

Complexities of care in a college microbiology laboratory

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ABSTRACT ORIGINAL

Recognising effects of care departs from previous conceptions of care within science education as an idealised, ethical, and normative dimension of being, thinking and relating. In this article, we hesitate with care's moralistic qualities to render visible disruptive and complicit moments of care in complex ethical and political situated practices. We follow care inside a college microbiology laboratory, documenting three practices: caring for bacteria, caring for logbooks, and caring for a nation. We show how these care practices potentialise/disrupt bacteria as technoscientific commodities and biotechnicians as a labour force for markets and nations organised along racial and gendered lines. Our paper attends to the complexities of care as an assembling force with its ambivalent ethical and political orientations. We conclude by reflecting on the possibilities of 'care-full' science educational analyses. How can we better care for care? What might care offer science education research and practice that other more popular explanatory units (such as concepts and effectiveness) do not?. © 2023 Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.