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Pedagogies of care, care-full epistemological practice and ‘other’ caring subjectivities in enabling education

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ABSTRACT

This article explores and conceptualises the emergent and historic presence of a feminised pedagogical praxis in Australian Enabling (university access) programs. Analysing a participatory project at a regional university that sought to map these pedagogies, it specifically aims to visibilise the complexities of careful pedagogical practices which challenge deficit and assimilationist renditions of equity and inclusion, and which foster the possibilities for re-narrativisations of self, community and other. Such pedagogical practices not only develop ethics and practices of care but foreground careful recognition of the epistemological contributions of subjects from non-traditional backgrounds. These pedagogies of difference and other pedagogical subjectivities are situated within a broader context in which hegemonic careless masculinities render these transformative feminised pedagogies invisibilised, devalued and denigrated. Our paper concludes with suggestions for the ways in which these pedagogies of care and other caring subjectivities might be nurtured and rendered powerful within our current context.

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Introduction

In this article we highlight the importance of pedagogies of care, care-full epistemological practice and ‘other’ caring subjectivities that continue to characterise the spaces of access and widening participation (A and WP) in higher education (HE). We locate our work within feminist discussions of the gendered nature of affective power relationships and how care/carelessness is situated within this. We theorise care as identified with feminised subjectivities, pedagogical relationships and affective power dynamics as opposed to the careless hegemonic masculinities (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005) and accompanying affectivities that imbricate smoothly with neoliberalism and increasingly dominate the higher education landscape (Amsler 2014; Amsler and Motta 2017). It is important to emphasise that this conceptualisation recognises that subjects perform the dispositions and behaviours of hegemonic and ‘other’ subjectivities in complex ways (and often inadvertently), regardless of how they are positioned in the (hegemonic) sex-gender binary. Thus, we do not equate masculinised with male or feminised with female.

We develop our engagement through focus on a suite of programmes enabling university access in Australia, programmes often (mis)understood and misrecognised by meritocratic framings as merely HE recruitment pathways. We argue that such a dominant neoliberalised conceptualisation overlooks the important ethico-political social justice commitments, forms of subjectivity and pedagogical practices, developed over many decades by the programmes' educators. A neoliberal view of A & WP programmes also serves to reproduce damaging dualisms inherent in hegemonic scholarly traditions – and intensified in neoliberal conditions – of academic subjectivity, premised as they are on reified, essentialist oppositions between: body/mind and emotion/intellect, with the former often represented as the feminised irrational and private, and the latter assumed to be the masculinised rational and public. Instead, we discuss a site where alternative pedagogies of care are embodied through the ethics, practices and relationships which, we found, plays out in the emotional, epistemological and affective terrains of the enabling educators we interviewed. We do this as a means of foregrounding the centrality of caring work, and its potential to play a wider role in reinvigorating democratising HE pedagogical practices and 'other' subjectivities that might work in, against and beyond the intensification of careless masculinised subjectivities and concurrent exclusionary politics of knowledge increasingly characteristic of the academy.

We analyse themes emerging from a recent (Bennett et al. 2017) participatory research project that explored the ethos, values and practices of pedagogies within the suite of access programmes at the University of Newcastle, Australia (UON), which have provided access to HE for over 55,000 people and that we found sit in stark contrast to the kinds of hegemonic masculinities premised upon careless subjectivity (re)produced through audit culture and ranking (Amsler 2014). The themes are explored through a conceptual dialogue initiated during the research and continued by the article authors' which interweaves empirical insights and reflections from project participants under the following three broad areas: care as recognition, care as dialogic relationality, and care as affective and embodied praxis. First, we provide a brief outline of the research project and then we trace the turn to affect, and within this care/careless subjectivity, to situate our argument about the ethico-pedagogical commitments to care as a multidimensional educational praxis found in Enabling Education.

Project context and approach

Our participatory research project (2016) mapped and conceptualised enabling pedagogies within the access programmes at the University of Newcastle, Australia (UON). English Language and Foundations Studies Centre (ELFSC) has the oldest and largest university access, what are termed 'enabling' programmes in Australia. Enabling programmes provide '... a course of instruction provided to a person for the purpose of enabling the person to undertake a course leading to a higher education award'¹ (Department of the Attorney General 2003, 384). The government provides Enabling programmes with Commonwealth Supported Places (CSP) funding as well as an enabling loading. As a result, enabling programmes are free for enabling students.

The programmes developed from a pilot project in 1974 (Stockdale 2006; Kavanagh and Stockdale 2007) and, closely resemble early UK access projects, which were focussed on social justice, empowerment and community, and were generally practitioner-led

(Burke 2001). As the founder of the enabling programmes, Professor Brian Smith, recounts he spent time in the UK examining and teaching in the 'British Open University, which was just getting established' (1987, 4). This experience became fundamental in shaping the emerging commitments of the Australian access programme.

The research project explored: the pedagogical practices and perspectives underpinning enabling education at UON (historically and in current practise); and the (dis)connections between those practices and perspectives in undergraduate contexts. The research involved seven team participatory workshops held throughout the project. Additionally, the entire research team (of 8) undertook a portion of the 30 individual interviews with teaching staff² representative of discipline areas across enabling modes and programmes with 13 identifying as male and 17 female, and with 21 past ELFSC students enrolled in a degree programme, with 17 identified as female and 4 as male. Of staff interviewees, 8 were on a sessional teaching (casual) basis to teach, the other 22 were permanent, of these 7 were employed as teachers (4 female and 3 males), with no research component embedded in their employment. The remaining were employed as 'academics' with a focus on both research about their discipline areas and/or teaching, with 8 female and 7 male.

Our research followed a participatory, prefigurative approach (Motta 2011, 2017). This epistemological underpinning foregrounds the importance that research itself be pedagogical (see Burke et al. 2016) in that researchers and researched are conceptualised as both knowers and learners, and analysis is collaboratively created. This aims to disrupt hegemonic registers of the politics of knowing and knowledge. Specifically, the methodology embedded a politics of knowledge seeking to contribute to both access to, and deconstruction of, powerful forms of knowledge and democratisation to the process of learning/creating such knowledges. Our epistemological commitment was operationalised in a participatory pedagogical practice in which everyone on the team was involved in the development of the conceptual and analytic framework, data collection, analysis, evaluation and report writing. This involved adapting critical pedagogy and indigenous co-learning/theorising methods in our team workshops and through individual reflexive journals, as well as designing the interviews as pedagogical, fostering the reflexivity and analytic contributions of research participants. Its commitments were thus to recognise Enabling educators and enabling education for their praxis in democratising access to powerful knowledge and, concurrently, democratising access to HE (for further details of the methodology and project findings see Bennett et al. 2017).

Situating our research: the affective turn

As part of the growing critique of the neoliberalising of HE there is increasing interest in the place of emotion and affect (see, for example, Amsler and Motta 2017; Burke 2017; Leathwood and Hey 2009; Lynch 2010). This problematises taken-for-granted (Cartesian) splits between emotional, affective (feminine), and stoic, dissociative (hyper-masculine) onto-epistemologies and is situated within a broader philosophical feminist³ troubling of dualisms in working to recognise and value multiplicity and difference within, across and beyond hierarchical and separating binaries. It shines a light on hegemonic masculinities, which attempt to dissociate teaching and learning from emotion and the embodied (in its experiential, cultural ethical and historical dimensions) (Amsler 2014). This it is argued is paradoxical to pedagogy and its relational and affective genesis.

These perspectives suggest the need to (re)think emotion and the embodied as generative epistemological dynamics and resources and valued as essential elements in our philosophies of education and pedagogical practices (Boler 1999, 5–10; Amsler 2014). Importantly, this ‘affective turn’ for critically considering pedagogy in HE foregrounds a holistic sense of education as a relational dynamic, and brings attention as much to the experience of joy, vulnerability, empowerment and powerlessness, for both students and teachers and their role in pedagogical processes of both ‘reproduction of hegemony’ and its contestation. Thus, we look to emotions and the embodied to explore analytically what emotions and bodies do (Ahmed 2004, 2014, 10; Lynch 2010) understanding that they can be developed/expressed as practices of control, resistance and transformation. Emotions and their embodiments thus become central to the construction of knowledge and knowing-subjects, and in particular knowledges about education and pedagogies of inclusion/exclusion, justice/injustice (Boler 1999, 3–5; Ahmed 2004).

The turn to affect provides recognition of the possibilities, as well the limitations, for pedagogies that visibilise the tacit operations of power ordering the dynamics of exclusion/inclusion, (mis)recognition and denial/embrace in the institution (Amsler and Motta 2017). There is expository power in re/cognising and re/valuing affectivities and emotions for ‘showing up’ and opening up pathways beyond the dehumanised ‘iron-cage’ rationalities focussed on teleological efficiency, calculation, control and self-denial – the irrationality (of rationality) (Weber 1958). By (re)inserting attention to the importance of the affective in HE, we are able to see that denial and repression of emotional and embodied humanity serves to reproduce the very problems with pedagogical performance that neo-liberal pedagogical policy-making reasserts (through attempts at denial). As Leathwood and Hey (2009) explain:

to disavow them leaves us with few intellectual resources to think about human desire ... and other forms of feeling and relations. So, we suggest that this turn to the emotional cannot be reduced to the claim of it being merely about showcasing ‘damaged’ subjects ... We could perhaps then begin to better design educational systems which take into account the informal, the auto/biographic, the historical, the personal, the interpersonal as sites of learning and power/powerlessness (p. 436).

Carelessness/Care

The care/careless dynamic can be conceptualised as a sub-set of praxis within the broader turn to affect in critical analysis of contemporary HE, and widening participation more specifically, outlined previously. Extant analysis of care/carelessness often focuses on the increasing colonisation of academic subjectivity by a care-less subject (Lynch 2010; Amsler 2014; Amsler and Motta 2017) modelled on (neoliberal) hegemonic masculinities (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; Ahmed 2004; Amsler 2014). This ideal type neoliberal subject is ‘grounded in individualisation, infinite flexibility, precarious commitments, orientated toward survivalist competition and personally profitable exchanges’ (Motta 2012, np). Such subjectivity is constituted through multiple micro-practices of bureaucratisation and professionalisation.

This attempts to produce a culture of hierarchy, competition and individualism through the eradication of cultures of solidarity, care and collectivity. Some subjects and forms of behaving and embodying space are empowered and legitimised, whilst

others are delimited, disciplined and subjected to the dominant logics, allowing some to judge and others to be judged. Imposed standards of excellence and quality manifested in audit culture are those to which the ideal subject is produced against and through. This ‘becomes a vehicle for changing the way people relate to the workplace, to authority, to each other, and most importantly, to themselves’ (Shore and Wright 1999, 559 cited in Lynch 2015, 195). As Kathleen Lynch (2010, 55) describes, this can result ‘[in] a deep alienation in the experience of constantly living to perform, particularly when the performance is experienced as being of questionable educational and scholarly worth’.

Audit culture reinforces historically deeply gendered and unequal power relations in academe and pushes towards elitist banking approaches in teaching and learning, and instrumental and elitist relationships with society (Lynch 2015; McLaren 2015; Motta and Cole 2014; Motta 2013a). As Lynch continues (2015, 194), ‘focusing on measurable outputs has the ultimate impact of defining human relationship in the university in transactional terms as a means to an end- the end being high performance and productivity that can be coded and marketed. This reduces first order social and moral values to second-order principles trust, integrity, care and solidarity are subordinated to regulation, control and competition’. The very conditions, commitments and practices of mutuality, relatedness and dialogue that foster an inclusive and nurturing higher educational institution become relegated to irrelevance, and explicitly derided.

These logics are not new however. They are premised upon the historic politics of knowledge that underlay the modern university and public education (Motta and Cole 2014; Lynch 2010; hooks 1994; Leathwood and Hey 2009). Within this, the Cartesian subject that splits mind from emotion, rationality from the embodied, is the epitome of the knowing-subject, in which the former is associated with the masculine and the latter feminised subjects and labour secondary or irrelevant to the labour of intellectual work (Leathwood and Hey 2009, 449). As Lynch argues (2010, 59, 60), ‘Caring, and the associated subject of emotional work, have been trivialised and dismissed in philosophy and intellectual thought ... The difference between the past and the present is that carelessness was an unnamed assumption in the past; now it is not only accepted, it is expected and morally endorsed.’

Much critique of such careless subjectivity tends to re-inscribe the dualism between affect and reason, emotional and intellectual labour (see Lynch 2010 for an example of this re-inscription). However, there are traditions of critical pedagogy that bring our analytic attention to the histories, possibilities and ethical imperatives of caring work as a site of not only emotional work but also feminised epistemological and pedagogical possibility, through creation of the conditions of possibility for ‘other’ subjectivities (Amsler and Motta 2017). We hope to draw on these critical traditions of the philosophy of education to develop a framework for visibilising and conceptualising the caring pedagogies and pedagogues embedded and emergent in *Enabling Education at an Australian University* and that work in, against and beyond hegemonic ‘careless’ subjectivities.

Freire’s work theorises a pedagogical philosophy that is committed to empowerment of marginalised communities, and democratises access to powerful knowledges whilst nurturing the development of knowledges of the oppressed (1972, 2014). Central to such pedagogical commitments are an ethics of careful recognition of the realities, experiences, histories and knowledges of oppressed communities, mis-represented in banking renditions of pedagogy as empty and lacking subjects, in need of the teacher’s expert knowledge. Such

attentiveness to holistic caring work with communities and learners, also extends to the teacher/facilitator who is theorised as an intellectual co-creator of knowledges for democratisation and transformation (Freire 1998, 2014; Darder 2014). A Freirean attentiveness to collaboration, collectivity, and critical reflexivity between educators, and between students and educators, is centred as part of the conditions of possibility for the emergence and nurturance of democratising educational praxis. The pedagogical space thus extends outside of the classroom, and into the creation of the infrastructure of possibility of democratising, caring and care-ful multi-dimensional work (Darder 2012).

Caring pedagogical work and caring subjectivities are nurtured and nurture attentiveness to creating time-spaces which foster dialogical co-creation of knowledges. Much work has focused on the role of (dis)comfort in this process. In particular, feminist theorists have focused on the need to create safe spacetimes which enable exploration of uncharted and unknown territories of thought which can challenge 'taken for granted' hegemonic narratives of self, other and society (Boler and Zembylas 2003). This work foregrounds how working with discomfort to create moments of pedagogical possibility can result in re-narrativisations of self, other and society, as well as foster new relationalities and possibilities (Boler and Zembylas 2003; Pereira 2012). Such pedagogical work requires complex forms of careful affective awareness and practice. They are premised on the integral presence of the educator in the learning spacetime in which shame and competition are eschewed in favour of vulnerability and openness to alterity, difference and the unknown.

In what follows, we explore the caring-work and caring subjectivities of Enabling Education at the UoN, NSW, Australia. We focus on three key areas that have emerged from our participatory research, these are: (i) care as recognition; (ii) care as dialogic relationality; and (iii) care as affective and embodied praxis. We do this as a means of offering a 'beacon of hope' for Enabling Educators, and critical educators across HE more broadly, which visibilises the pedagogies of caring possibility powerful and already existent in the cracks and margins of hegemonic spacetimes that are so increasingly focused on performances of neoliberal careless subjectivity and pedagogy.

Care as recognition

Care as recognition manifests as care-full pedagogical practices which acknowledge the complexities and wisdoms of students that come, often following on from experiences of exclusion and misrecognitions (Fraser 2003) within other forms of education, training and employment. An ethical and epistemological commitment to strengths-based knowledge making-practices which explicitly build pedagogical possibility by recognising student's experiential wisdoms is embraced. Recognising the knowledges and capabilities of all students also renders redundant deficit misrepresentations about students who transverse alternative pathways into education. Additionally, this approach serves to foster re-narrativisations of self which nurture critical reflexivity and the unsettling of hegemonic narratives of success and failure.

This care-full pedagogical practice is manifested by teacher-commitment to embracing the whole student, and not reducing them to instrumentalist and homogenised careless motivations and aspirations. Belief in the epistemological dynamism and creativity

emerging from the rich experiential knowledges of many enabling students is illustrated in the following reflection:

I love the idea of the creative power of students ... so part of what I would want to do is to sort of clear the way so that the creative power of students and the mutual energy of the teaching staff and the students can create something that is new ... and with teaching staff not being afraid to go with an idea that comes up from the students and work with them to develop that in an interesting way. So, I see it as always being a collaboration.

Here, 'care' pedagogically expresses itself as recognition of the complex creative energies, desires and experiences of students as a place of knowing-possibility. Such a place of possibility manifests in pedagogical encounters and collaborations in which the direction and process of learning moves towards a dialogical horizon and relationship as opposed to a uni-directional and monological direction found in banking education and reinforced by audit-culture (Motta 2013b).

Care-full recognition is also embedded in a strength-based orientation to enabling students often articulated through a politico-ethics of knowledge, mirroring that found in traditions of critical pedagogy. As one interviewee illustrates:

Enabling philosophy has multiple levels and different approaches but it sees the problem in teaching is not the student but is institutional. It is not top down more bottom up; ... understanding where they come from and valuing their amazing life experience and trying to use this to teach ... and connects it to everyday life ... demystifying education because the elite have mystified education for a purpose so they can maintain their power and elite status and when we demystify it we shift power.

Such a politics of knowledge contests hegemonic renditions of student success with its focus on individualised motivations and work-related outcomes and instead suggest that student success and failure, particularly when applied to non-traditional students is connected to institutional failure, an institutional failure that is classed, raced and gendered (hooks 1989, 1994). Some interviewees argued that what distinguishes enabling pedagogy is that a pedagogy/epistemology of care is programmatically embedded, and is thus always-already prefiguring recognition in relation to its students and their current and potential capacity (Burke et al., 2015). As one participant describes:

I think ELFS is a bit of a beacon, a bit of a lighthouse because enabling education cares about the whole person ... [this gives] hope that dreams can and do come true; hope that education can produce a fairer, more just and humane society.

Fostering care as recognition involves developing practices which might unravel and demystify a common experience of enabling students of failure in formal education. As one interviewee describes, this is a 'responsive pedagogy enabling students with their particular set of desires and needs to inspire this form of pedagogy'. This in turn creates the conditions with and within students for a recognition of their own value, worth, capability and success (Assmann 2013). Whilst care as epistemological recognition was not uniform, overall there was a commitment to this kind of care-full pedagogical practice. This resulted in the strong emergence of stories and experiences of student transformation. However, we must be mindful to the contexts and nature of the transformations visibilised and mapped.

Theorising transformative pedagogies, in terms of both student/teacher transformation, has a rich history in the tradition of critical pedagogy. Much of this tradition has emerged in relation to the formation of community movements contesting the hegemonic 'hidden curriculum', advocating for curriculum reflective of their experiences and knowledges, and enabling of collective political transformation (Freire 1972, 2014; Darder 2014; hooks 1989, 1994). However, there is a growing literature that frames transformation within the conditions of the political economy of neoliberalism, and the disarticulation (at least within the West) of collective forms of popular mobilisation, organisation and subjectivity (Motta 2013a, 2013b; Hall and Winn 2017; Amsler and Bolsmann 2012). It is within this latter historical-political context and conceptualisation of transformation that Enabling Education at Newcastle can be fruitfully situated.

Accordingly, key terms and thematics under the umbrella of transformation enabled by care as recognition revolve around a process of re-narrativising individual and community self-understanding. In particular, this involves contesting the internalisation of deficit discourses in which students enter disbelieving their ability to know, their capacity to study and their right to voice and agency. As one participant describes:

I did some research on the impact of enabling education ... I call it the ripple effect and how if you influence one you influence others. one person said was it gave them voice and that often they felt they didn't have a voice ... and that feeling of being affirmed. There are others who felt that they are imposters, they shouldn't be there, so it's trying to make them aware that they deserve to be there, they have every right to be there as anybody else ... Our role as a guide and a mentor rather than an instructor, and I think most – the feedback from the students, ah, is amazing and they say things like what I'm saying and that they have been taught for the first time. Because prior to that their previous education experience – many of the reasons that they've come to an Open Foundation type of programme ... is because ... school had failed them rather than they failed school ...

Such re-narrativising situates individual 'ills' within the social, education and cultural conditions that (re)produce 'failing' students and enables questioning about the institutions and structures of education itself. Transformation in this way enables the possibilities for the emergence of choices otherwise considered unattainable. The content of these choices is influenced by the pedagogical orientations of teachers in the sense that there can be clear commitments to the challenging of hegemonic narratives and discourses, as illustrated by this interviewee:

So, my vision of any educational process, is to develop awareness of, where I am, what I'm doing and that there are alternatives to any of those pieces. Then develop the capacity ultimately to take a step towards some of those alternatives ... And ultimately, to develop the capacity for critical reflection upon your own situation, as an element in a much more complex system. So, you're not forgetting the system. You're not forgetting yourself but you are merging, creatively interacting the two in a place where you can start to take control of your own life.

Equally, however there is a tension between such pedagogical orientations and an understanding of transformation as assimilation into a successful middle-class subject (fostered by marketised institutionalised logics and rationalities). This latter framing of transformation as assimilation involves, as one participant suggested, the potential loss of working class culture and wisdoms and their misrecognition as something to be left behind on the road to transformation:

I've often tossed and turned about that ... Am I trying to make them middle class, and therefore they could become worse than the long established middle class. ... So, I do think that this is a worry. I mean my perfect world would be that education wouldn't be a thing for the elite, that education would be borderless.

Indeed, the relationship between past identity and processes of transformation and re-narrativisation of self, are often disruptive as previous roles, relationships and responsibilities are challenged in the learning journey. These disruptions are also deeply gendered and can open previously unimaginable possibilities of self and other. They can thus be both joyful, liberating, and painful. The transformative potential and experience emerging out of a difficult journey can be significant and life-changing. As this story illustrates:

One classic case that stands out for me is [the case of a] woman who was doing brilliantly. She started off, had no idea absolutely uncertain of what she was doing. By the end of her semester, she was flying, loved it. [She was] one of my best students [and] came to see me at the last minutes of the last lecture of the first semester and said, "Look, I won't be coming back next semester." "Why not?" Um, because her husband was beating her up ... She was not in a position at that stage to resist. But she said, "This won't last forever." Basically, I think she was waiting for the kids to get to a certain age. And she said, "I'll come back." And then ... it would have been at least 10 years later, I suddenly looked up when I was at the graduation ceremony (recognition of attainment ceremony) ... and saw this woman standing there beaming at me about to walk across to get her attainment certificate.

As Fraser (2003) argues, this careful work of recognition and redistribution of educational resources is increasingly difficult in the face of intensifying neoliberal academic performativity and competitive rankings. New meritocratic framings of Enabling programmes being for students 'regardless of background' threaten the programmes' commitments to open access (no requirements or fees) and reduce measurements of success to course pass rates (each participating student must pass through their course because of their 'cost'). This creates an institutional context of misrecognition of the complex pedagogical practices and transformative experiences for students that occur throughout the programme independent of whether they complete or pass. Such a context mitigates against social justice pedagogies and pedagogues because it is dependent on performance pre-entry to enabling and locates responsibility for engaging (and not engaging) with the individual, not socio-cultural and politico-economic contexts (Southgate and Bennett 2014). The ongoing work of re-shaping narratives about Enabling Education, to which our research project and ongoing praxis (including writing) hopes to contribute, is an attempt to strengthen strategic praxis in relation to maintaining alive and sustainable careful pedagogies of recognition and redistribution, and the critical pedagogues who are their co-creators.

Care as dialogic relationality

The relationality of care as engendered in enabling pedagogies centres on relating and relationality and contests hegemonic conceptualisation of teaching and learning in mechanistic delivery terms understood through online 'learning analytics' and standardised testing and evaluation. It is pedagogically complex, not simply a method or approach that can be applied in another decontextualised environment (Bennett et al. 2017). Enabling pedagogies are about a relating in, with and out to other pedagogical contexts.

Care, caring, carefulness and being cared for are embedded, multidimensional, empowering, fraught and temporally multifarious, rather than unitary and static.

The epistemological commitments of care in Enabling are valued and foregrounded programmatically, rather than considered an individual teacher's emotional approach or disposition as a 'caring' teacher. The pedagogy of care we have captured represents an onto-epistemological commitment expected from both teachers and students – to be pedagogically caring (staff and students committed to and caring about pedagogy) and about being cared for. This takes care seriously – as a rigorous and iteratively re/developed ethics of mutuality, relationality and difference.

Our interviews revealed diversity and multiplicity, not only in terms of teacher approaches, but of student relationalities, including relational tensions. Thus, conceptually, pedagogically and materially, there is no unitary essentialised, 'ideal' enabling or caring subject position or approach to care. What became clear is a commitment to an ethics of practice based on reflexive re/development which was dialogical in contra-distinction to the monological logics prevalent in hegemonic performances of the teacher-self in HE. A student explained that 'it felt to me [we were] treated no differently to an honours student, you know, we were taken seriously and not dismissed by the lecturers. [S]o there was no hierarchy – if you thought there was going to be one, there wasn't.' Another described an:

... openness and an accessibility to support. from the very beginning, you knew that there were avenues of support and that ... there was a real passion there and it was also made out that you could do this. Like, university wasn't some kind of big pipe dream ... It was more geared towards embracing your passions, doing what you love and that you're going to be supported and that was continued throughout the course.

Students explained that a care-full dialogical approach was important to them for healing of injuries to perceptions of their capability and self-concept (Burke, Crozier, and Misiaszek 2016). A student explained that 'intimacy' was important and established by teachers:

You get insights into them as a person and – which you don't get um, when you're [in undergraduate study] ... No, you don't. You lose that. You wouldn't know anything about the lecturer [in undergraduate study] where in enabling, you know, you were given personal examples from them about – you know, what they'd done, you know ... And it's more like you're all working together rather than the us and them kind of thing.

As Freire (1972) argued, egalitarian dialogics depend on, and are creative of, a humanising relationship between teacher and student. A student interviewed described what they saw as the intimate dialogical approach commencing with a metaphorical welcome: 'like a congratulations for coming back [to education]',

... there was a lot of – a lot of encouragement. I was like, you know, – it wasn't as daunting, everyone's background ... was added to the conversations and then added to everyone's understanding ...

A teacher interviewee explained the importance of approaching classes with 'authenticity' in terms of presentation of self:

... they'll pick up very quickly on whether you're authentic and, you know, they're very forgiving. If they can see that you're passionate and you care about your teaching, you care ... about their success, then students can be quite forgiving if you make the odd mistake ... I

can't stop it all together [referring to teaching examples related to prior areas of experience] because that is what I am. If I didn't acknowledge that I would be fake, and that's definitely a no, no.

Although articulated differently across the programmes, all staff interviewed considered that good pedagogy is achieved through a reflexive, dialogical approach. This included scaffolding learning through reflexively engaging with students through narrative practice of delivery, as opposed to 'classic' lecture style, and using multi-literacies (poetry, newspaper text, story) and real-world examples with which 'to engage a subject so as to make the concept more real and applicable'. As one teacher stated, 'changing my practice over time has involved a recognition that content is less significant than skills and care' – not generic skills – but skills the participant described as being about approaches and literacies within the context of the course and the experience/needs of the student. As Freire explained, co-productive pedagogies necessitate reflecting on: the actions and behaviours of others, on how one relates to others, and on one's assumptions, judgements and actions in relation to others. As one interviewee explained:

... people who are less adapted and do less well as an Enabling Educator, are thinking inwardly ... Whereas to be ... successful I think in the Enabling space you really need to be looking outwards and always thinking about you know, what you can do better and how you can help people ...

As a relational dynamic, both perceptions and approaches to the exercise of power are pivotal in defining pedagogical relationships (Burke, Crozier, and Misiaszek 2016; Burke 2012). Understanding inter/intra- personal dynamics is important for thinking through the complexities of pedagogy. One long-time member of staff, who had taught and moved into leadership roles, said about the primacy of working on good pedagogical relationships:

One of the first things I'd want people [university teachers] to do is to say to themselves, "What are my assumptions? What am I assuming about this group of students that I'm about to take?" What do I assume about them as people?" and often there's no assumption that they are people ... "What do I assume about the knowledge they may already have that relates to this particular area of learning?" Well, if I think they have no knowledge of that, what do I think they might have knowledge of? ... Do I think that they have any knowledge that I can build on [and] what is my role? ... This is what we have to be able to do. If you can't do it now, then you've got to find a way of doing it".

A student interviewed described the details of this dialogical approach further:

If you spoke ... the teacher would listen to you and, and it wasn't ... a free for all where everyone would just talk over the top of each other. It was each person had their chance to say – it was like a nice flow ... Your idea was actually ... taken and thought about in the whole classroom ... There was more of a relationship between the teacher and the student than in undergraduate.

Another student commented that 'it's attitudes to teaching', which they explained were not entirely unique to enabling, but in enabling 'they're just more focused I guess, there's more, they're more relational I think. More emphasis on you as a person student as opposed to you know, you as one of a group of students'. These reflections express an ethics of care built on the philosophy of education as relationally dynamic and dialogical. As described above, this ethico-ontological commitment was described by both staff and

students as particularly distinctive to the enabling context. As our document analysis also illuminated, since 1974 this culture of care-fulness through dialogical relating has been a pivotal part of the structures and governance of the enabling programmes, with regular professional development centred on dialogical approaches that enable (un)learning for both students and staff.

Care as affective and embodied praxis

Freirean and feminist CP traditions demonstrate how transformative pedagogies that foster recognition and dialogical relationality do not reproduce a separation between the cognitive and the affective. As Antonia Darder (2012, 8) describes, within these pedagogical traditions ‘the mind and its cognitive capacities have to be understood as only one medium for the construction of knowledge. With this in mind, [students] are seen as integral human beings whose minds, bodies, hearts and spirits are all implicated the process of teaching and learning’. The affective and embodied elements of pedagogies of care become central to enabling the very conditions of possibility of careful epistemological work, embodying such work and nurturing ‘other’ subjectivities.

Attention to the affective and embodied elements of pedagogies of care and their relationship to creating careful epistemological work was manifested in the attentiveness that educators paid to the time-spaces of teaching and learning, in terms of fostering feelings of safety and belonging, particularly for students for whom institutionalised educational timespaces were viewed with fear and anxiety. As one student interviewed said, especially during the first years of study they found the university environment ‘strange’. They described feeling ‘scared’ –‘petrified the first time I went’. Describing this fear, one staff member said that this is because many students are ‘stepping into the unknown’. Some students interviewed explained that they could see enabling teachers wanted students to *feel* comfortable. One student described how the teachers spent time making ‘us feel comfortable in the environment and [to] make us feel like that we did belong there no matter what.’ This demonstrated that enabling educators follow a different temporality and rhythm to mainstream hegemonic constructions of classroom timespace (Assmann 2013) and they recognise students’ challenges and engagements at the visceral level. As research shows (see for example, Bennett and Burke 2017), students say they often experience learning activities as too fast paced and disconnected from their students’ experiences of both study and how their ‘personal’ time cannot be separated from the ability to engage and develop educational capabilities. Conversely, enabling educators are aware of the importance of taking time to create the conditions where students feel welcomed, safe and able to contribute.

Such care-ful attention to time involves reflexive emotional labour outside of the classroom space, labour which is often both invisibilised and feminised as secondary to what is re-presented as the important and essential labour of teaching (Burke 2012; Moreau 2017; Moreau and Kerner 2015). This attentiveness is an awareness of the kinds of rhythms, practices and languages that are conducive to co-creating inclusive and participatory learning spaces and relationships. Both staff and students described the importance of attempting to use ‘non-judgemental’ language and tone, encouraging students to participate in classroom discussion and ask questions. Of course, all this takes careful pedagogical attention and attentiveness to the kinds of spaces we create as well as time to enable

students to speak, even if that speaking is out of time, and does not fit into hegemonic renditions of the speaking-knowing-subject (Motta 2013a, 2013b).

Some educators described how the physical spaces they taught in were not conducive to establishing an inclusive teaching space, with one staff member commenting that: 'I guess one of the kind of teaching spaces I'm looking for would be a large tutorial room ... A lecture in a university just has a wall of faces. How do you forge an individual connection within that way, in a non-threatening way?' However, these educators also described how they were able to modify or transform the lecturing space. For instance, one described dismantling this by adopting an approach described as using activities and tactics to work 'pedagogically alongside' students: 'I think that's really important ... just sitting with, rather than opposite – not a didactic approach, but a coming with you approach.' Another enabling educator described how they disrupt power relationships within the classroom by allowing students to take control of the classroom: '(I) make them move, get up, write on the board, take control of the classroom. I sit back and say 'Let's work together to get something on the board'. 'Let's write short answer responses, pretend we're writing an answer in an exam''. Here, not only was student belonging and safety fostered by student autonomy and co-facilitation of the learning space, but by the creative and democratising practise of holding space by the educator. These strategies to position the self as an educator-learner reconceptualise care as an act that is potentially subversive to traditional concepts of teacher authority and let students into the 'backstage' elements of teacher performance (see Walker and Greaves 2016, 71–72).

This kind of timespace attentiveness and emotional labour foregrounds the agency and subjecthood of learners, and attempts to flatten the plane of hegemonic vertical renditions of the careless and nameless classroom (Motta 2013a; Bell 2017). They foster the building of pedagogical intimacy which opens the possibilities for self and other recognition as knowers and creators of knowledge. The emotional labour of enabling educators comes to the core of their pedagogical practice and philosophy and yet remains mostly invisible and feminised within the broader deepening of audit culture and the valuing of outputs which foster careless subjects. One staff member identified caring as feminised and 'invisible [labour] ... if I go to a performance review, I don't get ticked off how caring I was, you know?' Another said that 'there is no recognition of the other kinds of things that you do, there's no ... legitimate support structure around those [practices]'. Yet these teacher subjects had a willingness to 'go the extra mile' despite experiencing increasing misrecognition of their practice institutionally.

In light of the tensions between an increasingly careless institutional context and on-going attempt to keep pedagogies of care alive and subjects that care present, staff participants expressed a range of affective experiences that demonstrated increasing anxiety, precarity and feelings of misrecognition. Many staff pointed out that this context had a clear impact on they themselves feeling cared for. Descriptors such as 'isolating', 'competitive', 'I see myself as an island', 'easy to live in your little cocoon' demonstrate this, as does a criticism of wider institutional managerialism as 'so disengaged [from] the classroom, so meaningless to what actually matters'. Another expressed the 'wish' that 'the wider university was more understanding of enabling [educators] ... I think we need to be valued more'.

The possibilities of mitigating and politicising these tensions are, we propose, a deeply pedagogical and epistemological project which involves the co-creation of time-spaces of

possibility in which we might come to 'educate our fear' and speak as caring and careful subjects on the margins. Our participatory research project is one such example, as is our commitment to putting the results to work to create such time-spaces of pedagogical possibility in the future. Such borderlinking pedagogies involve a re-think of power, away from merely a focus on representational forms of demand and towards a focus on the interstices of being-knowing within which we enmesh and embody other university subjects and social relationships (Motta 2013a; Amsler and Motta 2017).

Conclusion: pedagogies of care and 'other' caring subjectivities

Our participatory research and ongoing co-writing has sought to demonstrate, and embody as a conscious epistemological commitment, the centrality and importance of pedagogies of care, care-full pedagogical practices and 'other' caring dialogical subjectivities present in Enabling programmes at the University of Newcastle, NSW Australia. These complex pedagogies of care continue to exist despite the difficult experiences with hegemonic masculinities and careless monological subjectivities which increasingly characterise the wider Academy. Our findings about enabling pedagogies do not represent the individual dispositions of specific teachers, nor are they simply a set of transferable methods. Rather, they constitute an emergent philosophy of education and feminised politics of knowledge co-created immanently by enabling educators and their students, that exists in, against and beyond hegemonic masculinised renditions of neoliberalised careless HE.

Arguably, there is much that broader HE might learn from these feminised and otherwise, devalued experiences, knowledges and practices of nurturing inclusion, diversity, dignity and democratisation. Rendering these complexities visible and present, we hope to foreground their centrality and importance in the struggle for a politics of education that walks its talk of diversity, equity and inclusion.

Notes

1. This does not include: (a) a course leading to a higher education award; or (b) any course that the Minister determines is not an enabling course for the purposes of this Act.
2. We refer to teaching staff participants interchangeably as teachers/teaching staff/academics/educators to reflect the different ways that the participants referred to themselves and their colleagues.
3. This differs for example from the more generic use of affect/desire as a key thematic in understanding the nature of power/resistance in critical thinkers such as Guattari and Deleuze (2004) and Massumi (2015) particularly with our focus on the gendered nature of affective relationships of power. However, it does border with the deeply relational, micropolitical and emergent focus of (political) possibility in Massumi's recent work (2015) and Deleuzian work which identifies how desire/affect manifests in different subjectivities of active and reactive desire for example, and with the focus on the formation of particular subjectivities as key to our understanding of the (re)production and possibilities of disruption of unequal power differentials and hierarchies (Robinson 2013).

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