

Radical Care Week 7: Critical (Race) Caring One Page Article Summaries
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Toward a theory of critical care in urban small school reform: examining structures and pedagogies of caring in two Latino community-based schools (Antrop-González & De Jesús, 2006)

This article explores the school culture of two Latino community-based small high schools (Dr Pedro Albizu Campos High School and El Puente Academy for Peace and Justice) through semi-structured interviews with students. Students described close interpersonal relationships with teachers and that these relationships were characterized by high academic expectations. Further, students experienced a sense of safety in these schools protecting them from the risk of conflict and gang violence. Antrop-Gonzalez & De Jesus (2006) draw on the schooling experiences of Latinx youth, as in El Puente and PACHS, and caring community and difference theories (McKamey, 2004) to further conceptualize a process theory of critical caring.

Will you stand for me? Authentic *cariño* and transformative rites of passage in an urban high school (Curry, 2016)

Expanding on anthropological literature discussing the importance of rituals in educational spaces shape student learning and ideological orientation, this case study described the firewalks rites of passage in a small, urban high school. Curry (2016) employs a framework of authentic *cariño*, grounded in familial, intellectual, and critical care, to examine the firewalks ritual at this school. The firewalk ritual at this school were milestone events and graduation requirements in which peers, staff, and teachers support and challenge each student to be emotionally vulnerable and deeply metacognitive in discussing all aspects of life. The analysis of the school culture and firewalk ritual indicated values of authentic *cariño* by supporting youth in negotiating cultural identities and developing social conscience, reflexivity and agency.

***Caring in a Small Urban High School: A Complicated Success* (Rivera-McCutchen, 2012)**

Drawing from theoretical perspectives of care, Rivera-McCutchen (2012) explores caring in a small urban high school that is explicitly devoted to enacting care for their marginalized students. In assessing interviews with the schools' founders, teachers, and alumni, the study finds that staff and teachers reported providing emotional and academic support to their students. However, there was an absence of sociocultural and sociopolitical knowledge and the belief that students were capable of meeting high expectations, contributing to that of rigor in the students' education. In speaking with alumni, they also emphasize this absence leaving them ill-prepared for college and future endeavors. Thus, the findings highlight that without fundamentally believing that students are capable of high expectations, other forms of caring are insufficient.

***Critical Care: A Color(full) Analysis of Care Narratives in the Schooling Experiences of Puerto Rican Girls* (Rolon-Dow, 2005)**

Using several different qualitative methods, this piece investigates care in an urban, working-class neighborhood school through a Critical Race and LatCrit theoretical lens. They focus on the specific experiences of Puerto Rican girls at the school and contrast that with those of their teachers. The authors find that teachers weaponize care against the families they serve by claiming that parents don't care, and, therefore, are to blame for the decline of the school. When teachers show care for their students, it is often more pity than care. In response to these harmful teacher discourses, Puerto Rican girls have their own narratives of care at school. They feel uncared for and left behind by their teachers and the larger school district. While they did have some teachers who performed care in a meaningful way, the girls largely longed for more caring relationships with their teachers. The author concludes with a recommendation of color(full) care praxis. This would require teachers to self-reflect on their practices of care through a race-conscious, power-conscious, and political framework.

***Accountable for Care: Cultivating Caring School Communities in Urban High Schools* (Tichnor-Wagner & D. Allen, 2016)**

This study compares four schools in the same school district with different achievement outcomes and differing approaches to care and leadership. Using the concepts of authentic, aesthetic

and hard caring as the theoretical base, they investigate variations in the school leadership, core values, and school supports. One school is classified as “isolated care” where there are some teachers who show authentic and hard care, but it is not widespread. This school had poor education outcomes and both teachers and students were pretty unhappy with the school overall. Another school is classified as “pockets of caring teachers” where the environment was generally caring but there are some uncaring aspects throughout. There was an emphasis on academic rigor that was not sufficiently grounded in hard care. The last two schools were the highest performing and had high levels of authentic and hard care. These schools were called “caring communities”. The school leadership actively cultivated caring in the school. Based on these findings, the authors conclude that caring leadership is important for cultivating an overall caring school climate. Namely, leaders in these caring community schools had care at the center of their mission, they encouraged extracurriculars for both teachers and students, and they focused on students’ futures and holistic growth.

References

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<https://doi.org/10.1080/15700763.2016.1181185>