The role of caring and compassion in pedagogy

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Abstract

How is pedagogy impacted by caring and compassion? This paper will explore some of the ideas and opinions that have been put forward in consideration of this question. The discussion will be structured around two objectives. The first objective will be to establish a theoretical framework for the discussion by examining a sample of the existing literature that relates to caring and compassionate pedagogy. The second objective will be to identify and discuss references to caring and compassionate pedagogy that are found in four selected books. The discussion will also include a look at data that make it possible to discuss caring and compassion in quantitative terms. The purpose of the discussion is to make the case that caring and compassion have a great impact on pedagogy and student achievement.
Just about anyone with even a passing familiarity of news in the United States would almost certainly get the sense that education of the nation’s children is considered to be very important. At all levels of government, federal, state and local much attention is given to the issue. While it is the case that there are differences in philosophy and approach to the matter of educating children, the claim can be made that there is little, if any, variance in the embrace of the belief that education and educational services must be delivered. Many different ideas about guiding children towards educational success have already been introduced to the debate and discussion, and there is the ongoing roll out of new ones.

With the stated objective of improving student achievement there have ideas and initiatives offered that address a wide variety of focus areas. Some ideas relate to school size and type. Some ideas relate to class size and groupings within classes. Teaching strategies and approaches is yet another one of the focus areas. An initiative that currently receives much attention is the practice of differentiation. This concept addresses the strategy that suggests the differentiation of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and environment, either or all of these, in the effort to accommodate students’ differences, and to improve achievement.

As would be expected matters that relate to teachers are also included among the focus areas. More often than not factors like teacher knowledge, skills and training receive attention. It is as if the emphasis is placed on whom and what the teacher is cognitively and professionally, that is, on how much they know and how skilled they are in share the knowledge that they possess. Seldom does one notice that there is any emphasis placed on whom and what the teacher is in the affective domain. What is the teacher’s passion? How does the teacher feel about children? Does the teacher really care about the student? Does the teacher have any
interest in building relationships with students? What are the teacher’s core perceptions about children? Are they seen as partners in a teaching and learning exercise, or are they seen as raw material that needs to be hampered and molded into shape?

This paper takes the position that questions like those just offered are of critical importance. The organizing theme is that caring and compassion have an important role to play in the education arena. Theories that relate to caring and compassionate pedagogy will be discussed, using references from a sampling of the published literature. In addition, examples of caring and compassionate pedagogy, as they appear in four different books, will be cited and discussed. The four books are: Dr. Rudy Crew’s *Only Connect: The Way to Save Our Schools*; Bob Fecho’s *Teaching for the Students*; the Nel Noddings edited *Educating Citizens For Global Awareness*; and Shaireen Rasheed’s *An Existentialist Curriculum of Action*.

**Caring and Compassionate Pedagogy**

There is the claim or suggestion that educational systems are inherently unfair, and that they routinely discriminate against students for a variety of reasons. While it might be the case that much of the unfairness and discrimination are not overt and intentional, they nonetheless exist. Conklin (2008) noted what she described as the intersection between an increasingly diverse student population, a persistently homogeneous teacher population, and ever-deepening inequities in educational, social, and economic opportunities. Among outcomes of this intersection she noted that there is a disparity in the access that students of color have to high-quality teachers and school funding, compared to white students (p. 654-5). The failure of schools to “incorporate culturally relevant curricula in courses” is noted in Antrop-Gonzalez and De Jesus (2006), p. 419. The article quoted a student as saying that he and others like him were being brainwashed to accept mainstream realities. In this same vein, Hao (2011) referred to the
need to address ‘institutional and classroom practices that ideologically place underserved students at disadvantaged positions’ (p. 92).

The totality of these few citations is that there is a body of disadvantaged, underserved and somewhat neglected students in American schools. Caring and compassionate pedagogy is suggested as a suitable, even vitally important, tool to be employed in the effort to address and correct the imbalance, inequities and disparities that exist. There is support in the body of related literature for the idea that K - 12 students are well served when their teachers genuinely care for them and are concerned for their well-being (Conklin, 2008, p. 658). Beauboeuf-Lafontant (2002) stated the following: “If school failure is a result of a ‘relational breakdown’ between teachers and students, where both groups see little in common or shared in purpose, then the academic success of poor, immigrant, and minority children lies very much in the quality of the relationships that their teachers establish with them” (p. 74). According to Goldstein (1999) “caring relationships are a central part of intellectual growth and development” (p. 669). The implication is clear, the teacher developing caring and compassionate relationships with students is critically important to student success.

The focus of caring and compassionate pedagogy does not rest solely on the cognitive achievements of students. As importantly, it applies to their affective growth and achievements. Noddings (1995) argued that “to have as our educational goal the production of caring, competent, loving, lovable people is not anti-intellectual; it demonstrates respect for the full range of human talents” (p. 24). Noddings continued to not the need to embrace the ideal that all students could be helped to become able to make positive contributions to their world. The case was made in Noddings (1988) that there is more at stake than the intellectual growth of students. She suggested that teachers must be interested in producing acceptable persons, and
that to do so they would need to approach their practice from a caring orientation (p. 221).

**The importance of caring and compassion**

This suggestion that caring and compassion are important in pedagogy is very well supported in the literature. Several theorists noted to have made the argument that caring within student/teacher relationships is essential to student engagements. These same theorists went on to suggest that these caring relationships are critically important to the educational success of student, especially students of color (Antrop-Gonzalez & De Jesus, 2006). Poppo (2006) made several strong claims about the importance of caring, compassionate pedagogy. Many of the claims in this article are framed in context of the work of Janusz Korczak. Poppo noted that Korczak’s guiding principle was his belief that “each and every child deserves love and respect, and such treatment by educators has the potential to change the world” (p. 33).

Tappan (1998) noted the following, “Noddings has articulated an approach to ethics and moral education that highlights the centrality of care and caring in human life. For Noddings, to care and to be cared for are fundamental human needs” (p. 24). Tappan continued to note that this notion of caring has implications for pedagogy, and that there is the task to develop a caring pedagogy. The stated purpose of Tappan (1998) was to make the case that there were areas of commonality between Noddings’ philosophy with respect to caring pedagogy, and Vygotsky’s sociocultural psychology (p. 24). To make this connection would serve the purpose of helping to establish the place of caring pedagogy within the accepted mainstream of educational thinking. It was concluded that Vygotsky’s sociocultural psychology was in fact a form of caring pedagogy, and that it shared its core principles with the perspective that Noddings advocated (p. 31).

Much of what has been presented so far is qualitative in nature. The argument could be
made that, given the nature of the matter being discussed, the material presented would, of necessity, have to be mainly qualitative. How does one quantify caring and compassion? Indeed, is it even possible to do so? Caring and compassion belong in the affective domain, and as such it would be difficult to measure them directly. There are, however, some manifest factors that would suggest the presence of caring and compassion in the pedagogical setting, in much the same way that the fluttering of a flag suggests that there is a breeze blowing. Reports contained in Hattie (2009) allow the opportunity to speak about caring and compassion in quantitative terms. Hattie’s book reports the findings of a series of meta-analyses that were conducted over a period of many years. The research was undertaken to identify factors that have an influence on student achievement.

For the purposes of this paper two of the factors that were reported in Hattie (2009) were selected for a brief discussion. They were selected because they address the matter of caring and compassion in pedagogy. The first of the two factors is Teacher-Student relationships. The data reported for this factor were from the analysis of 229 individual studies that had a total of over 350,000 subjects. An effect size of $d = 0.72$, and a common language effect of 76% were reported (p. 188). In a scheme where effect sizes are rated as, 0.2 being a small effect, 0.5 being a medium effect, and 0.8 being a large effect, it is clear that Teacher-Student relationships, to all intents and purposes, have a large effect on student achievement. The common language effect statistic of 76% can be interpreted to mean that 76 times out of 100 a student chosen at random from a setting where the principles of caring pedagogy were observed would perform better than a randomly selected student from a setting where the principles were not observed. This is a clear statistical endorsement for the value of caring pedagogy.

The second of the two factors is Feedback. Feedback in this context refers more so to a
flow of information from student to teacher, than it does to a flow in the other direction (p. 173). This kind of feedback can only take place in a setting where students are given value, their voices are respected, and their individuality, as it relates both to needs and to personhood, is accepted. This context is the kind that generates when caring pedagogy is practiced. The data reported for Feedback were from the analysis of 1,287 studies that included a total of almost 68,000 subjects. An effect size of $d = 0.73$, and a common language effect of 76% were reported. Here again, using the established scheme, Feedback has a large effect on student achievement. As well, the common language effect statistic indicates that students in contexts where caring pedagogy is practiced have a much greater chance of doing better.

**Theories of caring and compassionate pedagogy**

While it might seem to be a simple clear cut matter when one speaks of caring and compassionate pedagogy, this is not the case. Antrop-Gonzalez & De Jesus (2006) observed that “caring is an ambiguous term that means different things to different theorists and is often interpreted through culturally, racially and gender biased lenses’ (p. 411). The gender bias in particular was observed during the preparatory reading for this paper. In some instances it seemed as if the case was being made that caring and compassionate pedagogy was the exclusive domain of females. Selection of the various theories that were encountered in the literature will be offered herein along with a summation that would reflect a general view of what caring pedagogy is.

According to McKamey (2004) there are three theories of caring. These theories are: teacher caring theory, caring community theory and difference theory. The basic features of these three theories are shown in Table 1 below.

[Insert Table 1]
These three theories are discussed in Antrop-Gonzalez & De Jesus (2006), and they go on to identify what they describe as soft caring and hard caring (p. 411, 413). Soft caring and hard caring are summarized in Table 2 below.

[Insert Table 2]

In Poppo (2006) a framework made up of four processes that are essential to caring pedagogy is presented. Poppo’s offerings were guided by the work of Janusz Korczak. The four processes that were offered are: 1) Enduring Vulnerability; 2) Discovering Uniqueness; 3) Joining Community; 4) Making Meaning. Enduring vulnerability relates to the fact that children are dependent upon adults and thus are predisposed to yield to their will. The issue that arises for educators is how they will use the influence that hold over these vulnerable children. Will they manipulate and exploit, or will they nurture and protect? (Poppo, 2006, p. 35). The position taken is that the caring and compassionate pedagogue will choose to nurture and protect. Discovering uniqueness is grounded in Korczak’s belief that every child has unique potentialities, and that it is the burden of those who work with them to provide the kind of environment where these potentialities can be explored and developed (p. 36).

“Since all children will need to function within communities, a pedagogy of compassion recognizes that members of healthy communities cooperate with each other, care for each other, and responsible for supporting the larger community” (p. 37). This affective outcome, teaching children how to become caring and compassionate participants in their communities, is found throughout much of the literature. In Poppo (2006) it is the focus of the third of the four processes that were presented, ‘joining community’. The fourth process is ‘making meaning’. At the core of this process is the need to create the context in which children are able to make sense of and to accept as relevant the principles that they are being guided towards.
Gholami (2011) identified a set of three foundational evidences that should inform the caring context. These evidences are fairness, respectfulness, and commitment. The caring teacher would strive to be fair in decision making, to be respectful in the execution of their various duties, and to convey the sense that were committed to overall well-being of their students (p. 140 – 142). The nature of caring pedagogy is further explored in Marlowe (2006), where reference is made to the ‘teacher lore’ of special education teacher and author Torey Hayden. Marlowe noted Hayden’s emphasis on caring relationships as the cornerstone of her approach to teaching (p. 94). In addition to reporting on Hayden’s ‘teacher lore’, Marlowe (2006) reports eight concepts that were identified by Tarlow (1996) as being the basis of caring relationships. The concepts were: 1) Time; 2) ‘Be There’; 3) Talking; 4) Sensitivity; 5) Acting in the best interest of the other; 6) Caring as feeling; 7) Caring as doing; 8) Reciprocity (p. 94).

The caring, compassionate context

What would the caring, compassionate learning context look like? There are some features that are suggested by the material that has been presented to this point. This kind of context would feature teachers who demonstrate a deep sense of commitment to their students. There would be evidence that care was taken to create safe spaces for the students, and that the uniqueness and individuality of students was accepted. The caring, compassionate learning context would be characterized by an ongoing dialog between students and teachers; there would a constant flow of information back and forth. Added to all this, an observer would be able to see that teachers had taken the time to build meaningful relationships with students.

In the caring and compassionate learning context children would be noticed caring for fellow students, and treating other with respect. There would be a quite noticeable move towards acceptance of differences, and the effort to make room for all students. There would be a
constant and deliberate effort to make connections between the principles and ideals that were being taught, and the individual student’s reality, helping the student to make sense of things. Finally, this kind of context would convey the sense that caring and compassion was not a set of actions, but rather a way of being.

Caring and compassion in selected books

The four books that were mentioned earlier all contain material that relates very closely to the ideals that are the fundamentals of caring and compassionate pedagogy. Indeed it might not be too much of a stretch to suggest that the writers would accept being described as proponents of the concept. In fact the way in which Nel Noddings, one of the writers, is featured in the literature that was reviewed suggests that she is considered to one of the founding theorists for caring and compassionate pedagogy. The discussion from this point will look at instances from the books that are suggestive of the embrace of caring and compassionate pedagogy.

One of the fundamental reasons that are stated for caring and compassionate pedagogy is the need to promote fairness and equity in the educating of children. Beginning the discussion at this point one looks to Crew (2007). Recognizing the transformation of the school population from almost exclusively white into a diverse racial, cultural and ethnic mix, Crew hinted at the disaster that would result from the abandonment of public schools. He continued to express the view that there is the need for a re-envisioning of public education in America (p. 10). In this he strikes to the heart of indeed is a critical issue in public education. Many of the reform efforts are rooted in deficit thinking, at best, and at worst there is that subtle suggestion that they represent the effort to separate children using a variety of different strategy to justify doing so. Sadly, in too many instances the suggestion of re-envisioning devolves into a discussion of funding and finances, with the position taken that ‘bad, underperforming’ schools, that tend to
serve minority and lower socio-economic status children, spend more per child. What is implicit in this position is that those students are lesser beings, and that they can only a smaller return for each dollar spent. Crew’s position is right. There is the need for re-envisioning, for rethinking the entire approach and philosophy that drives the education of those disadvantaged students, with a view to maximizing their learning and getting optimal returns on the investment.

Crew made several statements that suggest the thinking of the caring, compassionate pedagogue. With reference to No Child Left Behind he asked, “Is leaving no one behind the same as helping everyone to fly as far and as high as they can (p. 13)? He makes repeated mention of the need to incorporate fairness, and justice into public education, with the intent of seeing that equitable educational services are provided to minority children, and that every child receives a quality education (p.17). If this is going to happen, the principles of caring, compassionate pedagogy will, of necessity, have to be worked into the philosophical underpinnings of public education.

The kind of change and re-envisioning that Crew suggests will need to take at a level beyond the classroom. Crew himself and others promote the idea that it needs to take place system wide. He suggested that, “we as a nation must do for the entire public education system what we want to do for each classroom --- guarantee that caring, high expectations, and diverse approaches to learning exist” (p. 111). While this is true, the harsh reality is that this kind of radical systemic change will only come as the result of other critical changes, especially change as it relates to the political thinking that defines public education. Fecho (2011) acknowledged this reality when he made this observation, “as educators working in large institutions, we might not have the political capital necessary to point whole school districts in directions dialogical” (p. 17). Fecho’s suggestion then is that the individual teacher, while limited in the ability to effect
change, must not despair, but rather should commit to making change to the extent that is possible. In Fecho’s own words, “schools in general and specifically classroom teachers need to become partners in change if they want students to engage more dialogically in class” (p.68).

Rasheed (2007) referring to Maxine Greene’s 1988 study, *Dialectic of Freedom* wrote the following, “The goal of Greene’s work is to suggest changes in the structure and governance of schools that will eliminate the dehumanizing effect of school routine, while at the same time ensuring that students can begin to explore the interface between their own existential questions and the assumptions that underlie their sociocultural milieu” (p. 6). The kind of change that is suggested here, if successfully implemented, will of necessity lead to the creation of contexts that will feature many of the principles that are incorporated in caring and compassionate pedagogy. In fact Rasheed went on to suggest that the impact of Greene’s philosophy would be the creation of ‘democratic public spheres’ within which students would experience ‘self-renewal’.

From the literature that was reviewed in the effort to develop a theoretical framework for this discussion it became clear that caring and compassionate pedagogy manifests in many different ways. Antrop-Gonzalez & De Jesus (2006) introduced the concepts hard caring and soft caring, and suggested that hard caring is to be preferred over soft caring in truly caring and compassionate pedagogy. This thinking was found in many instances in the works that are under discussion here. Crew’s stated interest in every child receiving an equitable, quality education is in its essence rooted in a hard caring philosophy. On page 61 of the book he noted that, by creating safe zones for children, make it possible for students to grow and develop, and to be willing to take risks. His account of the actions of a single special-ed teacher in the effort to push one of her students to success is an apt illustration of what hard caring is all about. This teacher is noted as having taken the time to work with the student to create a plan that would put
him on a path towards meaningful graduation. The plan succeeded. This was a good example of hard caring. It required an investment of time and effort; it was child centered; it held on to high expectations.

Attention to curriculum is another one of the factors that figured prominently in the discussion of caring and compassionate pedagogy. Most of the books that are the focus of this discussion made mention of the importance of curriculum. One of the key considerations was that curriculum should be made relevant to the lives and reality of the students. Rasheed (2007) discussed the need for reformulation of the language of curriculum discourse to include individual voices (p. 54). Rasheed took the position that curriculum standardization is an inefficient approach since it would inevitably lead to the exclusion, or underrepresentation of the realities of some students. This is thinking that resonates with this special education teacher. It is my belief that the notion of standardized ought not to apply in the realm of special education. Indeed it is the case that the focus of my work will be to make the case for curriculum individualization. This quest generates from the belief that there is a dire need to rethink and redesign special education in ways that will make true success attainable for all students.

Peggy McIntosh in Noddings, Ed. (2005) discussed work that she has been doing in the area of educational equity and diversity. One of the areas of inquiry in this work is how to make “curricula more gender-fair, multicultural, and global” (p. 31). Among other things McIntosh said, “Greater diversity of curriculum reflects not just the exterior multicultural world but the interior self that in early childhood was aware of, and attuned to, many varieties of experience” (p. 34). Herein are expressed the ideas that curriculum needs to be relevant and inclusive. In what could certainly be taken as an indirect comment on the matter of making curriculum relevant Crew (2007) said, “Let’s give all our children serious academic work and show them
how it matters in the world directly around them” (p. 23). The point is that when the learning is connected to children’s realities, i.e. is made relevant and meaningful, the task of educating becomes that much more doable.

It is an easy argument to make that the idea of giving value to each child would be at the very core of caring and compassionate pedagogy. This idea too is suggested in the books that are being reviewed. Crew (2007) speaking about two groups of students from different socio-economic classes observed that the students in the two groups were not different in any substantive way. He suggested that there was the need to reframe and redesign schooling in the effort to serve adequately the needs of all students (p. 33). The idea that there are no substantive differences between children from different socio-economic classes is noteworthy. There is, sadly, the tendency on the part of some educators to treat children differently on the basis of their social class, or for whatever other reason. It is critically important that the educator would disabuse the thinking of all reasons used to treat children differently, and come to see children as children, each child being unique, but equally deserving of the opportunity to reach the zenith of potential.

Fecho (2011) decried what he considered to be a negative tone in schools. He noted, for example, the seemingly endless testing that tends to focus on what is wrong with students, and how it could be fixed. In his opinion this deficit thinking often seemed to convey the message that children are not really valued, and that the expectations for them are very few (p. 12). He continued to suggest that what he offers as the dialogical stance would help to reverse this negative tendency since, in its essence, it embraces and values what the student brings to the classroom (p. 13). These are valuable and potent arguments. The reality is that the best learning, learning that of necessity would produce the best citizens, cannot occur in settings where each
individual child is not valued and respected. Here again, sadly, too much of what happens in the name of educational reform seems to push the child to the side, and to focus on the program and the policy. There has to be acknowledged the need to build education and educational reform around the child before anything else. Stated another way, we must fashion programs and policies to fit children, while resisting the tendency to fashion children to fit programs and policies.

This would seem to be a good point at which to discuss the idea of the caring classroom, another of the principles that are foundational to caring and compassionate pedagogy. Fecho (2011) describes how he was able to change the response of a class of students by first changing the way in which he responded to them. What he described suggested that he adopted policies and procedures that indicated to them that he cared about them and their work. One of the things that he did was to take the time to have conversations, dialogues, with the students. He reported that his interest in the students and their work resulted in their showing added interest in their own work, and producing work of a better quality (p. 66).

The caring teacher serves to create a classroom which, in its essence, is a protected zone for children. These classrooms would be characterized by constant feedback, encouragement and adjustments (Crew, 2007; p. 61). The caring classroom, Crew stated, was a place “where the people in it – and not just the teacher – see beyond your condition. They see you beyond your poverty or your wealth, beyond your clothing or color or the language you speak. They see you as normal …” (p. 63). In the caring classroom children emerge from the shadows. They take value and meaning, and rise to levels of importance that say that it is all about them, before anything else. Like the literature suggests, when this happens the very same children will almost certainly thrive and succeed in school.
An important objective of caring and compassionate pedagogy is that of producing caring and compassion as qualities in children. Nancy Carlsson-Paige and Linda Lantieri in Noddings, Ed. (2005) commented on this concept. There suggested that the school is the place “where children learn what it means to be a member of a community” (p. 109). Among the ideals suggested by Carlsson-Paige & Lantieri were the following: Building community and mutual respect; appreciation of diversity; affirmation and acceptance; managing and resolving conflict (p. 112-113). One wonders if the lack of interest in, if not total absence of, ideals like these from schooling is a reason why so often there are to be heard reports of the tragic results of bullying in schools. Could it also be the case that their absence is responsible for what might be noted as the much too often reported instances of lawless, antisocial behavior on the part of young people?

Noddings (2005) stated that “when students learn to respect and befriend classmates from different backgrounds and cultures, they are learning an attitude significant for global citizenship” (p. 122). Noddings went on to suggest that curriculum should focus attention on the “skills and attitudes likely to enhance a global perspective” (p. 124), and noted that the benefits to be derived from such a focus would extend to many different areas of life. In Crew (2007) the idea of creating students who care is expressed thus, “the education of our children must include providing them with knowledge of themselves in the form of Personal Integrity, knowledge of the world around them through Civic Awareness, and the language and mores of work through Workplace Literacy” (p. 43). He went to stress the importance of teaching children about “place and time”. Expanding upon the theme of Civic Awareness, Crew stated that it “is about our children finding roles for themselves in all the greater circles of community that surround them” (p. 49). The ideals that these various writers present all fit snugly into the principles suggested as fundamental to caring and compassionate pedagogy. If these principles are adopted across
the board, only good could come for children and for the entire community.

Conclusion

When this exercise was embarked upon there were no expectations, and no knowledge base. Now that it is approaching completion, it is the case that it has turned out to be a rich learning experience. Caring and compassionate pedagogy is a rich and widely researched and reported field. Not only that, but the ideals that inform caring and compassionate teaching practice are fundamentally important, especially as they relate to a world that is rapidly contracting as a result of technological advances. Like most of the writers, whose works were selected for the discussion, suggested, and added role for education to prepare children to become global citizens. Much was presented, both in the selected articles, and in the four selected books, to make the case for a pedagogical approach that is caring and compassionate in its nature.

The essence of this pedagogy is that it brings children to the focus, and develops pedagogy around them. In this kind of setting children are cared for, they are valued, they are made to feel safe, and as a consequence they thrive. The state of our society just about begs for this kind of pedagogy. The prevailing context of standardization, and restrictive administrative policies that have a combined effect of limiting creative teaching do not serve the best interests of children or of their societies. Maybe it is about time that those who assume for themselves the right to chart the course of education pause and critically reflect upon what they have done. If this would be done we could put an end to the current reform of the month practice.

There is a dire need for reforms that work and that lead to improved outcomes for children. Much of the qualitative research that has been reviewed support a conclusion that caring and compassionate pedagogy would lead to improved results for children. These
conclusions from the qualitative research are supported by some of the findings from quantitative research. As discussed earlier, Hattie (2009) presented the results of meta-analyses that indicated that teacher/student relationships and feedback, concepts that have foundation in caring and compassionate pedagogy, both have significant impact on student achievement. Upon the strength of what has been discovered about caring and compassionate pedagogy it is being suggested as a practice that is deserving of a closer look.
References


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CARING AND COMPASSION IN PEDAGOGY


Table 1:

*Mckamey’s three theories of caring* *(McKamey 2004, p. 7)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Basic Features</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Caring Theory</td>
<td>Assumes a causal relationship between student achievement and caring behavior on the part of the teacher.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Caring Community Theory</td>
<td>Acknowledges the capacity and obligation of schools and communities to provide caring contexts for students who may be lacking caring experiences in their lives.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Difference Theory</td>
<td>Recognizes varied definitions of caring among social, ethnic, class and gender groups and argues that schools which incorporates these differences are more inclusive of students.</td>
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Table 2:

*Features of soft and hard caring from Antrop-Gonzalez & De Jesus (2006), p. 411, 413*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of caring</th>
<th>Features</th>
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<tr>
<td>Soft caring</td>
<td>Teacher feels sorry for student’s circumstances and as result lowers academic expectations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hard caring</td>
<td>Supportive instrumental relationships and high academic expectations.</td>
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