ONLINE EDUCATION: TEACHING IN A TIME OF CHANGE

• Paper / Proposal Title:
Student Social Media Engagement and Care Ethics

• Author(s) Name:
Denise Goerisch

• University or Company Affiliation:
Department of Integrative, Religious, and Intercultural Studies at Grand Valley State University, Michigan, USA

• Abstract (300 words):
During the COVID-19 pandemic, many instructors turned to technologies and digital media within their institution’s learning management systems as these systems provide support and guidance for both instructors and students. Others chose to use digital and social media platforms not supported by their institutions. In doing so, instructors may unintentionally be creating and exacerbating precarity for students by pushing students to engage in forms of social and digital media that may cause more distress or harm, especially in these times of uncertainty and instability. However, this is not to say that instructors can be intentional and thoughtful in how they design social media engagement in their virtual classrooms and how they can modify and accommodate this form of engagement in times of crisis. Instructors can take an ethics of care approach within their classrooms when engaging with social media, particularly as social media can be contentious and often violent spaces for students. According to Joan Tronto (1998), care ethics both places significance on care as a value in our everyday lives and acknowledges that care requires a complicated process of judgement. An ethics of care approach encourages instructors to understand the complexities of the actors,
institutions, and systems that impact students and their engagement within the virtual classroom, specifically around social media, in order to practice care. By using an ethics of care approach in regard to social media engagement, this potentially opens up the classroom in times of crisis, to be a much more democratic and socially just space for both students and instructors. In this paper, I draw on Tronto’s ethics of care framework to argue that such an approach concerning student social media engagement is warranted in times of crisis but should also be extended into our everyday pedagogical practices.

• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

Dr. Denise Goerisch received her PhD in Geography from San Diego State University and University of California, Santa Barbara. Her research focuses on the socio-economic lives of children and young people. She currently researches college students’ engagements with the costs of pursuing higher education in the US. She has published on topics related to feminist research ethics, care ethics and mentoring in the academy, emotional labor in higher education, emotional labor and girlhood, children’s work and play, and leadership in informal educational spaces. She recently co-authored a forthcoming short monograph, The True Costs of College. She teaches courses on interdisciplinary research methods, leadership and social change, globalization and work, and food studies.