to think

The work oriented teacher: is bases my grade on more than homework and tests, is willing to adjust the workload if needed, is willing to give extra time for completing assignments, is willing to change the classroom rules when necessary, accepts more than one answer to a question.

The Teacher Who Engages Students: Is an expert in the subject, helps me to become independent, is willing to give extra time for completing assignments, provides opportunities for classroom discussions, offers “ extra credit” activities.

The Active Teacher: Is energetic, has a sense of humor, tells stories and uses examples, provides interesting assignments, bases my grade on more than
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homework and tests. Students now ask for a teacher who has to have some interesting strategies that can attract students' attention. By becoming an active, energetic, and humorous teacher, students seem like a teacher who can also entertain them. Perhaps, by using some humor, I can prevent my students from getting bored of learning the subject matter. However, I think I have to learn more about becoming a good entertainer in front of a class. I have to also learn more about providing my students with some interesting assignments.

From the students who became Caldwell (2008) participants of her survey, I see that caring can mean many ideal things that teachers should have, not only caring as mentioned as Noddings' (2005) perception. Caldwell's list expands upon and specifies the many ways in which caring can and should occur. And I am not sure whether I can apply all of those ideas into my teaching and my curriculum since I have my limitations as a human. For example, if I have a lot work to do, or if I am not in a good health, I am afraid I might not use all of my attention to my students, it means that I might not really listen to and understand my students, or others'. However, I will try to use the idea as my basis knowledge to be a caring teacher. Meanwhile, I will try to learn more deeply about this idea of caring, especially how to care for our communities and our environment.

Noddings's idea about caring also included her idea of caring not only for human beings but for all of things in the world such as caring for the world community and the environment. If we do not care for our environment, we can destroy our own earth. Especially if the people who have no or less care for the earth are educated and powerful people. They can make more
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damages to our environment in the earth. And this is the phenomena that Orr observed, so he made a statement that we do not need many educated people if that can give more damages to our environment.

In response to Orr statement about education, I argue that the world's environmental destruction comes from the people who do not care for themselves, their family, their community and their earth. I think people are being ignorant with regard to themselves, others, their community, and the earth since probably nobody reminds them or teaches them to have the awareness of and care for others. Therefore, in this matter I believe that education is important for people to learn how to care for others, as well as to care for themselves, to care to the earth, and to the environment. The educational challenge is to learn how to care for the earth and environment by developing ecological literacy.

What I mean by ecological literacy is a way to say that “” everything is connected.” A study of these interconnections highlights our dependence on the healthy functioning of the earth's natural systems which give us clean air, water, soil, food, and all the other resources we depend on.” (Toronto Outdoor Education Schools, http://toes.tdsb.on.ca/ecological_literacy_resources.asp).

In understanding the ecological literacy concept, I have to understand that I am not alone in the world, I am a part of the big system running in the world which consist of human beings and their communities and the environment. Each of us has the responsibilities to take care to each other in order to maintain the function of the earth natural systems can work well.

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Caring as the aim of education

Similar to Noddings's goal of education, for me, the aim of education should be based on caring to prevent the graduates from being ignorant of other people, of their communities, of their environment, and all of these forms of ignorance lead to being ignorant of themselves, since all of us in the world are interrelated. This aim of education also supported by Littky (2004) who says that, " the real goal of education is if the students care for others and can get along better with others". Noddings has the idea of caring in education since she experienced and was impressed by many carings that she got from her teachers.

Furthermore, for me, education should always relate to and be inspired by caring since education is for helping people, helping students to grow to be a caring human being. If the students become caring children they will also care for others and also for themselves, for the communities and for the earth; they also can always learn to improve themselves. By being a caring teacher I hope I can help students learn more effectively. If I care for my students I have to put a lot of effort in helping them engage in their learning in order to help them learn more deeply about all the subject matter that they study. Therefore, I have to concern myself with my subject matter and my students' lives so that while I am teaching, actually I also am learning, as well. The main point of caring in education for me is showing our love to others and the earth

How I can show my caring into my work?

I argue that people who are involved in giving or providing an education, either in formal school, or in the family, or in some non degree programs, <https://assignbuster.com/my-philosophy-of-education-education-is-about-caring-education-essay/>

have to always be aware of their roles and their influence on their student, or their children, as cared-for teachers. Teachers have to learn about caring since “teaching happens in relationships of caring, thoughtfulness, and mutual respect” (Hill, Stremmel, & Hu, 2005, p. 33). Besides, I think I have to remind my students that each of us in the world is interrelated with each other. If we care for others, hopefully they can care for others, as well. My idea is if teachers, introduce their students to care for others, in the long run, I hope caring teachers and caring students will care for the world, and it is hopefully can lead to a better world. Therefore, if all of us care for people, the community and the environment, so we can, side by side, try to put a lot of effort to develop a caring class, a caring school, and a caring community to save the people and the world.

I think I can learn from SFU in learning about caring in education. Even though I have been at SFU for only seven months, there are some great impressions that I have received from SFU. I found that my teachers or professors or instructors at SFU have the spirit of caring in the way they plan and implement their curriculum in their teaching learning activities. I found, for example, that the professors can develop a flexible curriculum and teaching learning process to meet our needs as their students. I think my professors at SFU put a lot of effort to help us learn and engage in our learning. I also find that on the SFU website, it shows that SFU as a community cares for the environment, culture and diversity. I think I learn how to care in teaching from observing my professors, and how they design and carry out their teachings; each professor uniquely helps us become actively engaged with the learning material.

In doing my teaching, I have to be aware of my students needs while I am developing the study program curriculum, and curriculum for my teaching learning activities, including planning, and implementing my curriculum, and then, giving evaluation to my students. Since my work as a teacher in my faculty of education generally are developing a curriculum for my tutorials, writing some learning printed and non printed materials, developing some item tests, and do some teachings, so I plan to develop a flexible curriculum for my teachings, but, I have to make sure that I can do that, in my online tutorial, since in my office there is a rigid procedure concerning those kind of matters. At least, I can have a flexible curriculum in my face to face tutorials. I also want to add some materials about ecological literacy and caring for the communities into my curriculum and in teaching learning activities.

Environmental problems have already been a serious problem in my country, so I think I need to bring it up the issues to my student teachers, so that they can teach their students to care for the environment. I think I will show my students the 11th hour film and let it be the topic for my class discussion.

Therefore, my curriculum should help my students to develop their caring for themselves, their own communities and their environment. In doing my teaching, either in face to face or in online tutorial, I can do some actions as follow (based on my understanding of Cardwell, 2008), I would suggest that as a caring teacher for all of my students I have to be a student-oriented teacher, so I have to use some teaching strategies that can make my students get involved and engaged in their learning, I also have to treat all students with respect; therefore, I have to be careful in using some words that can show my respect to my students. In addition, as a caring teacher I

also have to believe in my students, to listen and to be a patient teacher and <https://assignbuster.com/my-philosophy-of-education-education-is-about-caring-education-essay/>

to try many efforts to encourage my students to learn more deeply about the subject matter and to learn for saving the environment

In doing either in a face to face or in online teaching, I also have to be a work oriented teacher who bases my students' grades on more than homework and tests, has a willingness to adjust the workload if needed, has a willingness to give extra time to students in completing assignments, has a willingness to change the classroom rules when necessary, and to accept more than one answer to a question, recognizing multiple perspectives. Therefore, I have to provide many discussion for the students to learn from each others. This can be done in face to face or in online learning as I experienced in doing dialogue central.

Additionally, I have to learn to be a teacher who can engage students in their learning. I can do this by learning more about my subject matter and trying to be an expert in the subject by joining some seminars or workshops or taking additional degree related with my subject. I also have to help my students to become independent learners who can provides opportunities for classroom discussions. My experiences that I learn while I am studying in SFU, I hope can help me in helping students engaged in their learning and help them to learn more independently. Moreover, in doing some face to face tutorials, and based on my experiences, as a caring teacher, I also have to be an active teacher who is energetic, has a sense of humor, tells stories and uses examples. Furthermore, I have to also learn about providing my students with some interesting assignments that can make them motivated to learn.

In doing my teaching learning activities, either in face to face or in online learning, I will use dialogue as my important way to help my students engage in their learning and make my students learning more deeply. Dialogue here is a learning process for students and the tutors which happens when there is an interaction between students, the tutors, and other students to conceptualize some meanings, and when they try to apply their current understanding by constructing new arguments, and elaborating current understanding by reflection (Scott et al. , 2008). I will use dialogue as my main teaching learning activities since by using dialogue I can learn and I can try to have a mutual understanding with my students. Based on my experiences, my students teachers really like to have dialogue with me as their teacher. This dialogue hopefully can motivate them to learn.

Conclusion and Implication

Education for me is a way to help students to be caring for others, their communities and their environment; and, caring education hopefully can help me and my students to live well in our places, and to have moral courage to join the fight to make the world habitable and humane. However, there are some considerations as my implications that I have to put in my mind about the following issues.

How can we develop caring in distance education at UT?

I think I want to apply this caring idea only for my own teaching, since if I want to inform to some of my friends about this idea of caring, I have to have some discussion with my dean of my faculty about the awareness of including caring in our teaching programs. Perhaps I can collaborate with my

other colleagues in my faculty to do a seminar or workshop about the awareness of caring to some of my other academic staff, and administrative staff, as well as my students. I hope, this way can give them an understanding of the meaning of caring and how to care for others and I can get help from the audiences about how to develop caring in schools. I also have to think about how to make my students learn about caring in doing their teaching in their own classrooms. I think caring is really an important matter for early childhood teachers since for their children the teachers like their parents. However, I know that this idea will ask more time of teachers to help their students. Being a caring teacher will also means that I have to provide more time to be with my students. More often, I have to spend sometimes after my office hours to meet, to talk to and to have dialogue with my students about their needs. I know that for some teachers providing more time more than the official office hours is not easy, especially if they have their own family. Therefore, I have to mention about this problem in order to make my students aware of the consequences of being caring teachers.

Will students appreciate being cared for? As a student, I know that I will have more motivation to learn if my teacher, he/she shows his/her attention and empathy to me, and if he/she asks me, if she/he wants to have dialogue with me and wants to help me to solve my problems, especially in my learning. Another example is from Noddings. Based on her experience of the caring she got from her teachers made Noddings got the idea of providing caring in the schools (Smith, 2004). Moreover, based on my experiences students will really like being cared for.

What are some of the challenges in developing a caring approach to education at UT? Actually, I just want to apply my caring education for myself. However, I have to consider some challenges that I might have. First, the challenges from the administrators such as my head of my unit, or my dean of the faculty; perhaps, they will question me since I will need more time to help my students in needs, and since sometimes I will have some students waiting for me in front of my room. I think I have to explain to my administrators about why I do what I believe as my caring in education. Second, the challenge that I might face perhaps come from my other lecturers, and the other staff of other units in UT. Perhaps they will feel that I am strange and it might happen that they will ask the reason of my action about caring in my teaching, if this happens I can explain about my believe of my teaching, but, I am hoping that my other colleagues will have more understanding to my philosophy of education. Therefore, I believe that most of my academic friends have the same caring for their students, as well. The challenge that I might have perhaps come from my friends who are in charge in some units related with students' affairs, for example, my friends who work in the registration or in the examination unit. In UT some students sometimes have problems related with registration unit or examination unit. Therefore, I will often go to the units asking for helps. Lastly, the challenges that I will face in applying my idea of caring are coming from my students. Even though my students mostly are early childhood education teachers, or primary teachers, but I have to remind my students to commit in learning and in practicing this caring idea in their own classrooms since their role as carers is very important to their students; perhaps, to help my students

more, I can provide a lot of examples to give students the concepts and examples of how to do caring in their classrooms.

In conclusion, I can say that implementing caring in my job as a teacher can help me to care for others, and I believe by caring for others, I can help others to become better people and, as well, I will learn to be a better person. In the long run, I hope, my students and I can help to maintain and to improve our community to save our environment. And I hope by caring we can help ourselves and our students become what Orr (1990) has in mind in *WHAT EDUCATION MUST BE FOR*, which is to make more peacemakers, healers, restorers, storytellers, and lovers of every shape and form. Therefore, by having care in my way of living, I hope I can answer Orr's question about what education is for.