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Abstract

Care has received relatively little attention in higher education (HE) literature. However, literature alluding to care reveals contrasting perspectives. Some scholars diminish care concerns as a product of the marketised university, where students-as-consumers insist on 'safe' teaching and the avoidance of 'troublesome knowledge'. Others position care as an ethical pedagogical stance, given the power asymmetries inherent in university life. Some suggest that attention to care in HE is risky, since it troubles gendered boundaries between public and private life, and rationality and emotion. In this article, we discuss a research project that explored diverse students' conceptions of good teaching and effective learning at a research-intensive university in Aotearoa New Zealand, using focus group discussions, critical incident technique and photovoice. Participants included 55 Māori, Pacific, international and (other) local students enrolled in Health Science and Humanities subjects. Although care was not the focus of the study, all cohorts of students represented care as a key marker of good teaching. They described good teachers as people who care about their discipline, care about teaching and care about students, powerfully influencing students' engagement with subject matter, enthusiasm

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for learning and aspirations for the future. While some students acknowledged and lamented their position as consumers in marketised HE, they also revealed an awareness of the factors that constrain teachers' capacity to care and expressed gratitude for teachers' investment in students. We argue for the need to recognise teaching in HE as cognitive, emotional and embodied work; to acknowledge teachers' powerful influence on students; and to avoid simplistic representations of both teachers and students in contemporary HE. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)