

**Article Review: “Why Caring Too Much Can Make You a Less Effective Teacher”**

**Source:** <https://www.smartclassroommanagement.com/2014/10/04/why-caring-too-much-can-make-you-a-less-effective-teacher/>, accessed 24 Jan 2018

**Review**

Article outline:

1. Teaching is important, but it can
  - a. weigh heavily on you
  - b. cause you to put too much of your identity in your job
  - c. cause you to care too much
2. Caring too much could result in
  - a. you being preoccupied and make mistakes that make you less effective
  - b. you becoming personally offended when students misbehave
  - c. you start doing for them what they should be doing for themselves
3. The most effective teachers
  - a. maintain a professional distance from
    - i. their students
    - ii. their classroom
    - iii. their school
  - b. view teaching as a two-way street
    - i. they give their best to their students to create a learning experience the students want to be part of
    - ii. they expect the best in return
  - c. their actions show a deep and abiding belief in their students
    - i. they enforce consequences
    - ii. they give directions one time
    - iii. they have other behaviors that keep student responsibility with the student
4. When student have their responsibilities removed
  - a. they get the message they have a free pass
  - b. they shrug at your urgent exhortations
  - c. they ignore your requests for quiet
  - d. they listen when convenient
  - e. they daydream
  - f. they don't see they need what you are teaching
5. Effective classrooms have responsibilities separate and defined
  - a. The teachers do their jobs well, providing everything the student needs to be successful
  - b. You will focus your energy on these core responsibilities
    - i. teach
    - ii. inspire
    - iii. hold accountable
  - c. The onus of getting the work done is handed over to the students, so
    - i. complacency and apathy die out

- ii. their respect for you will soar
- iii. their independency will grow
- d. You will leave school at school

This article has pointed out a problem I believe I have. I care too much about my students and their learning. I worry that any changes or experiments I do with my lessons might adversely affect their learning so I am very cautious about making changes. I wonder at my colleagues' more casual attitude about making changes.

This is not a 100% problem. I do acknowledge that I cannot care more than my students in that I see it is their responsibility to do the work and pass the class. I do not strive to be a "co-dependent enabler", as I have seen described in other websites. But I do want my classes to be successful, despite knowing that some students just won't put in the effort.

On the other hand, I have always tried to run my classrooms where the student responsibility sits on their shoulders. In order to pass, they have to get their work done, come to class prepared, and study and prepare for exams. They are in charge of getting their questions to me.

I suspect I worry because I have had students who insisted that I take responsibility for them. They want me to structure the points so they are guaranteed to pass. They want me to give them the lecture notes and tell them exactly what to study for tests. It is difficult for me to resist that pressure semester after semester.

What strikes me in this article is the idea that teachers give their best and expect the students to do the same. This has been my model but does not always result in my students' best. From what I read in here and other articles, though, is that if they fail, it is not on me if I give my best. Again, the responsibility is theirs.

The statement about caring too much can have you make mistakes that make you less effective has been addressed in other articles. Basically, if you are worried about being the caring, approachable teacher who has a good rapport with your students, you might be tempted to ignore accountability because you are concerned you will ruin your relationship with your students.

Another aspect I like is the recommendation to focus on the three core responsibilities: teaching, inspiring, and holding accountable. This makes teaching look much more fun and relaxing. Hopefully it will reduce the stress of worry, too.

### **Article Text in Full**

#### **Why Caring Too Much Can Make You A Less Effective Teacher**

*by Michael Linsin on October 4, 2014*

Teaching is important, to be sure.

But if you're not careful, this fact can weigh heavily.

It can cause you to wrap an unhealthy amount of your identity into your job. It can cause you to be distracted around your friends and family.

It can cause you to care *too much*.

And when you care too much, not only are you wrung out, preoccupied, and no fun to be around, but you make mistakes that make you a less effective teacher.

You become personally offended when students misbehave. You become irritable, easily frustrated, and less approachable.

You become so invested in your students' success, so pressured by administrative powers, that you begin doing for them what only they can do for themselves.

The truth is, the most effective teachers maintain a level of professional distance—from their students, their classroom, and even their school.

They view teaching as a two-way street. Meaning, they give their best for their students. They teach high-interest lessons. They build leverage and influence through their consistent pleasantness and likability. They create a learning experience their students *want* to be a part of.

But they also expect the best in return, which manifests itself in everything they do.

From enforcing consequences dispassionately to giving directions one time to their reluctance to kneel down and reteach individuals what was taught to the entire class minutes before . . . their actions announce to the world their deep and abiding belief in their students.

You see, when you take on what are your students' responsibilities, even emotionally, they'll be left with the message that they have a free pass.

So they shrug in response to your urgent exhortations. They ignore your requests for quiet. They listen only when convenient. They daydream and side-talk and count tiles on the ceiling.

It never occurs to them that they're sitting in a sacred place of learning or that they desperately need what you have to offer. The result is a stressed-out teacher and a class full of students who just don't care.

In the most effective classrooms, responsibilities are clearly separate and defined.

The teacher does their job well, providing everything their students need to be successful, then hands the onus to do the work, discuss the book, perform the experiment, and solve for  $x$  in full over to their students.

Your job is to teach, inspire, and hold accountable—which is completely in your control. When you focus your physical and emotional energy on these three core responsibilities, and determine to turn the rest over to your students, your stress will all but disappear.

At the same time, the whole vibe of your classroom will change. The winds of complacency and apathy will die out. Balance will be restored to the kingdom.

Your students will feel the burden of responsibility for learning and behaving settle upon their shoulders, where it belongs. Their respect for you will soar. Their sense of independence will swell. Rapport will come easy—light and effortless.

Your heavy mood, your hurt, and your disappointment will lift and dissipate into the heavens. You'll have the energy you need to create your dream class. And you'll finally be able to leave school at school.

Now both you and your students will possess the same look: Happy yet determined. Calm yet filled with purpose. Fulfilled yet resolute.

The way it's supposed to be.