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Teaching is usually considered a caring profession, yet care in higher education settings is rarely studied (Anderson, Rabello, Wass, Golding, Rangi & Eteuati, 2020; Baice, Fonua, Levy, Allen & Wright, 2021; Barnacle & Dall'Alba, 2017; Dowie-Chin & Schroeder, 2020; Mariskind, 2014; Walker & Gleaves, 2016; Walker, Gleaves, & Grey, 2006). In this reflective piece, I reflect on my experiences supporting offshore international students during the pandemic, where care-full teaching developed into a communal form of care that is based on recognition and dialogic relationship with students.

Scholars suggest that care in higher education setting is rarely studied because it is usually conceptualized in maternal terms and thus irrelevant to higher education settings, where learners are usually deemed to be autonomous, self-directed adults (Mariskind, 2014; Baice et al., 2021). In addition, dominant discourses traditionally associate care with emotions and the private realm of women's work, and thus care is irrelevant to the public realm of intellectual work at a university. Persky (2021) described her frustration with her colleagues' reluctance to accommodate students' requests during the pandemic:

> During a phone conversation with a colleague, I expressed my dismay… "How is it OK?" I asked her. "How is it OK to not help?! To not care?! We're TEACHERS! Every single one of us are teachers. We're supposed to be the caregivers. How can we expect our students (future teachers) to demonstrate empathy for their students, or offer compassion to the families they will serve, if we don't model it for them?" Her reply saddened me, "Julie, I'm not so sure that everyone in the department sees themselves as caregivers, or perceives that caring is part of their role. They see themselves as professors/instructors, with information to disseminate, and the rest is up to the student. (pp. 301-302)

This episode illustrates the collision course that the neoliberal university's ways of managing teachers and students may lead us to, as well as the dominant linking of care with maternalism (Mariskind, 2014; Mutch & Tatebe, 2017). The issue of care in higher education settings during the pandemic is further complicated if not minimised by the fact that universities are increasingly

instruments of neoliberalism (Baice et al., 2021; Mutch & Tatebe, 2017). In many neoliberal universities around the world, academics have become "mice on a treadmill" with ever increasing workloads, larger classes and more administrative requirements (Mutch & Tatebe, 2017). They are increasingly driven to enact what Dowie-Chin and Schroeder (2020) call 'calculated and neoliberal care', where care becomes an emotional labour performed to attain social desirability, metrics and accountability. But maternal, calculated and neoliberal care are not the only enactments of care possible in higher education setting.

My current job role as a Professional Teaching Fellow supporting offshore international students was 'invented' during the pandemic to mitigate further loss of income from international student fees and to cater to the academic needs of this group of learners, most of whom are from China and have been socialised to a very different form of education. New Zealand first imposed entry restrictions on foreign nationals travelling from or transiting through China in February 2020. Things developed quickly and by 19 March, the government had closed the country's border to all but New Zealand citizens and permanent residents. Many New Zealand public universities had come to rely on international student fees to supplement their income after neoliberal reforms to the higher education sector saw the rise of internationalisation and commercialisation (Mutch & Tatebe, 2017). The pandemic hit New Zealand's $5 billion international education sector badly, with at least 7000 international students unable to enter the country.

Many universities responded to the drop in international student numbers with job cuts and voluntary redundancies, which were widely reported in New Zealand news media. As staff numbers fell and uncertainties abound, many academics felt pressured to keep up their game. In contrast to other Covid-19 stricken countries, where both domestic and international students were all studying online because of lockdowns as well as movement and border restrictions, New Zealand was relatively free from the virus in most parts during 2020. Senior management of the University of Auckland decided to hold on-campus courses for domestic and international students who were onshore, but this required academics to prepare for two modes of teaching if they had to engage both on- and offshore students. It was in this context that my current job role as a Professional Teaching Fellow specializing in the support of offshore international students was invented.

I found myself having to navigate caring work and caring teaching with a unique group of international students who were rendered "offshore" by the pandemic (Walker et al., 2006). Prior to the 'invention' of the Professional Teaching Fellow role in 2021, I had worked alongside two other bilingual international students as Graduate Teaching Assistants supporting offshore international students in 2020 Semester 2. This was when we experimented with what our direct manager called "knowledge translation". We had no clue at that time what knowledge translation meant or entailed and basically concretised, shaped and reshaped the notion of knowledge translation through the actions and reflections we took as we went along. When we first took up the role, I suspect we probably saw knowledge translation as literal translation, such as explaining the concepts the Chinese offshore students had problems with in their mother tongue, Mandarin.

But many Zoom sessions later, I came to realise that knowledge translation involved creative translation: adapting the knowledge to a different

cultural audience while staying loyal to its essence. Creative knowledge translation involved drawing on my understanding of the societies and educational systems of the international students I taught to make pedagogical decisions that would help them develop the necessary cultural and intellectual capital needed to be academically successful in a New Zealand university. In other words, it required care-full teaching which paid attention to my positionality as well as theirs. Baice et al. (2021) suggest that a strong relational approach to care that recognises who students are is paramount to effective practices of care during the pandemic:

> Recognising a student's and care practitioner's cultural positionality and worldview is of utmost importance to more likely ensure that equity is being addressed across the institution. This will help to guide pedagogies of care to be more impactful, relevant and sustainable. (p. 16)

Indeed, although I am bilingual and have a basic understanding of the Chinese education system, I had never experienced offshore learning at a Western university while living in a Mandarin-speaking context, like many of the Chinese international students I support. My experience with supporting offshore international students last year told me that many of them had never been to New Zealand, nor do they have prior knowledge of or experience with online learning, let alone learning at a foreign university. As English-as-a-second or foreign language learners, they also had to cope with the challenge of reading and writing academic texts, as well as listening to recordings that interspersed English with te reo Māori and unfamiliar acronyms of New Zealand education policies and practices. This list is but some of the needs that became evident from the offshore international students across the more than thirty courses across the Faculty I support.

I wondered how I could adjust my teaching in ways that can help them learn and facilitate their academic success. I knew that I had to take care of their needs but given the fact that my knowledge, capacity, and the "official" resources I had at hand were too limited, I would not be able to meet the offshore international students' needs on my own. I had to draw in others into the care community to support the care-giving process.

Although I had assumed that the structural inequalities embedded in the teacher-student relationship would always place me into the role of the carer, it was not really the case. Noddings (2012) is right in saying that the labels of 'carer' and 'cared for' are never stable. The ethic of care binds carers and cared-fors in relationships of mutual responsibility. It requires each of us to recognize our own frailty and to bring out the best in one another. Over the year, the international students I supported cared for me. They sent me messages during important occasions, such as Teachers' Day and Mid-Autumn Festival, to affirm my work and thank me for the time I dedicated to support and address their needs. They looked out for signs of my wellbeing, such as whether I looked tired, during our Zoom meetings and asked about how I was doing. These international students studying in a neoliberal university did not behave as though they were entitled consumers (Anderson, Rabello, Wass, Golding, Rangi, & Eteuati, 2020; Baice et al., 2021; Mutch & Tatebe, 2017), they were more like empathetic and sensitive carers.

Many also reciprocated my care-full teaching with acts of service to others in the care community, their fellow offshore international students. They joined me as care-givers in the network of care, which had previously only comprised professional and academic staff. Through my ongoing support for offshore international students, I got to know some of them very well, including their strengths and the experiential wisdom that followed from their prior experiences of exclusion and misrecognition (Motta & Bennett, 2018). Their creative energies, desires and experiences provided a place of knowing-possibility that we leveraged in a collaborative effort to care for other offshore international students in the care community.

For instance, Alice (pseudonym), an international student that I supported last year, was forced by border restrictions to become 'offshore'. Because she was enrolled in the Faculty's early childhood programme and could not return to New Zealand for her practicum, she had to take a gap year in 2021. Although she was no longer a student under my charge because of her academic suspension, she regularly shared her reflections on the learning experiences with me. When I needed to find a learning partner for another offshore student in a communications course Alice was enrolled in the previous semester, Alice readily agreed to spend 30 minutes to 1 hour with me and the offshore international student to support her in the communications course.

A group of postgraduate offshore international students that I co-supervised with other academics needed help in critical discourse analysis, so I reached out to Alex (pseudonym), an offshore postgraduate international student I supported in the previous semester. She readily accepted my invitation to share her knowledge and experience. The Alex (pseudonym) I know today is a far cry from Alex as she was the first time I spoke to her. I remember her sobbing on the phone after her first postgraduate class with the university. She was despondent that she could not follow the discussion, nor the readings, but she was determined to pursue her interest in inclusive education policies. We spent a lot of time engaging in discussion of the readings and her writing. One semester later, she had become confident in her knowledge, her ability to know, her capacity to engage in intellectual work and her voice and agency. She was also ready to be involved in caring for other offshore international students.

The final group of offshore international students that became care-givers in the care community was five students in the Faculty's Teaching English as a Second Language (TESOL) programme. In 2021 Semester 1, I met a group of nine offshore international students for one hour weekly to support their learning in a TESOL course they were enrolled in. The course director and I were very impressed by the strength of their work. At the end of the course, I invited interested students to co-design bilingual academic skills workshops with me to help offshore Chinese international students better navigate their learning at the university. As TESOL students who had learnt to successfully navigate the two worlds that they live and study in, I thought they could challenge deficit misrepresentations of international students and offer more care-full pedagogical practices than the existing ones the university had. We discussed and designed the bilingual workshops together and trialled them prior to conducting the workshops for other offshore international students. During the workshops, I witnessed these shy and introverted students transform into engaging and confident student-teachers, as I observed their teaching with joy and pride.

In writing this reflective piece, I wanted to make the point that a communal form of care that is based on recognition and dialogic relationship with students offers the possibility of a different enactment of caring teaching. Caring teaching is both a public and private undertaking. Communal forms of care, which involve students in caring teaching, demonstrates the care-giver's commitment to recognise and address differences and inequities, and supports the creation of sustainable caring communities. It also challenges dominant and narrow thinking of care as pastoral care, where teachers and experts come together to support the wellbeing of deficient students (Mariskind, 2014). Communal forms of caring teaching, which foster and maintain pedagogic relationships, while privileging trust, acceptance and diligence, offer tertiary educators the opportunity to reverse the "emotional damage of neoliberalism" and "put the heart back to the neoliberal university" (Mutch & Tatebe, 2017, p. 232). It also provides a space for students to develop the capacity to care about others, and in turn, offers the opportunity for care to effect larger pedagogic and educational change in higher education settings (Barnacle & Dall'Alba, 2017; Mariskind, 2014; Motta & Bennett, 2018). To conclude, I hope my account of caring teaching demonstrates that offshore international students can be more than names on black Zoom screens when caring relationships are built and caring teaching afford them opportunities to care for others. They just need time, encouragement and affirmation.

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