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INTRODUCTION

The widespread use of technology has enabled a multitude of options for the teaching and learning environment, resulting in a myriad of research initiatives into specific interventions, processes, and justifications for the use of technology enhanced learning.

This focus on technological innovation has, unfortunately, resulted in the subjugation of the learner. The learner is only viewed as a component of the research on the technological innovation.

Most research does not allow us to view the learner outside of their role as a user of the technology. Their "role" as a human being with multiple responsibilities is rarely acknowledged.
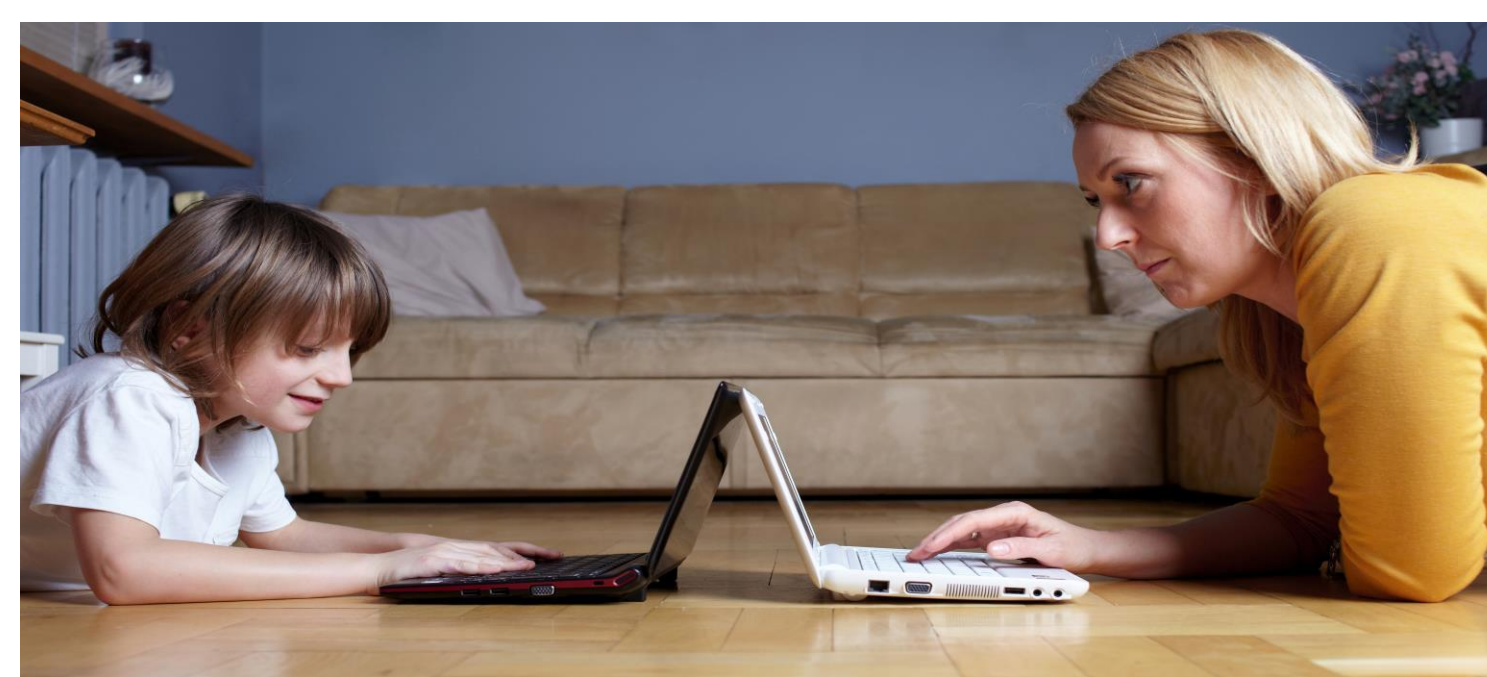
LITERATURE REVIEW

In a recent literature review that examined articles that focused on student experiences or needs, very few of the articles explored the students' needs as the main aspect of the study (Hellsten & Prescott, 2004; Leners & Sitzman, 2006; Sitzman & Leners, 2006).

Most often these studies focused on instructional design, learning theory, or methodology; this would include Cercone's (2008) article that focused on adult learning theory and Huang's (2002) article that examined the impact of constructivism.

In no way does this finding devalue the research being undertaken; but when one examines the description of the learner they are often characterized as one dimensional entities:
- commonly differentiated by their modality of learning (online learner versus one in a blended environment or in the traditional classroom)
- identified very generally (adult learner versus child, traditional versus non-traditional).

This is not reflective of the extent to which learners are unique or respectful of the challenges and opportunities that they face both in and outside the classroom.

CARE

"On the most general level, we suggest that caring be viewed as a species activity that includes everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our 'world' so that we can live in it as well as possible. That world includes our bodies, our selves, and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web"

(Tronto, 1993, p. 103).

For SoTL work **Care** can encompass anything that we interact with:

- Friends
- Family
- Community
- Work
- Studies
- Other Interests

Care is **culturally defined** (Tronto, 1993); we need to consider cultural perspectives when assuming or observing or evaluating care. What one cultural group may find integral in their definition of care may be seen as inconsequential by another.

Care is not time or space limited; care is ongoing throughout everyone's life (Tronto, 1993).

"The **WORLD WILL LOOK DIFFERENT** if we move care from its current peripheral location to a place near the center of human life" (Tronto, 1993, p. 101), and researchers can utilize this framework to focus on the practice of care and its cultural implications if they so choose.

CARE FRAMEWORK

Care needs to be seen as a practice (not an emotion or a principle), it can then be seen and measured (Tronto, 1993).

To acknowledge care	To observe and measure care	To evaluate care
Caring about: recognize care is needed	Observe as a practice	**Attentiveness:** attentive to the needs of others
Taking care of: taking responsibility and determining a response	Observe and measure conflict of competing needs, responsibilities and of resource constraints	**Responsibility:** that the care-giver is responsive to care responsibilities
Care-giving	Cultural perspective	**Competence:** that the care is done as competently and fully as resources allow
Care-receiving		**Responsiveness:** the response from the care-receiver to the care being received.
Focus research on learner, teacher or educational institution based on care		
Observe and measure care focusing on the learner, teacher or educational institution based on care.		
Evaluate the level of care provided by the learner, teacher or educational institution based on the ethic of care.		

Complete Care Framework (Rasmussen, adapted from Tronto's Work, 1993)

DISCUSSION

Engaging in research that looks at the larger implications of education and its place in our lives, as human beings, can be examined if one utilizes an adapted ethic of care framework (Tronto, 1993).

This framework provides a solid structure in which to investigate many aspects of education – from strategic visioning to the underlying structure of an instructor's role in the classroom.

Additionally, this framework provides a more humanistic focus on educational research as it recognizes the importance of care as part of our lived experience.

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