Title: Critical pedagogy: Loving and caring within and beyond the classroom  
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Learning about critical pedagogy and love in theory is easy, however, implementing it in real life classrooms is much more difficult. Teaching can and should be considered an act of love. This is not a passive emotion, but a deliberate and equitable action that shows solidarity, honesty, respect, care, and listening. This love and care needs to be for our students, but also for ourselves and our communities. It is an active choice and it’s rooted in acceptance, appreciation for student assets, confidence, and hope. This love is learned in- and outside of the classroom through friends and peers and it’s a fundamental concept in feminist theory. It’s also an essential component to promote imagination, teaching of social responsibility and freedom, and critical thinking. Loving is an action that demands constant and continuous effort as well as reflection.

White scholars, students, and educators have always been at the forefront of education, research, and even standardized tests, and although they have been trying to help, they have sustained racial hierarchies. A non-hierarchical approach would be a better option. In such an approach, everyone gets to speak freely. They are respected and cared for, and everyone’s thoughts and feelings matter equally. Since actively caring for each other and mutual aid are radical acts of love, they are essential in defying a capitalist system and authority. This alludes to a pedagogy that refuses authority in favor of sharing, collaboration, cooperation, and nurturing.

An important thing to remember is that everyone deserves to have their needs met without having to give up their dignity. Discussions about pedagogy need to allow space for people’s wants, hopes, dreams, and voices because this creates the opportunity to build solidarity as well as shows the challenges in the road to liberation.

Key Terms

* Feminist theory: Feminist theory is the opposite of masculinist education, which is a banking model often seen in regular classrooms/education. It’s competitive, rational, socially detached, emotionally distanced, and socially detached. Feminist theory on the other hand attaches great importance to love and care as actions and emotions.
* Liberation: Love is a central part of the movement toward liberation. It involves affirmation, respect, and the commitment to care for students as individuals and human beings and ultimately empowers both teachers and students to promote social change.
* Solidarity: In this context it is seen as the same as “love”. Engaging in actions that promote equality and address issues of inequality and oppression. For there to be solidarity, there needs to be a mutual attachment that is based in compassion, altruism, love, and a desire to end inequality and oppression. It’s not rooted in pity (like empathy), but instead, it protests injustice as an act of love.