

Finding Care in Networked Learning: close encounter with a virtual assistant

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Abstract

A theme that emerged from the selection of papers drawn from the 14th edition of the networked learning conference and included in the edited book in the Research in Networked Learning series was that of care. The editorial team noted that while care is an assumed aspect of networked learning, it has not received direct attention in the networked learning literature. What began as a curiosity about the presence of care in recent networked learning scholarship developed into a motivated inquiry to examine both the thematic representation of care and the possibilities researching with a virtual assistant. The guiding question was: What are the distinct ways in which care is thematically represented in recent networked learning literature? The question was answered with reference to the proceedings of the two most recent conferences on networked learning that generated a dataset of 92 papers. This corpus was chosen as representative of the field in the period following the Covid-19 pandemic and the concurrent rise of generative artificial intelligence (Gen-AI) and other AI-driven applications. These developments and related regulatory debates increased the attention to care and care ethics. The study confirms the limited direct focus on care in the recent networked learning publications. From the small subset of papers that explicitly address the theme, it is evident that care in technology mediated education settings is a troubling concern, spanning practices, approaches, values and beliefs and tensions in the intersectionalities cutting across them. Care demands genuine action towards the mattering of both human and non-human actors. The tensions surfaced suggest that care needs to be foregrounded more explicitly in networked learning to highlight conflicting perspectives, counter hollow political discourse, and emphasise care as integral to design, implementation and practice. As the postdigital entanglement with sophisticated AI-driven technologies deepens, appeals for care and care ethics are expected to intensify. This experimental study conducted with a chatbot illustrates such entanglement. The personal experience of doing this work further underscores the necessity of human oversight – not only to verify and validate the outputs of non-caring algorithmic systems but also to ensure that digital assistants remain accountable tools rather than arbiters of what the world is.

Keywords

Care, care ethics, networked learning, virtual assistant

Introduction

A theme that emerged in the selection of papers from the fourteenth edition of the networked learning conference that were included in the ensuing edited book (Dohn, Cutajar, Borg, Ryberg and de Laat, 2025) was that of care in networked learning. In the conclusion chapter, the editorial team observed that while care resounds as a presumed aspect of networked learning, it does not seem to have been given direct attention in the networked learning literature. This paper shares an explorative effort following up on this prompt simultaneously experimenting the assistance of a large language model (LLM) chatbot as a kind of research assistant to take a closer look at recent networked learning literature and how the issue of care arises.

In the broader literature, the Covid-19 pandemic drew substantial attention to care (such as Kono and Taylor (2021), Schultz (2022), O’Flaherty & McCormack (2023), Zakharova & Jarke (2025)) and care ethics (such as Macgilchrist (2024), Zawacki-Richter & Jung, 2023; Bearman, Boud & Ajjawi, 2023). Concurrent rapid development and breakthroughs making generative artificial intelligence (Gen-AI) and other AI-driven applications easily accessible led further appeals for care ethics and regulations to human life and humane existence. For example, consider the UNESCO’s recommendation to all of its 194 member states on the ethical use of AI in November 2021 (<https://www.unesco.org/en/artificial-intelligence/recommendation-ethics?hub=32618>), the publication by the European Union (EU)’s legislative body in April 2021 proposing regulation for harmonised rules on AI use across member states ([1](https://digital-</p></div><div data-bbox=)

strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/proposal-regulation-laying-down-harmonised-rules-artificial-intelligence), and the observed policy guidelines issued by regional government bodies, professional bodies, universities and so forth. In her local context, the author also observes recently introduced content knowledge in school curricula and tertiary courses calling attention to care ethics and the adoption of human-centred orientations in systems that are characterised by human and non-human entanglement. This exploratory study is curious about the engagement of the networked learning community with the theme of care in this surrounding context. The possibility of presenting to the networked learning community such an exploratory study developed with a Gen-AI virtual assistant also fed the explorative interest.

The paper is structured by 3 main parts. The first part sets forth an understanding of care to help provide some background. In the second part there is shared an account of the explorative work assisted by a generative artificial intelligence (Gen-AI) application to arrive at thematic constructs representing care in the recent NL literature. The third section follows up with a presentation of a descriptive picture with discussion based on the mesh of chatbot output and the author's oversight and interpretation on how the engagement with the theme of care appears in recent networked learning literature.

Care in the broader literature

The concept of care in the academic literature appears to go back decades. The works of Noddings (1995, 2005, 2013, 2015) and that of Tronto (1998, 2013, 2019) stand out as seminal contributions problematising care and developing care theory locating it in the feminist knowledge domain. Both theorists emphasise care as not merely an emotional disposition or interpersonal virtue, but as a foundational framework for an ethical way of being and acting in the world. Starting out from different disciplinary areas pursuing the issue of care— Nel Noddings from Education and Joan Tronto from Political Sciences, these two expert theorists discuss care as relational, contextual, and profoundly political. Both highlight the attention to immediate needs distinguished from perceived needs, the mutual relational characterisations of care, and the need for critical interrogation of the structures within which care is organised. Noddings (2013) argues that caring for is intensified by the caring about and transcendent by reciprocity in what she refers to as relational care. She notes that care denotes a responsibility to one another, holding each other's best interest at heart. Central to Noddings' (2015) framing of care is the cultivation of a dynamic of responsiveness and mutual recognition. In a caring relation, the cared-for are responsive making the act of care a shared interactional moment (Noddings, 1998). Noddings' s (2005) emphasis on the importance of expressed needs over assumed ones, challenges traditional hierarchical models of moral reasoning and aligns with a more dialogic, situated understanding of care ethics. Tronto (1998) affirms Noddings' argument of relational care and offers a four-stage framework modelling care: care about, care for, care giving, care receiving. Tronto (1998) again highlights the mutuality of care and additionally emphasises care as a complex concept, fraught with conflict, and its pursuit weighted by moral and ethical concerns. Tronto's (2013) additional fifth stage "caring with" (resonating to Noddings' advocacy of care as a dynamic of mutual responsiveness) introduces a democratic imperative ensuing when the four-stage cycle binds the caring and the cared for in trustful convivial relationships of solidarity: that care must be distributed equitably and deliberated collectively, articulating care as a political action in process pushing care ethics into the realm of social justice and citizenship. For Tronto (2019), care is not only personal but structural, requiring transformations in how the collective allocates responsibilities and resources. In her writings Tronto (2019) calls attention to institutional and political arrangements highlighting stereotypical assumptions and divisive norms. The insistence on reciprocity resists paternalistic or charitable models of care that obscure power imbalances. A deepened understanding of care underscores that care must be responsive and mutual among individuals and across the collective and collectives. It cannot be reduced to political discourse void of action nor benevolent acts by one party, but involves the sensitivity, receptiveness, agency and responsiveness of all participants. Just in time when pervasive Gen-AI technologies were becoming more accessible to everyone and before the Covid-19 pandemic hit the world, this activism put a spotlight on shared care as both a political action and a grounded expression pushing back against divisiveness, social conflict and polarisation.

From an educational leadership perspective, LeBlanc (2022) argues that extending care for human others in that everyone matters is a means for healing the broken social systems (such as educational, healthcare and justice systems) that are self-serving and dehumanising. Focusing on online higher education, Cambell and Coke (2025) locate care in the explicit, indivisible dance of community and culture. Specifically with respect to the teaching and learning domain in educational settings, recent concerns for care are expressed in conceptualisations like pedagogy/ies of care (Bali, 2024) and the "mattering" (Gravett, Taylor and Fairchild, 2021) and "kindness"

discourses (such as Bali, Cronin, Czerniewicz, DeRosa and Jhangiani, 2021; Gilmour, 2021; Rice & Bakke, 2022; Chbib and Misiaszek, 2025) inviting closer attention to the diversity of students' learning and well-being needs, participatory orientations of learning and teaching along with ethics of care. Unsurprisingly, it seems as if the corpus of empirical literature exploded in the years of the Covid-19 pandemic and continues to accrue with deepening human entanglement with sophisticated AI-driven digital technologies. There are increasing in this literature calls for greater attention to contextualities and situationalities, equity and justice-driven decision-making. Focusing on human and non-human entanglements in school settings, Zakharova & Jarke (2022) propose a framework of “care with, through, and against edtech” to “shift attention from the tensions different caring dispositions in education evoke” so opening space for “the analysis of distributed agency, power, and resources that enact these tensions in the first place” (p. 106).

Expanded conversations on care problematise human-centric assumptions, inviting consideration of “more-than-human” care (de la Bellacasa, 2017; Haraway, 2016; Bridle, 2022). These all-encompassing viewpoints draw attention to the interdependence of humans and non-human actors —animals, ecosystems, digital technologies and so on—and the ethical implications of these entanglements. These perspectives reframe care as an ecological and ontological condition, not limited to human moral obligations towards other humans only, but embedded in the very fabric of shared, situated life. These calls to care for the broader world (which humans are part of,) coupled with critique of global care injustices point us toward an expanded terrain of care ethics, urging a broader responsiveness (transcending responsibility that includes non-human vulnerabilities and planetary interdependencies).

Bringing together the theme of care, care ethics and moral reasoning, McClaren (2025) declares that “care ethics is a feminist approach to moral philosophy ... a normative ethical theory that emphasizes the importance of caring, relationships, and empathy in moral decision-making”. Resonating to the works of Noddings (2013) and Tronto (2019) with regards to the theme of care, McClaren (2025) declares “care ethics” as focusing “on maintaining relationships, responsibility to others, and avoiding harm” and “takes into account contextual features of the moral situation and acknowledges the impact of identity and emotions on moral reasoning”. As Galligan’s (2014) notes, “The ethic of care guides us in acting carefully in the human world and highlights the costs of carelessness. It is grounded less in moral precepts than in psychological wisdom, underscoring the costs of not paying attention, not listening, being absent rather than present, not responding with integrity and respect”. In a world of deepened entanglement with AI and global warming challenge exacerbated by human conflicts and exploitation of world resources, education potentially acts as a game changer nurturing psychological wisdom rooted in attentiveness, mutual responsiveness and collective accountability, shared care and care ethics more specifically in teaching and learning processes.

Within the education field of practice and research, networked learning is not exempt from this commitment. Care is a relational, political, and increasingly posthumanist practice demanding attentiveness, responsiveness, and individual and collective accountability—not only among humans and within educational enterprise such as networked learning pursuits, but across the complex web of life including the agentic non-sentients that sustain the sentient. In the next section, I focus on the theme of care in recent networked learning literature surveying emergent conscious engagement.

Finding care in the networked learning literature

I was prompted to zoom in on care in the networked learning field when serving as part of the editorial team of the Networked Learning Conference 2024 editorial team looking across a selection of papers that made it to the subsequent edited book. I was further motivated by personal beliefs in networked learning (Goodyear et al. 2004, NLEC, 2020; Gourlay et al. 2021) as a contemporary relational pedagogical approach and experience (McConnell, Hodgson and Dirkink-Holmfeld, 2012) that has the potential to drive care, instil care ethics, inspiring caring attitudes through formal education practices and learning and development beyond. In a current surrounding landscape wherein AI has become deeply present in much of our entanglements with digital technologies where to we draw the line? Specifically in teaching and learning, concurrently AI integration augments what we do for the better, concurrently it is a threat diminishing opportunities for learning and development; distracting us from moments of possibilities to develop problem-solving skills, creative thinking and critical thinking competences. This motivation was paired with a personal interest partnering with a Gen-AI chatbot for experimenting the use of online applications driven by large language models (LLMs) for conducting qualitative research. This tentative partnership was deemed of itself an act of exploration on care in networked learning assemblages (of human and non-human agentic actors). Familiarity with the networked learning field was deemed a bonus providing an edge

in making sense of the literature surveyed in collaboration with a virtual assistant (which I continue to approach use with caution, and what is personally believed to also be an act of care for others and things as well as self). To help guide the exploration, the following question was asked: “What are the distinct ways in which care is thematically represented in recent networked learning literature?” The question was answered with reference to the proceedings of the last 2 conferences on networked learning generating a pool of 92 papers as follows: 25 full papers and 28 short papers presented at the networked learning conference in May 2024, and 28 full papers and 11 short papers presented at the networked learning conference in May 2022. This pool of papers forming the study data set was chosen as representative of recent networked learning literature authored in current times. In seeking to obtain a thematic account of care from this data set, as aforementioned this research author relied on the interaction and output of the chatbot coupled with her oversight and capacity devising the thematic description. ChatGPT-4o (which at the time of this experimentation in summer 2025 was the latest version available) was used to assist in the analysis of the data pool to obtain a set of themes and subthemes describing care in recent networked learning literature.

The papers making up the dataset were organised in 4 portable formatted files and fed into the system as the chatbot’s research project reference documents. The subscription plan put a limit on the file size ruling out the possibility of a single data file or grouping papers by conference instance. The following instructions were used to direct the system in taking forward this project:

You are a qualitative research assistant specializing in thematic analysis. Your task is to help analyse these 4 files by identifying key codes, themes, and patterns from the data that describe care in learning, teaching and educational processes. Use a structured and rigorous approach to ensure insightful and actionable results.

The objectives of the data analysis were to identify key codes, themes and patterns in the dataset that describe care in recent networked learning leading to thematic results traceable to the dataset that are meaningful, insightful and useable for informing knowledge actions. As shared above, instructions for guiding the project included attention to the chatbot acting as an expert in doing qualitative thematic analysis. The chatbot was instructed to take the role of an academic specialist assisting researchers in the field of networked learning, digital learning and technology enhanced education.

In a preliminary exercise to help understand the representativeness of the codes, themes and patterns to be automatically drawn from the data, the chatbot was prompted to list all the occurrences of care including illustrative quotations with page numbers in the fed documents (of NLC2022 and NLC2024 papers). ChatGPT-4o returned 13 distinct quotations referencing a total of 4 out of 92 papers: Brown & Tolbert (2024), Wang (2024), Moraiti & Bergviken Rensfeldt (2024), and Wilson et al (2022). The generated quotations were drawn as follows: 1 quotation from the short paper by Moraiti & Bergviken Rensfeldt (2024) and another from the full paper by Wilson et al. (2022), 2 quotations from the short paper by Wang (2024), and 9 quotations from the full paper by Brown & Tolbert (2024). The author verified these results manually. The ‘find’ function was used to locate (over 100 instances) of the word ‘care’ in the dataset but in going through this list, many occurrences were discarded either because they were unrelated or irrelevant (such as the use of words like “healthcare”, “careful” and expressions like “new educational designer has been onboarded to take care of the workshops preparation” (Pischetola et al, 2022, p.8)) . Wading through the dataset, 2 other papers were identified where in the authors made a reference to the theme of care which the chatbot did not identify. But care was not the article’s focal point and so a possible reason why the chatbot did not include them in the output list. In one paper, Bayne (2024) argues for care activism with respect to the planet and the health of the surrounding environment in our use of digital technologies, and in another article Hachmann et al. (2024) insist that the network potentially serves as a mean for conveying care (echoing an argument brought up in Moraiti & Bergviken Rensfeldt (2024)). Table 1 below summarises the number of quotations directly referencing care in the dataset.

Table 1: A sample table

Paper Referenced	Paper type	Chatbot quotation reference count
Brown & Tolbert (2024)	FP	9
Wang (2024)	FP	2
Moraiti & Bergviken Rensfeldt (2024)	SP	1
Wilson et. Al (2022)	FP	1
Bayne (2024)	FP	0
Hachmann et al. (2024)	FP	0

Further instructional prompts commanded the chatbot to assist in the qualitative thematic analysis coding data, offer guidance for identifying themes describing care in networked learning and interpreting results. The chatbot was prompted to emphasise accuracy, clear focus and analytical depth. It was also instructed to output responses that were in a scholarly tone in English, avoiding jargon and buzzwords, clearly explaining complex concepts in simple terms and with examples. The interaction prompt developed through the course of this iterative process of Gen-AI assisted thematic analysis is the following:

You are an academic qualitative research expert specializing in thematic analysis. You are also a specialist assisting researchers in the field of networked learning, digital learning and technology enhanced education. Your task is to assist me in the thematic analysis of the 4 attached files that together make up the dataset. You help by identifying codes, themes, and patterns from the dataset that describe care in networked learning, teaching and educational processes. You use a structured and rigorous approach with clear traceability to the data files to ensure meaningful and insightful results. Your response in English uses academic scholarly language that avoids jargon and buzzwords. You explain concepts in simple terms possibly also including traceable illustrative examples. You present the findings as follows: (i) a tabulation of the set of codes that can be traced back in the data set, (ii) the list of themes and patterns that describe care in networked learning, and (iii) a thematic account of how these themes and patterns describe care in networked learning

Three iterations of thematic data analysis prompting the system to thematically analyse the dataset were performed over the span of 6 weeks, each 2 weeks apart. The responses remained consistent across iterations as the prompt was refined to increase the level of detail and what was surmised to work at generating more focused results convincingly traceable to the dataset. Apart from verifying the results obtained and manually authoring a thematic description of the emerging themes shared in the next subsection, the author engaged in a further manual stage of analysis iteratively considering the generated themes to deepen understanding of what was surfacing from the data about the issue of care in the dataset. Concurring to Braun and Clarke 's (2013; 2019) claim that themes are not simple labels but interpretive units with internal coherence and narrative meaning, the author focused on attaining thematic coherence and analytical depth bringing together her own insights of the texts with the output of the chatbot. A following subsection shares the resultant thematic interpretation.

Emergent themes with virtual assistance

The themes that emerged from the thematic effort with virtual assistance included: critique of managerialised care, pedagogies of care as praxis, ethics of care and political commitment, care as reciprocity and peer engagement, design and structure as expressions of care, sociotechnical and design justice-oriented care, tensions in caring roles and expectations, ecological and planetary dimensions of care, micro-practices of inclusion:

- Critique of managerialised care – Care is questioned when framed as administrative discourse lacking relational depth. Brown & Tolbert (2024) implicated as hollow the messages from managers about “pastoral care for students” seen as disconnected from students’ lived social and economic realities. Considering student tracking technologies, Moraiti & Bergviken Rensfeldt (2024) are sensitive to teachers’ workloads heightened rather than alleviated by administration systems covertly also acting as surveillance systems for students and their teachers; conflicting narrative of efficiency supported by for-profit technology businesses (Moraiti & Bergviken Rensfeldt, 2024).
- Pedagogies of care as praxis– Care is enacted as critical, relational and collective practices, especially in postdigital and crisis contexts as illustrated by Brown & Tolbert (2024) and their study drawing on educators’ perceptions of pedagogies of care when still fresh from the experiences of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Ethics of care and political commitment – Care is framed as both an ethical awareness and a critical political orientation grounded in feminism, social justice and relational ethics. Brown & Tolbert (2024) refer to Tronto (1998) who describes care as both a disposition and awareness of the need for caring.
- Care as reciprocity and peer engagement – Peer-based learning environments foster mutual, shared responsibilities of care among learners. The participant educators of Brown & Tolbert ‘s (2024) study are reported to perceive these pedagogical practices of care as a question of “care or share care between learners” (Brown & Tolbert, 2024)

- Design and Structure as Expressions of care – Learning design is interpreted as a form of anticipatory care and resulting learning environments as expressions of care by their capacity to scaffold autonomy and convey responsiveness through intentional structure. This comes through in the voice of Brown & Tolbert’s (2024) participants’ voices expressing agency in “care through structure/care through self-management”.
- Sociotechnical and design as justice-oriented care – In technology mediated settings such as networked learning, care is positioned not only in the interpersonal activity but also as a design ethic. Quoting Cruz (2021), Wilson et al. (2022) remark that “[a]cknowledging and nurturing care (as labor/work, affect/affections, ethics/politics)” (p. 1862) should be sociotechnical design’s first and non-negotiable principle”.
- Tensions in caring roles and expectations – The ambiguity of care as duty is a concern arising in recent networked learning literature. When care is shifted from voluntary relational engagement to institutional and moral obligation questions of autonomy and agency follow: “When does care become a duty?” is another insight Brown & Tolbert (2024) derived from participants’ accounts. Care emerges as a discussion theme in relation to questions of power and responsibility when it is imposed, expected and enacted autonomously.
- Ecological and planetary dimensions of care – In the recent networked learning literature care also surfaces as linked to ecological concerns, advocating for restraint and renewability in the use of digital devices and infrastructure. As Bayne (2024) pleaded in her concluding remarks: “Actively advocate for care, restraint and renewability in the way we use technology to teach”.
- Micro-practices of Inclusion – Care surfaces in small meaningful acts as in “pockets of care/asking for help” in Brown and Tolbert’s (2024) interpretation of educators’ accounts of their perceptions.

These emergent themes and related descriptions formed a first level analysis that the author saw as meriting further interpretative effort to devise a cohesive interpretative picture that neatly described care in networked learning. In the next subsection are shared the results of the attempt achieving this interpretative thematic representation.

Interpretation of Care in Networked learning

On the basis of these themes of care drawn from networked learning literature with the assistance of a Gen-AI chatbot, the author went on to devise the following interpretation of care in networked learning structured by ‘care as praxis’ in learning design and learning/teaching practices, in tension with ‘care as moral obligation’ wherein moral obligation stems from without in top-down command and/or within in moral duty. The tension is in turn, structurally constituted by duty and agency. Figure 1 conveys a graphical representation of this interpretation of care.

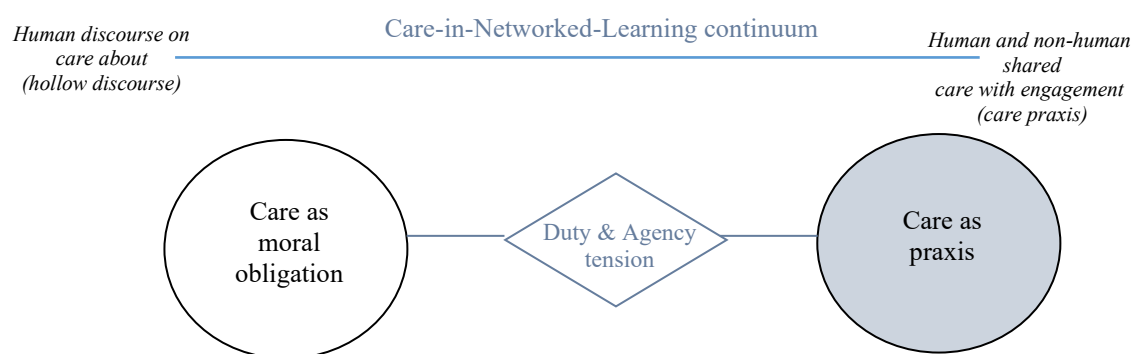


Figure 1: An interpretation of care

In the networked learning literature surveyed, overarchingly networked learning is seen as variously advanced as a praxis – shared awareness and action; the action of learning with human others as part of the learning group. Care as praxis is characterised by relational pedagogies (of care) assumed, knowledge content attending to capacity building inspiring planetary (care) awareness, learning design implementations, human relationships and actions for learning, and a critical attention to ethical stance. Care as praxis emphasises needs, care, responsiveness, relationships and connections of inclusion where everyone and everything matters.

The dataset also exposes another perspective of care as moral obligation. Care brought up as a moral obligation context largely puts the onus on the teacher signalling digital technologies as a means to convey care to the students. Care as moral obligation is characterised by the (institutional) adoption of AI-driven platforms, digital assistance and surveillance, and tailored learning and teaching support. While in part this narrative of care as moral obligation harmonises to the predominant story line of care as praxis that goes beyond the call of duty in “doing the right thing”, care as moral obligation is critically considered for what may be “managerial rhetoric” (Brown & Tolbert, 2024; Moraiti & Bergviken Rensfeldt, 2024; Hachmann et al., 2024) highlighting principles, hierarchies, rights and responsibilities along with the conflicting narrative of efficiency backed by for-profit technology businesses. Hence derives the tension in the coming together of care as praxis and care as moral obligation. There is exposed by this dataset a tension in the duty and agency constructs building up the relational sense of care at the microlevel supporting inclusiveness and well-being of students along with meaningful learning and the obligation of care in administrative discourse which at the macro level especially is critically regarded as hollow when this is void of action. While digital technologies may serve to convey care in keeping track of students’ learning progress that in a sense conveys an act of care, there is advocated across this networked learning literature the need for a deepened sense of criticality. The integration of digital technologies in teaching and learning does not of itself convey care, nor does diminished use (of digital technologies in teaching and learning) impede it. Crucially, it is the shared human action in the mediation that breeds it. While care as moral obligation does not sit in opposition to care as praxis tension arises from the need of critical reflection on the motivations for technology use in teaching and learning practices, the technology role in these processes including psychological and socio-cultural impact in technology mediated actions.

Concluding Remarks

This paper picked up on what began as a curiosity about the direct concern of care in recent networked learning literature which was paired with another interest to experiment doing qualitative research in partnership with a virtual assistant. As the postdigital entanglement with sophisticated AI-driven technologies deepens, appeals for care and care ethics are expected to intensify, and the care with needs to encompass all. This explorative study conducted with a chatbot illustrates such entanglement. The personal experience doing this work also deepened the discernment of the necessity of human oversight – not only to verify and validate the outputs of non-caring algorithmic systems but also to ensure that digital assistants remain accountable tools rather than arbiters of what the world is.

This study confirms the limited direct focus on care in recent networked learning publications. It suggests that the theme of care in networked learning has only captured the expressed direct attention of the few. Possibly this is because, as Dohn et al. (2026) argue in the conclusion chapter reflecting on the few papers that made it to the edited book, care is taken for granted in networked learning. It might also be the case that care ethics are reckoned too as well taken care of in the very essence of what networked learning stands for as a pedagogical approach and family of practices.

From the limited number of networked learning articles that explicitly direct attention to care, it strongly comes across that theme of care in technology mediated education settings is a troubling concern spanning practices, approaches, values and beliefs and the tensions at their intersectionalities. Care demands genuine action in the pursuit of the mattering of humans and the nonhuman. The surfacing tensions suggest that the theme of care in networked learning needs to be brought more to the fore for highlighting conflicting perspectives, counter hollow political discourse and emphasise care as integral to design, implementation and practice. While direct attention to care generally is low key across the board, the care about, care for, and care giving are more in focus. Care receiving and care *with* emerge in the reciprocity and peer engagement but no attention brings in focus care directed at the educators as part of the learning network and self-care. The author is reminded that despite all the theoretical claims of what it is (NLEC, 2021; Goodyear et al, 2004), networked learning is an ideal and realistically speaking “a call to perfection” (Cutajar, 2014) that is aspired of a learning network. The attention to care and care ethics needs to be conscious and ongoing in design, implementation and practice alongside theoretical conceptualisations, perceptions and discourse. As Ehrlichman (2021) points out in focusing on learning networks, action networks and impact networks at large, persons and entities participating in a learning network are not necessarily congenial but are there for a purpose which in part is personal gain and in part the collective gain in network membership. In taking care for granted in learning network practices aspiring networked learning, potentially there are overlooked social injustices allowing the tyranny of participation to crawl in and fester. Case in point, is the missed care attention in the dataset to educator care and self-care abovementioned. Recognition of

care and its pursuit in learning network assemblages cannot be taken for granted and needs to be consciously pursued ongoingly if every one and every thing matters. Positively looking ahead to a “new renaissance” of teaching and learning processes beyond the emergency remote teaching (Hodges et al. 2020) dominant during the pandemic crisis, Bozkurt and Sharma (2021) reflected that “In the educational kingdom, context is the king, content is the queen, quality is the crown, and care and empathy are the kingdom itself!” (p. v). May it never be the case that the kingdom is taken for granted and those that the kingdom stands for overlooked!

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